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Netanyahu vows to end extremist haredi behaviour

Says Beit Shemesh conflict a test for Israel's democracy

Jonathan Lis
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JERUSALEM — Israel will act against anyone who harasses women in the public sphere, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said last week, the day after a massive protest against gender segregation took place in the central Israel town of Beit Shemesh.

On Dec. 28, thousands of Israelis gathered near the Orot girls school in Beit Shemesh to protest gender segregation in a city that has become a symbol for the struggle against religious extremism.

Referring to rising tensions over gender segregation in Israel's haredi community, Netanyahu said in the Knesset Dec. 29 that Israel will act against "anyone who harasses women, anyone who harasses people in the public sphere.

"We won't accept spitting on people in the street just because someone doesn't approve of their apparel," the prime minister said, adding that the "public sphere is open and safe and will remain so.

"This is part of what makes Israel a liberal, western democracy – that the public sphere is open and free to everyone," he said, warning, however, against an attack on the entire haredi community.

"We must beware of generalizing an entire population, because the vast majority of the haredi public combines an adherence to Jewish tradition and a complete respect of the law," Netanyahu said, commending top rabbis who criticized the actions of extremists.

He said recent clashes were instigated by "violent, lawless, fringe groups," adding that those criticizing the entire haredi community would be better off "uniting to eradicate these incidents.

"We'll stop the extremists, and won't let anyone harm Jews, Arabs, or [vandalize] mosques"

Netanyahu's comments came after a female Israel Defence Forces soldier reported being accosted by a haredi man over her refusal to move to the back of a segregated bus in Jerusalem.

Continued on page 27

Thousands of Israelis took part in a demonstration on Dec. 27 in Beit Shemesh to protest the attempt by some haredim there to exclude women from public life. The sign urges the "silent majority to awake. Israel is a free country." At left is eight-year old Na'ama Margolis, the third-grader who was harassed as she walked from her house to an ORT school across the road. *[Flash90 photos]*

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CANADA

JVS Gets Funding

TORONTO — Jewish Vocational Service (JVS) Toronto received $280,000 from Ottawa for two work training programs. Natural Resources Minister and Eglinton-Lawrence MP Joe Oliver said Dec. 16 that JVS' Asperger's Job Readiness Program will get $182,000 from the Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities to train and support 16 people with Asperger's syndrome. JVS will also get $98,000 for a youth employment project to help 10 young people train or gain experience to find work or go back to school.

Police Seek Suspect

TORONTO — Toronto Police's sex crimes unit combed the area northwest of Bathurst Street and Wilson Avenue last week seeking a suspect in the abduction and sexual assault of a four-year-old girl who was visiting from Connecticut with her grandparents for Chanukah. Police said she was assaulted and then abducted from a house Dec. 26 at around 3 a.m. by a man described as white, 19 or 20, medium build, 5-6 to 5-10, wearing a blue jacket or sweatshirt and bluish toque or hat with a stripe and dark pants. Family members saw a man fleeing shortly after noticing the girl missing from her bed. She was found outside a short distance from the house.

Workers Arrested

HALIFAX — Eleven Israelis were arrested in Halifax for allegedly working illegally there. Their alleged ringleader, Iftash Jacob, was among 10 Israelis arrested Dec. 21 in a raid on a Halifax home and on kiosks at three malls in the Halifax region. Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) officials arrested an 11th person the next day outside a courthouse. Jacob was released after surrendering his passport and posting a $7,500 bond. He must report to the CBSA every week and travel from Toronto to Halifax next month to enter a plea. Eight of the accused – two women and six men – pleaded guilty to working in Canada without authorization and were each fined $1,000. They're allowed to stay in Canada but not to work. One accused was freed on bail and must abide by the same conditions as Jacob. The CBSA claims Jacob brought foreign workers to Canada illegally and was working illegally himself. Also last month, 31 people, mostly Israelis, were arrested for working illegally at Ottawa-area malls. In WikiLeaks documents released in August, a former U.S. ambassador to Israel said such schemes are a $1-billion industry. He said young Israelis are promised good pay for selling goods at mall kiosks, but many are forced to work long hours for little money, CBC reported.

Sask. Extends Funds To Private Schools

REGINA — Saskatchewan will give public funds to private schools, including faith-based ones, Education Minister Donna Harpauer announced.

Donna Harpauer

The plan, which starts next fall, will give 50 per cent of the provincial per-student public school average to a new category of "independent" non-profit schools that comply with certain criteria, such as implementing the provincial curriculum, employing certified teachers, taking part in the provincial student assessment program, and complying with education ministry directives, Postmdedia News reported.

There are more than 30 mostly faith-based independent schools in the province, but no Jewish day schools. Some areas also have provincially funded Catholic and Protestant separate schools, and there are faith-based schools associated with public boards whose funding will rise to 80 per cent of the per-student average.

The new Saskatchewan model is similar to the one in British Columbia, where 85 per cent of private schools, including some Jewish ones, get funding under conditions similar to those announced by Harpauer.

She said her government "is committed to providing a high quality education system that supports Saskatchewan's families and attracts new families."

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Canada to chair Holocaust task force in 2013

Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf
Staff Reporter

Canada will assume the chairmanship of the Task Force for International Co-operation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research in 2013.

Former Davenport Liberal MP Mario Silva will chair the organization for that year. Chair countries hold the position for 12 months, during which time it hosts meetings for member states.

Mario Silva

Jason Kenney, minister of citizenship, immigration and multiculturalism, made the announcement Dec. 15. "I am proud of the leadership role that Canada is taking to further Holocaust education and combat antisemitism together with all forms of racism and xenophobia," Kenney said in a statement.

Established in 1998, the task force is composed of 31 member countries. Canada became involved with the organization in 2007 and was made a full member in 2009.

Silva has been active in Holocaust education for years. He was chair of the inquiry committee and vice-chair of the steering committee of the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism (CPCCA).

He also helped ensure the success of the 2010 Ottawa conference of the Inter-parliamentary Coalition for Combating Antisemitism (ICCA), which brought together parliamentarians and experts from around the world to "lead the fight against global antisemitism," Kenney said.

The 2010 ICCA Conference produced the Ottawa Protocol, which called for leaders of faith groups to combat all hatred and discrimination, including antisemitism, "which is inextricably linked to the universal lessons of the Holocaust," the task force's website states.

Both Kenney and Liberal MP for Mount Royal Irwin Cotler are ex-officio members of the steering committee of CPCCA.

Cotler, who has championed human rights issues throughout his career, lauded Silva's appointment.

"This is an important responsibility and Mario will be an excellent chair," Cotler wrote to *The CJN* in an e-mail. "Canada will be playing a major role in Holocaust remembrance, education and research during its chairmanship in 2013 and Mario will be the right person to exercise leadership on Canada's behalf."

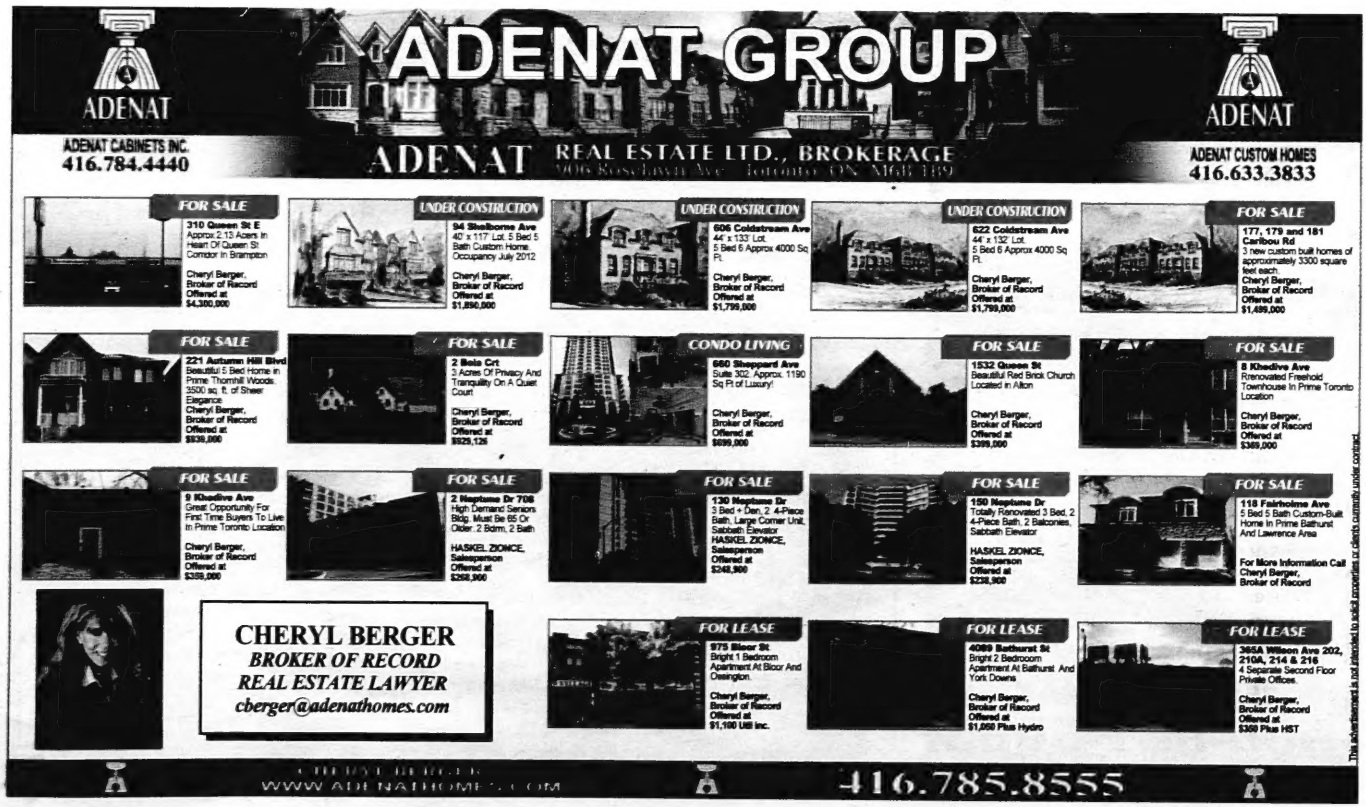
Silva, who lost his seat in the 2011 election to NDPer Andrew Cash, said he was inspired to become involved in combating antisemitism because of his personal history as an immigrant to Canada from Portugal.

"I see myself as a minority… and I see this [appointment] as part and parcel of my work on and support of human rights around the world," Silva said. "We cannot be complacent when we have leaders like [Iranian President Mahmoud] Ahmadinejad spewing hatred and targeting [Israel] with destruction. We can't stand by when an ally like Israel is being made out to be the scapegoat for every problem in the world."

He said it is crucial to take on antisemitism around the world because it attempts to "dehumanize" the Jewish people and by extension "vilify" and "delegitimize" the State of Israel.

"I look forward to working with [Kenney and Cotler] to help define what Canada's objectives will be while chairing the task force," Silva told *The CJN* in a phone interview a day after his appointment.

He noted that both Kenney and Cotler encouraged him to accept the chair of the task force, believing him to be the best candidate for the job.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A corridor of blood

From the editor's desk...

These words were written three days before the advent of the new year. For many people in disparate countries, we observe with great melancholy, the transition from one year to the next was a falling through horror into a corridor of blood.

A partial listing of the inventory of slaughter during Christmas week is illustrative.

In Nigeria, Boko Haram, a group of Islamist militants whose ambition is to establish *sharia* rule throughout the country, set out on Christmas to kill as many Christians as they could. They murdered 40. The Islamists bombed three churches and set off two other blasts in the north of the country. As of this writing, Nigerian authorities were on the alert for retaliatory strikes by Christian zealots.

In Afghanistan, also on Christmas, a suicide bomber attacked a funeral procession, killing 19 people, including a member of the Afghan parliament. The city and the province in which the bombing occurred had already been handed over by NATO to Afghan forces as part of the planned withdrawal of foreign combat forces by the end of 2014.

In Iraq, some 65 people, mostly Shiite Iraqis, were killed during coordinated attacks merely days after American forces quit the country. Al Qaeda claimed responsibility.

The Sunni terrorists have an abiding, atavistic, deeply held hostility toward the Shiite majority, indeed to Shiite believers in general. They distrust the elected Iraqi government because the prime minister is a Shiite Muslim. They killed their Shiite counterparts in order to protect their co- Sunni believers.

"The mujahedeen [holy warriors] will never stand with their hands tied while the pernicious Iranian project showed its ugly face and what it wants with Sunnis in Iraq became obvious and exposed," the Al Qaeda followers proclaimed in a statement posted on jihadist forums, according to the U.S.-based SITE Intelligence Group.

And in Syria, the chief charnel house in the Middle East currently, the state-sponsored slaughter continues unabated. Arab League monitors arrived in the country last week even as government tanks were shooting at civilians in Homs. Each day, there were reports of dozens of new deaths on both sides of the battle. The toll of the intra-Syrian fighting has likely exceeded 5,000.

Many western observers greeted the arrival of the Arab League monitors with perfervid expressions of relief and gratitude. The end of the anarchy and violence was now in sight, they maintained. But their gladness of heart was more delusion than solution, more chimera than oasis.

As Zvi Bar'el pointed out in *Ha'aretz*, the Arab League monitors' real objective was to "prevent the Syrian crisis from reaching the United Nations. Their mission is not to prevent the killing of civilians... They are coming to observe the killing, listen to the claims of civilians and the regime and report to the league."

Jonathan Tobin of *Commentary* brought additional context to the arrival of the Arab League observers.

"The notion that the Arab League was going to stand up for human rights in Syria was always somewhat farcical," he wrote. "This is, after all, a group that has numbered among its members some of the worst tyrants in the world and which has supported terrorist groups so long as their targets were Jews and not Arab oligarchs... The identity of the head of that peace mission ought to pour cold water on the idea that it will do much to help alleviate human rights abuses. As David Kenner reports in *Foreign Policy*, the head of the mission is none other than Sudanese Gen. Mohammad Ahmed Mustafa al-Dabi. Dabi just happens to be the man who created the murderous janjaweed militias that were the principal perpetrators in the Darfur genocide."

Thus, the last two weeks of 2011 were much like the first two weeks of the year – fraught with sectarian strife and a great deal of killing, most of it Muslim of Muslim.

And as the bombs exploded and the blood spilled throughout the Middle East and parts of Africa, the UN Security Council, except for the United States, excoriated Israel for not stopping construction in and around Jerusalem. South Africa's UN Ambassador Baso Sangqu, speaking on behalf of the Nonaligned Movement of mainly developing countries, said Israeli settlement construction was "the main impediment for the two-state solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."

It is sad, increasingly tragic and potentially calamitous that the Palestinians and the Israelis have not returned to negotiations. But for the Security Council to blame Israel alone for this is an assault on truth and fact.

However, ignoring the ongoing butchery and massacre, in Syria for example, that sends blood into the streets like storms overwhelming the sewers, assaults conscience and morality. And it merely ensures that more blood will flow in Syria, or in the Middle East or Africa, where the UN feigns concern for human rights, and anywhere the Israel Defence Forces do not protect the people of Israel. – ***MBD***

SeeJN

NEW BIKE TRAIL: An 18-mile cycling trail was inaugurated by the Jewish National Fund last week in the Ben Shemen Forest, between Modiin and Ben-Gurion Airport in central Israel. The forest has long been popular with cyclists. The JNF was responding to high demand from Israelis and tourists for a new bike trail in the plush, sylvan setting. ***[Israel Sun photo]***

Federation says new JCC to open in 2016

$40M has to be raised before project can be started

Frances Kraft
Staff Reporter

More than a year after the Bathurst Jewish Community Centre (BJCC) was torn down, construction has yet to begin on the building that will replace it, and officials now say it won't open until 2016.

Fundraising for the new Prosserman JCC is "going very well – better than we estimated," according to Ted Sokolsky, president and CEO of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, in an e-mail interview.

However, when asked, he did not specify how much had been raised in the past year. Last December, Howard English – at the time the federation's vice-president of corporate communications – told *The CJN* that the federation needed to raise approximately $40 million for the project before it could responsibly break ground.

Ted Sokolsky

The total cost of completing the Sherman Campus, located on Bathurst Street between Sheppard and Finch avenues, was estimated last year to be about $150 million in total, including about $110 million for Phase 2, which will include the new JCC, a new Koffler Centre of the Arts and Leah Posluns Theatre, and the Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre.

Phase 1, which has already been completed, cost $40 million, including the $10-million Donald Gales Family Pavilion, renovations to the Lipa Green Centre and reconstruction of the parking lot.

Last year, English said the new JCC was expected to be finished by 2014, but Sokolsky is now talking about a 2016 opening.

The BJCC closed in September 2009, and the Gales Pavilion opened the following month. It houses fitness facilities and classes as part of the Prosserman JCC, the entity that will include the building replacing the BJCC.

Tearing down the old building saved the federation millions of dollars a year in repairs and operating costs, according to Sokolsky. Having it already demolished "gives us at least a six-month head start when we start construction again."

Sokolsky said there are currently about 700 paid Prosserman JCC fitness members, which is approaching 80 per cent capacity. Last year there were 620. Before the BJCC closed, it had more than 1,200 fitness members.

He said roughly 4,700 people are involved in centre programs, an increase of 15 per cent over this time last year.

Sokolsky said that plans for the new JCC have been updated, but "all the major elements remain, and the square footage doesn't change."

He added: "Our goal is to be in the ground just at the end of 2013. That could mean an opening in 2016."

He expressed disappointment that the project has been "slowed down," but added that the Lebovic campus in Vaughan is "moving ahead on time and on budget. All the growth in JCC membership over the last two decades has been north of Steeles."

The Schwartz-Reisman JCC is expected to open on the Lebovic campus in October, and a northern JCC summer camp is planned for this summer.

Celebrity chefs help fight cancer

Barbara Silverstein
Special to The CJN

More than 500 people recently gathered at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre for the second annual Chef's Challenge: The Ultimate Battle for a Cure. The gala in support of breast and ovarian cancer research and education at Mount Sinai Hospital was presented by World MasterCard and hosted by American celebrity chef Bobby Flay.

To read the full story, please go to http://www.cjnews.com/lifestyle/food

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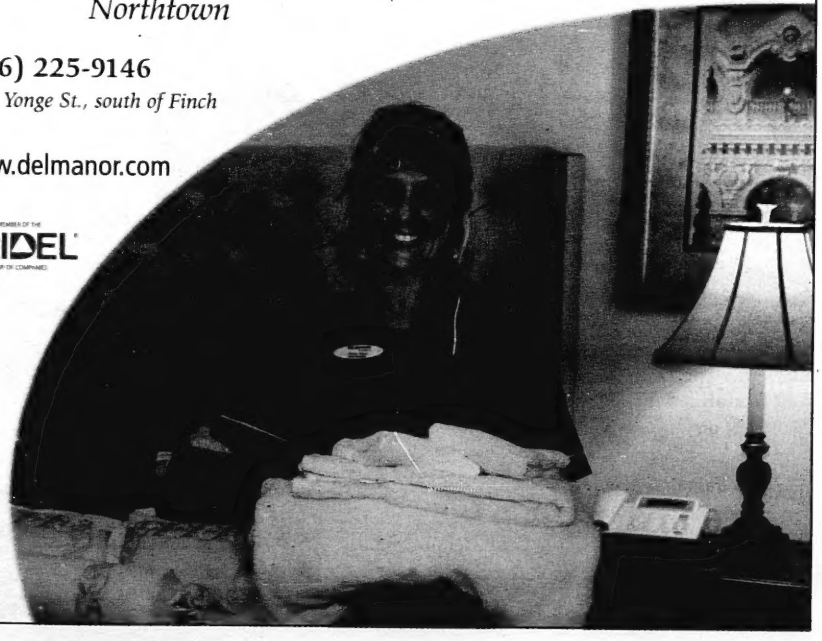


Kids, parents warned about suspicious man

Frances Kraft
Staff Reporter

Several Toronto Jewish day schools issued warnings late last month about a potential danger to young teens from a man who they said may look like a member of the Orthodox community.

However, the man has since left for a treatment facility in the southwestern United States, according to a Dec. 22 e-mail that Rabbi Isser Pliner, dean of Eitz Chaim Schools, sent to parents.

In an earlier e-mail, on Dec. 19, Rabbi Pliner alerted parents that "a man who was raised in the Toronto Torah community... has recently tried to lure teenagers from our neighborhoods and our schools into inappropriate relationships and situations."

A follow-up e-mail the next day advised that the school had been asked by Toronto Police not to divulge the person's name, but it included a description of a male in his late 20s, 5 foot 10, approximately 175 to 200 pounds, clean shaven with olive skin, brown eyes, and dark, wavy hair.

The individual has been seen "dressed in a frum manner," according to the e-mail, which asked recipients to contact police if they see a person who matches the description "engaging in contact with children, or in proximity of a facility that deals with children."

In a third and final e-mail on the subject, Rabbi Pliner wrote, "While the dangers posed by this person have now, at least temporarily, abated, there is no room for laxity on our part as parents and educators."

He encouraged parents to contact the appropriate authorities if they have concerns about any person. "We must always remember it is our responsibility to ensure our children are as safe as we can reasonably make them, and that we have provided them with the tools and education they need to keep out of harm's way," he said.

> ***Police consulted, but are not investigating***

In a phone interview, Rabbi Pliner said that the man "tried to make some overtures" to boys from another school in the neighbourhood south of Lawrence Avenue.

No one interviewed for this article would confirm whether the man is a convicted offender.

At Eitz Chaim, staff spoke to students in grades five to eight about awareness and self-protective behaviours, which were listed in one of Rabbi Pliner's e-mails:

- "Your body belongs to you."
- "How to say no."
- "There are no secrets from your parents, especially when someone says, 'Do not tell your parents.'"

In the Orthodox community, both police and "community activists" (*askanim*) were consulted about the situation, Rabbi Pliner said.

Paul Shaviv, director of education of the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto, also sent an e-mail alert to parents.

He wrote that the man "is alleged to be a predator who is a danger to teenagers, especially boys. He is known to frequent synagogues. Please discreetly remind your children that they should never accept invitations or approaches from adults whom they do not know, and should immediately tell a responsible adult of any suspicious incidents."

The man had been "seen in and around Thornhill, and we have many students in that area," Shaviv told *The CJN*.

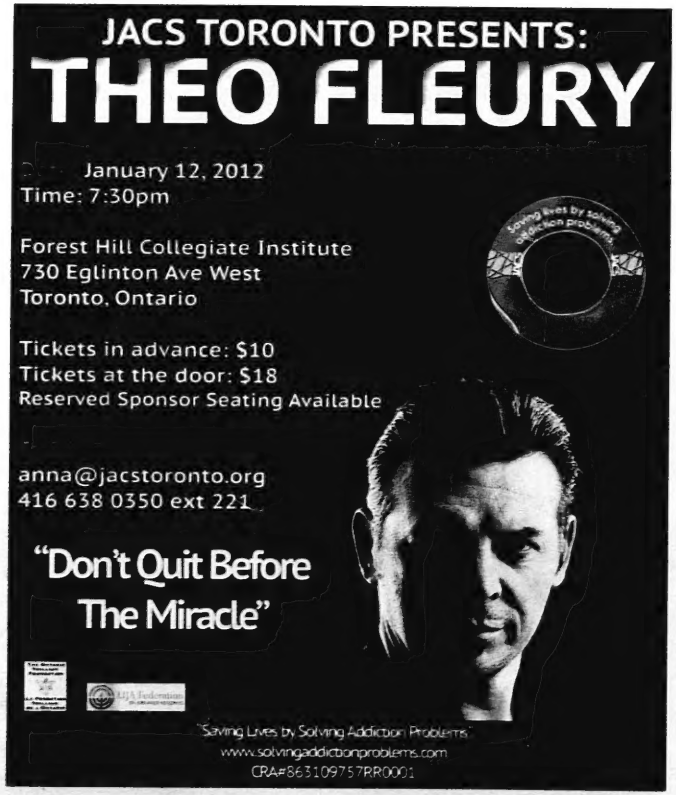
At Associated Hebrew Schools' Danilack Middle School, principal Mordechai Cohen and vice-principal Elisabeth Segal met with students who take public transit to advise them about safety.

In an e-mail to parents, Cohen said the students were not advised of the catalyst for the meeting. However, they were "reminded to always be alert and aware, and not to be lured by strangers even when they may look like rabbis."

Doron Horowitz, director of national security infrastructure for the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), has been in touch with some of the Jewish schools about the situation. He emphasized that the man was not charged by police for any recent incidents. "From what I understand, he did not break any laws."

Horowitz commended the schools for their response and added that children should understand what constitutes inappropriate behaviour and know that they have options when faced with it.

Det. Scott McKay of 32 Division said police were consulted, but are not investigating the situation.



Beth Tikvah Synagogue - 3080 Bayview Ave. 416-221-3433

TUESDAYS WITH LARRY – WINTER 2012

Wheel Chair Accessible

Shows begin at 2:00 p.m. **$5. cash at the door**

Jan. 10 Barney's Version
The film adaptation of Mordecai Richler's best-selling novel about the irascible life and times of Barney Panofsky. Stars Paul Giamatti, Rosamund Pike and Dustin Hoffman.

Jan. 17 Matter of Size
When losing weight becomes too difficult, Herzl decides to take up sumo wrestling as a way to turn his size into self respect. Hebrew, with English subtitles.

Jan. 24 Berlin '36
Struggles of Jewish high jumper to make the German Olympic team in 1936 despite a Nazi policy of excluding Jews from the team. German with English subtitles.

Jan. 31 Yoo Hoo Mrs. Goldberg
Heart-warming documentary about radio and television pioneer, Gertrude Berg, who created the hit sitcom, The Goldbergs.

Feb. 7 Bride Flight
The epic story of three brides who travel to New Zealand in the early 1950's and how they are connected to each other and to a man they meet on the flight to their new homes. Dutch with English subtitles.

Feb. 14 Nora's Will
A dark comedy about trying to bring Nora's ex-husband and the rest of their family together for a magnificent Passover seder meal. Spanish with English subtitles.

Feb. 21 Liberty Heights
Comedy-drama that tells the semi-autobiographical story of filmmaker Barry Levinson's childhood growing up in Baltimore in the 1950's. Starring Adrien Brody, Joe Mantegna, Ben Foster.

Feb. 28 The Rape of Europa
Story of Nazi Germany's plundering of Europe's great works of art during World War II and the Allies' efforts to recover these works.

Mar. 6 The Matchmaker
During the summer of 1968 a teenage boy goes to work for a matchmaker who has survived the Holocaust and both their lives are changed forever. Hebrew with English subtitles.

Mar. 13 Then She Found Me
A New York schoolteacher has a midlife crisis when her husband leaves her, her adoptive mother dies and a strange woman turns up and changes her life. At the same time, the woman begins a relationship with the father of one of her students. Helen Hunt, Bette Midler, Colin Firth, Matthew Broderick.

Each film includes an introduction and commentary by:
Larry Anklewicz, Programming Coordinator, Toronto Jewish Film

Student intern program seeks ongoing funding

Sheri Shefa
Staff Reporter

A successful bid to secure funding for JVS' Kohn Summer Intern Program after the expiration of a three-year UJA Federation of Greater Toronto grant has ensured the initiative will continue into 2012.

The four-year-old Kohn Summer Intern Program places about 15 post-secondary students in professional positions in leading Jewish agencies in the Toronto area for 10 weeks every year.

It was initially funded largely by a three-year grant from UJA Federation's community fund. When the grant expired in 2010, federation found an anonymous donor to fund the program's fourth year in 2011. But Jewish Vocational Service (JVS) Toronto had yet to find money to cover the stipends of participating interns for 2012.

JVS then established a fundraising committee to attract donors, and so far, the committee and staff from Hillel of Greater Toronto have managed to raise the $85,000 required to run the initiative in 2012.

The 2011 Kohn interns, with Hillel of Greater Toronto's Rabbi Aaron Greenberg, bottom left, JVS' Lisa Rae, top left, JVS president Frank Markel, second from right, and Hillel director Zac Kaye, far right.

JVS Toronto president and CEO Frank Markel said the committee and Hillel appealed to families of past Kohn interns, as well as to potential donors and those who have donated in the past, and called on participating agencies to increase their own per-student contributions from $1,250 to $2,000.

Markel said that when he assumed his role with JVS in July, he was struck by the board of directors' determination to keep the program alive.

"The board of JVS was very strong in wanting to find a way to continue the program. Even before I had started, I went to the June meeting and I heard about what a tragedy it would be if the program were lost," Markel said.

He said that the initiative is named after the late Annie Kohn, who, along with her husband Thomas, was an active member of Clanton Park Synagogue. It aims "to create the seeds of the generation that will carry on the very noble Jewish tradition of helping others. Ideally, 20 years from now, the person who may be sitting in my seat will be a Kohn graduate. That's the dream – to inculcate future leaders."

There are about 15 Jewish agencies in Toronto – including Ve'ahavta: The Jewish Humanitarian and Relief Committee, Jewish Immigrant Aid Services of Toronto, and Jewish Family and Child – that take on an intern for the summer.

"The interns work four days a week for the agency, and on the Friday, they gather as a group under the auspices of Hillel and Rabbi Aaron Greenberg... where they learn about Jewish traditions and values, they have speakers, and a chance to discuss amongst themselves their experience," Markel said.

"The Friday program gives them a chance to put the work they're doing into context. It's a very nice combination of hands-on practical work and a chance to think and learn about the meaning of the work they do."

Jessica Pollock, a 2011 Kohn intern and a *CJN* columnist, wrote a piece about her experiences working with the Kehilla Residential Programme, federation's affordable housing agency, in which she explained why it's so important to the future of the Jewish community.

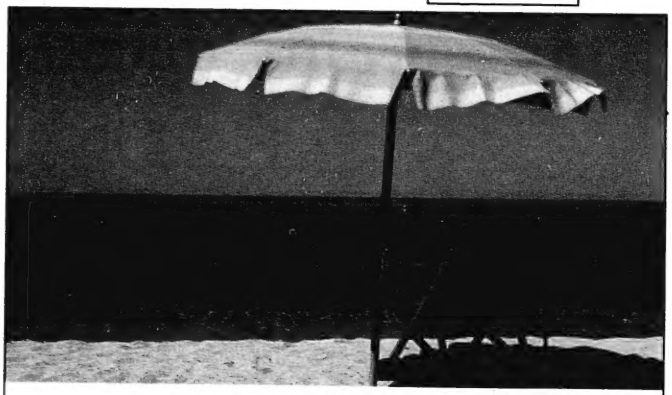
"I came into this internship wanting to acquire beneficial experience in the Jewish nonprofit world. I wanted an insider's look into how a small-scale non-profit agency such as Kehilla operates and a better conception of its need in our community," Pollock wrote in a column last fall.

"The professionals at Kehilla, the individuals I have come in contact with on Fridays, and of course the other interns themselves, have all motivated me to continue giving back to the community that has already given so much to me."

Although Markel didn't want to speculate about whether JVS will be able to find funding for the program beyond 2012, he said the agency will continue exploring other sources of money.

"Hopefully, the economy will start to rebound and some of the funding sources will be in a position where they can be more generous."

For more information about the Kohn program, contact services@jvstoronto.org or info@hilleltoronto.org.



Start the New Year off right at Amica at Thornhill

How to Beat the Winter Blues ~
Tuesday, January 10th, 2012 - 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm
Join us for a motivational talk on how to make sure Winter doesn't get you down. Well known speaker Dr. Kleinberg provides helpful tips on starting off the New Year right. Refreshments and a tour of our beautiful community will be provided.

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Wednesday, January 18th, 2012 - 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm
Are you tired of the cold weather? Then come and join us for an afternoon of Tropical Treats and live Island musical entertainment to brighten your January! Stay for a tour of our stunning model suites.
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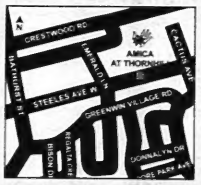

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Israel must uphold the law

Not even for one day since its birth some 63 years ago has the Jewish state known peace or normal bilateral relations with its neighbours. As a result, not surprisingly, Israeli governments have focused most of their policy attention on defence and foreign affairs.

For six decades, existential threats have commanded the agenda. The Israeli public has understood this and usually made allowances for the imperfections of a country beset on all sides by enemies. But some of those imperfections, through years of inattention and neglect, appear to have festered into deeper, sub-stratum societal wounds that threaten to wreak a different, but still destructive, havoc on the Jewish state.

One of the most pressing societal threats in Israel is the blatant disrespect for the rule of law that characterizes certain pockets of the population. Specifically, we refer to the extremist, aggressive, violent behaviour of some haredi and zealous nationalist religious groups. To be sure, these groups constitute a very small, atypical sampling of the general population. But the danger to key, fundamental institutions of Israeli society is no less real for the small numbers of the thugs and disrespecters of basic human rights.

One particular sect of the haredi community in Beit Shemesh has been the most recent example of the grossly abusive behaviour by the very few against the many, harassing, abusing and bullying women for reasons they justify by their narrow, mysogynist view of our religion. (See the related news story in this edition.)

Religious, nationalist zealots have recently attacked Arabs and Jews alike in the name of their vain, misguided attestation of "God's will." They even attacked an Israeli army base, injuring the base's commander.

The government and the leaders of Israel must urgently turn their focus to these non-military threats to the Jewish state. Religious leaders who wield influence over the offending haredim and zealots must denounce the extremism that has increasingly become their followers' trademark. The government must enforce and uphold the rule of law. It is gratifying that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said last week that he will act against "anyone who harasses women, anyone who harasses people in the public sphere." He reiterated earlier comments: "While we will use all legal means at our disposal… this is not just a legal issue. It is also a social issue."

The long-range, structural correction however, requires the larger mainstream political parties to amend a flawed electoral system that confers inordinately disproportionate political and thus financial power in the hands of small, single-issue, single-constituency, political parties, many of whose followers and loyalists feel empowered by their foothold in the electoral system to brazenly flout the law of the land.

The wider common good must finally trump narrow self-interest in the politics of the Jewish state.

25 years ago in *The CJN*

Canadian Jewish Congress criticized a Supreme Court of Canada ruling that upheld Ontario's Sunday closing law, despite acknowledging it infringed on freedom of religion. CJC said the law and ruling failed to reflect Canada's multicultural nature and penalized Saturday Sabbath observers, because they could only open Sundays with up to seven employees.

Dry Bones
HI! I'M FATHER TIME, AND THIS IS 2012!
SORRY. WE'RE JEWS, AND WE'RE WAITING FOR 5773.
HE'LL BE ARRIVING IN SEPTEMBER.
THANKS ANYWAY.
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Says writer got the facts wrong

It seems that Harry Schachter, who wrote the article "Settlements an impediment to peace" (Dec. 8), is in need of an atlas, a history book and recent newspapers. Ever since Arabs were caught cutting down and damaging their olive trees in order to defame "settlers," accusations that settlers have done these evil acts have lessened. Perhaps that's why he is in need of relying on his data from the "impartial" United Nations. Gilo, which according to Schachter is in east Jerusalem, is actually in southern Jerusalem. He omits to say that the "Palestinian" application for admission as a state to the United Nations is a repudiation of every agreement signed by the Palestinian Authority. He omits to state that the Arab demand that Israel freeze settlement construction is a new demand, first raised by U.S. President Barack Obama, and that no such demand appears in any of the signed agreements between Israel and the PA. Moreover, he omits to write that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Natanyahu did freeze building for 10 months, but the Palestinians still did not return to the negotiating table.

He seems unaware that the Fourth Geneva Convention does not apply to Judea and Samaria and that, according to international law, valid to this day, Jews are allowed to settle in this area. More disturbing is his description of the historic part of Jewish Jerusalem as "Arab." What is totally obscene, however, is when, by implication, he equates the killing of Arab terrorists with the murder of the Fogel family – three children and their parents – five of the eight settlers he feels compelled to mention that have been killed by Palestinians.

Yehudit Shier Weisberg
Toronto

LET THEM GO…

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz

* * *

Attack masquerades as academic discourse

The "academic" aspect of the paper "A Comparison of the Olive Oil Industries in Tuscany and Palestine," presented at the recent olive-oil conference at St. Michael's College at the University of Toronto, was rather tenuous ("Propaganda in an academic guise," Dec. 8). There were no comparisons of the Palestinian example with relevant examples such as Israeli olive-oil production, Palestinians working inside Israel, etc. The speaker even admitted that "Tuscany" was basically an excuse to concentrate on Palestinians.

This is not the first attack against Israel I have witnessed in academic conferences, though usually the papers have had more academic merit. My own university union local has an entrenched anti-Israel policy that I am constantly trying to mitigate – not because I think there is nothing to criticize about Israel (or any other country), but because this attitude flies against academic principles and indeed the local's own equality statement. There is no reason to tacitly or implicitly condone attacks on Israel – or any country or culture – just because these attacks claim immunity by masquerading as academic discourse.

Judith Cohen
Toronto

* * *

Misleading headline

In the Dec. 8 issue, *The CJN* published an article with the headline "Last shul in downtown Ottawa sells building," referring to Congregation Beth Shalom. However, the headline is misleading. It is not the last shul. There is one more synagogue in downtown Ottawa – the Orthodox Ohev Yisroel, located at 516 Rideau St., only two blocks away from Congregation Beth Shalom. We wish to assure your readers that, just as our shul has hosted travellers, tourists and businesspeople from all over the world in the past, so, too, shall we continue to do so for many years to come. Shabbat hospitality is always offered to guests.

Heshel Teitelbaum
Ottawa

* * *

Surgeon was a trailblazer

I was very happy to see my father, Herb Fitterman, mentioned in Sheldon Kirshner's column "The passing parade," (Dec. 22). My father was a man of accomplishment, a surgeon who performed the first implant operation in Canada despite huge opposition, a wonderful husband and father, a generous member of the community, an athlete who chafed at his body breaking down, a reader, a traveller and a bon vivant. His last name, however, was, like mine, Fitterman, not Fetterman.

Lisa Fitterman
Westmount, Que.

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cjninfo@gmail.com

Czech Jews enjoy Havel's revolution

Ruth Ellen Gruber
JTA

PRAGUE — On the first night of Chanukah, I stood in the splendid reception hall of the U.S. ambassador's residence in Prague as the ambassador himself lit the first candle in an imposing gilded menorah and chanted the blessings over the flames.

Since it was the first night of the holiday, these included the *Shehecheyanu* – the thankful blessing recited when reaching a special or long-awaited moment.

How strangely fitting to recite this, I thought, at this very time and in this very place. Two days earlier, Vaclav Havel had died, and many people were still in shock at the loss of the shy dissident playwright who had led the Velvet Revolution that ousted the Communist regime in 1989 and gone on to become Czechoslovakia's – and then the Czech Republic's – first democratically elected president and enduring moral compass.

Masses of candles in Havel's memory were glowing on Wenceslas Square, site of the huge demonstrations that had toppled the regime. And plans were going ahead for the sombre state funeral.

Why at this sad moment of mourning did I feel that the *Shehecheyanu* was fitting?

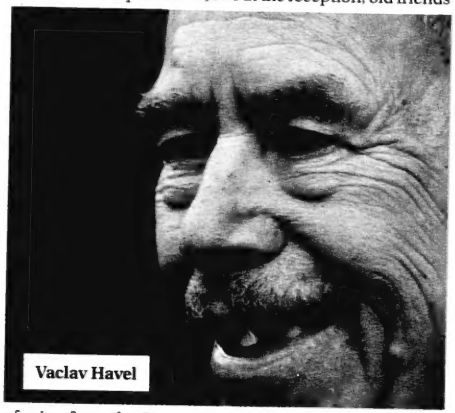
It was because, in a way, I felt it was a blessing that honoured Havel himself, for without him and the impact he had, this Chanukah evening – and what it represented – could not have taken place.

Joined by his family and a few guests, Ambassador Norman Eisen lit the first candle ahead of his official holiday reception for hundreds of diplomats and political and cultural figures. Throughout the evening, the menorah blazed at one end of the hall, while a huge decorated Christmas tree, placed there by the U.S. government as part of its decoration of this public space, glittered at the other.

"It's my first Christmas tree ever," Eisen, the son of an Auschwitz survivor from the former Czechoslovakia and an observant Jew who had had the residence kitchen koshered, joked to the crowd as waiters threaded through with trays of latkes.

Eisen opened his welcoming remarks by asking for a minute of silence in Havel's honour. Then he told the story of the residence – a mansion that had been built by a wealthy Jewish family, the Petscheks, in the late 1920s. The family left in 1938, before World War II broke out. During the war, it served as the residence of the head of the German army occupying Prague. Afterward, the mansion became Czechoslovak property until 1948, when the United States purchased it.

There were quite a few Jews at the reception, old friends



Vaclav Havel

of mine from the Prague Jewish community such as Leo Pavlat, director of the Prague Jewish Museum, who delightedly told me how he and Eisen had seats next to each other in synagogue. I was there to make a formal presentation of a big website project I am co-ordinating on Jewish heritage in Europe.

I couldn't help but think back.

The postwar Communist regime had carried out a policy of persecution aimed at stifling Jewish life, and the state-appointed community leadership had followed the party line, routinely issuing statements critical of Israel. In May 1989, Pavlat had spearheaded a group of young Prague Jews who sharply criticized these regime-approved aparatchiks. He and his friends warned that Jewish life in Czechoslovakia was "in danger of extinction."

The Velvet Revolution, with Havel as its reluctant hero, changed everything.

One of Havel's first acts as president was to reinstate full religious freedom. And one of his first state trips abroad was to Israel, bringing with him an entourage of 180 Prague Jews. By the end of 1990, Pavlat was serving as a diplomat in the Czechoslovak embassy in Israel. He remained there until 1994, when he returned to Prague and took up the directorship of the Jewish Museum.

At the ambassador's reception, I reminisced about those heady days, and about Havel's impact, with Tomas Kraus, who has served as executive director of the Federation of Czech Jewish communities since 1991. Kraus helped organize Havel's first trip to Israel and had been part of the Jewish delegation that accompanied him.

"It was exciting," Kraus recalled. "It was part of the 'Velvet Europhoria.' Everything that we had not dared to dream of was immediately possible. The Holy Land had been a philosophical term for us, an image of something that you would never be able to reach – only in a dream. And then, overnight, it was a reality."

That trip to Israel, he said, was "a very symbolic way to show what Czech foreign policy would be. It was a very important sign of what his priorities would be."

On the domestic front, too, Kraus recalled, Havel had been extremely important. Not just with his condemnation of antisemitism, but with the active role he played in addressing issues such as restitution of Jewish property and in awarding one of the highest state honours to Nicholas Winton, who organized the Czech kindertransport to rescue some 669 Jewish children on the eve of World War II.

"Havel's passing will leave a very big gap," Kraus said. "Since he left office, he was in a position without concrete power. But sometimes a moral authority is stronger than armies."ww

Havel was a friend and champion of freedom

Ron Kampeas
JTA

Vaclav Havel was a friend of the Jews and of Israel, but prominent Jews who mourned his passing last month said the Czech leader's greatest legacy was his universal message of freedom.

"Vaclav Havel was one of the few islands of intellectual freedom in the sea of totalitarian rule," Natan Sharansky told JTA, speaking of the late 1960s and the 1970s, when both he and Havel were struggling against Communist rule – Havel in the former Czechoslovakia and Sharansky in the former Soviet Union.

Havel, a dissident playwright and human rights champion, helped lead Prague's 1989 Velvet Revolution and was a hero in the Cold War struggle for democracy in Soviet-dominated eastern Europe. In 1977, he was a co-author of the human rights manifesto Charter 77, which became the catalyst for the Czech dissident cause.

Just weeks after the collapse of Communism, Havel was elected president of Czechoslovakia, on Dec. 29, 1989.

After the Czech Republic and Slovakia separated into two countries in 1993, he was elected president of the Czech Republic and served until 2003.

Sharansky learned of – and said he was not surprised by – Havel's Jewish connections later in life. But in 1977, when Sharansky was sent to Siberia, the universalist message of Charter 77 gave him succor.

"He played an important role in keeping the spark alive," said Sharansky, now chairman of the executive of the Jewish Agency for Israel. "He launched a counter attack which liberated people intellectually, and then physically."

Havel demonstrated his commitment to Jewish causes by making one of his first foreign trips after becoming Czechoslovak president a three-day visit to Israel in April 1990. He was accompanied by 180 Czech Jews. In 2010, he was one of the founding members of the Friends of Israel group of international political figures.

Havel's last public appearance was on Dec. 10, when he met with the Dalai Lama and signed an appeal in support of dissidents around the world. He died Dec. 18 at 75, apparently from respiratory ailments.

Elie Wiesel, the Holocaust memorialist and Nobel peace laureate who met frequently with Havel after he became president of Czechoslovakia and then of the Czech Republic, said Havel was proud of his nation's Jewish heritage.

"He spoke a lot of Jewish philosophy and study," Wiesel told JTA.

The European Jewish Congress called Havel a "great friend of the Jews" who "did much to confront antisemitism and teach the lessons of the dark chapter of the Holocaust during his two terms in office."

The Federation of Czech Jewish Communities said Jews respected Havel as a statesman and a world-renowned writer, and felt close to him "as a friend who had an understanding of human concerns and joys."

Sharansky said Havel's courage as a dissident long outlasted Czechoslovakia's emergence from Communism. It was Havel's reputation that led Sharansky to convene the 2007 Democracy and Security International Conference in Prague in 2007.

Havel, along with Sharansky and former Spanish prime minister Jose Maria Aznar, was a co-chairman of the conference, although Havel was mostly absent – his illness already had hobbled him. But his message pervaded the proceedings.

"His moral clarity, his courage, his charm, his sense of humour really influenced many people at the conference," Sharansky said. "His experience was their experience, whether they came from Egypt, from Iran, from Iraq, from Sudan."

Havel and Aznar were co-founders of Friends of Israel, a group of European leaders who sought to counter growing anti-Israel rhetoric on the continent.

That's where Havel's appreciation for Jews and Israel and his deep commitment to human rights converged.

It was a stance the pro-Israel community appreciated, said Daniel Mariaschin, executive vice-president of B'nai Brith International. "At a time when many European leaders find the opportunity to upbraid Israel, he would stand his ground, seeing Israel as a strong democracy in the place of nations," he said.

Ruth Ellen Gruber contributed to this report from Prague.

Lives that touch lives

In this space I'd like to celebrate the formidable accomplishments of two women who changed the shape of my world. Although neither was related to me, in each case their recent passing struck me with the force of family loss. The Jewish tradition has much to say about mourning not only close family, but also teachers, and these two women taught me much and deeply.

Ida Fink, the Polish-born Israeli writer, passed away in the fall after several years of declining health. Born in 1921, she survived the Nazi genocide by posing as a non-Jewish Polish labourer with her younger sister. In 1957, she moved to Israel and began the difficult process of learning a new language in her 30s.

She had planned to be a pianist, but her studies at the conservatory were halted with the German invasion of Poland. Instead, she wrote. Her stunning short stories and her novel were masterpieces, focusing on the telling detail of life under the shadow of Nazi atrocity – intimate glimpses of family life, betrayal, sacrifice, and moments of realization that all was changed, lost irrevocably.

I encountered her writing when the *New Yorker* published one of her stories. I was riveted by its quiet force and wisdom. The next time I travelled to Israel, I contacted her. I was a young professor of literature, just beginning my career, and I had planned to interview her for a literary journal. I borrowed a tape recorder, and met her at her home in Holon one summer morning.

We talked for a while, and during a lull in the conversation, I sensed that this was the moment to ask her consent for an interview. I was certain she would agree. But I also felt, at that moment, that I was at a crossroads. I could take out my tape recorder and do the interview, which would advance my career, or I could leave the tape recorder tucked in my purse, and instead have a friendship.

I chose the friendship. We spent the afternoon in conversation and met several times that month. I spent time with her whenever I was in Israel or she in North America.

Over the course of years, which turned into decades, our friendship deepened. I was privileged to know a woman who, like the writing itself, was wise, sensitive, strong, compassionate, and complex. More than admire her as a writer, I came to love her as a person. I feel her loss profoundly.

The brilliant Jewish historian Paula Hyman passed away in mid-December after a fierce battle against cancer, a disease she had fought and defeated several times since her early 30s. Although not much older than I, Paula was already a legend by the time I entered graduate school. She began her academic career at a time when universities were not very welcoming to female professors, and when commitments to family life were considered a barrier to professional advancement for women. If this was true of for professors generally, it was even more pronounced in Jewish studies, where there were precious few women professors. Paula was a pioneer.

Sara R. Horowitz in Toronto

We watched her meteoric rise with awe and pride: first a professor at Columbia, then a very young dean at the Jewish Theological Seminary, finally the head of Jewish studies at Yale. She was among the first to bring the perspective of gender to Jewish studies, asking (and answering) questions about women's place in shaping the Jewish experience. Through the quality of her thinking and the force of her personality, she opened doors that the rest of us could walk through.

She had strong commitments to Judaism, Jewish feminism and Zionism. She was the consummate mentor, guiding, inspiring and supporting students and colleagues. At a recent memorial, friends, colleagues and students gathered to remember her and the impact she had on our lives and our work.

Through all the recounted anecdotes, the same words surfaced: courageous, forthright, principled and strong, but also compassionate, nurturing, gracious and generous. It was my good fortune to work with her, learn from her and be guided by her example.

My world feels diminished without them. May their names continue to be a blessing.

Making our secularism Jewish

Among the countless answers to what it means to be a Jew, two seem to be particularly common in the Diaspora. The religious answer focuses on synagogue affiliation, while the secular one uses philanthropy as a criterion. If you care about *Judaism*, you're likely to belong to a shul. If you're committed to *Jewishness*, you're expected to give money to Jewish causes, often linked to Israel.

Neither of these criteria makes much sense to Israelis. They come from a world where most Jews don't belong to synagogues, even when they use them. They see no reason to change their ways here. This sets them apart from communities here.

Rabbi Dow Marmur in Toronto

And despite their commitment to Israel, they're less likely to make donations to institutions that support Israeli projects, because they tend to send money directly, e.g., by providing for relatives, keeping up homes and visiting often. They could cite data that suggest that their kind of investment benefits Israel more than charitable giving.

Israelis are usually able to fuse Judaism with Jewishness not through synagogue or charity, but through the culture they brought with them. Even when it's ostensibly secular, Israeli cultural life is often rooted in Jewish sources and reflects well what it means to be a Jew in our time.

This makes it different from contemporary Jewish secularism in the Diaspora that usually seeks to imitate the non-Jewish world rather than attempt to present an indigenous alternative. Here the Jewish dimension is often confined to trivial nostalgia, stodgy food and stale humour.

I recently had reason to appeal to Israelis in Toronto to help make our secularism more Jewish. We may not need Israeli input when it comes to the way we practise Judaism. In fact, we can teach them much about religious pluralism and current relevant manifestations of the Jewish faith. But we need them to show us how to be richly Jewish even without explicit references to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Using the well-worn cliché, I urged Israelis not to ask themselves what the Jewish community can do for them, but what they can do for the Jewish community. Many have been raised in a vibrant Jewish culture rooted in the Hebrew language and Jewish history, informed by traditional Jewish texts and manifest in national solidarity. We need them to teach us how to do more of it here.

The flowering of Jewish life in Israel today, which – despite the pressure that popular American culture is exerting everywhere – manifests itself in the output of internationally renowned writers and scholars, is indicative of the spiritual wealth to which Israelis have access. I urged them to share some of it with us and resist the temptation to look down on *galut* Jews.

But in order to rise to the challenge, Israelis must first free themselves from two prevalent myths of their own: they must disabuse themselves of the fantasy that most are only here temporarily, and they must accept that the Diaspora is here to stay as an accepted Jewish way of life and as an indispensible partner of the State of Israel.

That's why last month's ill-conceived and provocative advertisements that sought to frighten Israelis into returning home created such a furor in the United States and had to be withdrawn by the government of Israel.

Doctrinaire Israeli politicians may argue that all Jews must live in Israel to prevent assimilation and ensure a Jewish majority on both sides of the Green Line. But that's not about to happen. Nor should it happen, because the liquidation of the Diaspora would destroy Judaism and threaten the very existence of the Jewish state.

For Israelis to refuse to engage with local Jewish communities on the erroneous assumption that Diaspora Jews are moving toward extinction is morally, tactically and factually wrong,

Because life is good for most Jews here, a growing number of Israelis – perhaps as much as one-fifth of Canadian Jewry – have chosen to share it. By also sharing with us of who they are, they'll enrich our Jewish life and enjoy the privilege of giving of themselves.

The event I spoke at was sponsored by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto in a laudable effort to promote co-operation. It's one of many signs that the organized Jewish community is anxious to welcome Israelis with open arms. I hope they'll respond in kind.

Conservatives impugn Obama's pro-Israel record

With primaries in a succession of U.S. states looming and the presidential election just about 10 months away, conservatives in the United States have turned Israel into a wedge issue.

Israel has been thrust into the centre of the debate both by candidates vying for the Republican party nomination and their respective supporters. In a year when the U.S. economy is faltering, Israel has emerged as a key issue among Republican politicians scrambling to impress two completely different constituencies: Jews and evangelical Christians.

Jews constitute only two per cent of the overall population, but have been critical in swing states – Pennsylvania, Ohio and Florida, among others – and have been useful as campaign donors. Evangelical Christians, who outnumber Jews by a huge margin, tend to vote as a bloc.

For decades now, the vast majority of Jews have voted for the Democrats in presidential elections. In 2008, almost eight out of 10 Jewish voters cast their ballots for Barack Obama, the Democratic standard bearer who defeated Republican John McCain. But these facts have not deterred the Republicans.

Buoyed by a recent byelection in New York City in which Republican candidate Bob Turner posted an upset victory over Democratic rival David Weprin for the vacant congressional seat of disgraced Democrat Anthony Weiner, Republicans figure that unconditional support for Israel may well pay hefty dividends come November.

Virtually all the current Republican candidates, from Mitt Romney to Newt Gingrich, have adopted hawkish pro-Israel positions and portray President Obama as insufficiently supportive of the Jewish state.

Romney, claiming that Obama wants "to undermine" Israel, "our longtime friend and ally," says that he treats it with "suspicion and distrust." Romney believes that Israel should not be pressured to make concessions to the Palestinians in the interests of reaching an agreement.

Gingrich, while supporting a two-state solution, claims that the Palestinians are an "invented people," a comment that heartens Israeli rejectionists opposed to territorial compromise. Rick Perry says that Israel should be permitted to build settlements in the West Bank and that eastern Jerusalem should remain in Israel's hands.

Clearly, Republicans are trying to define Obama as a fair-weather friend of Israel, focusing on a speech he delivered last May in which he espoused a two-state solution based on the pre-1967 borders and mutually agreed land swaps. Like many Israelis, Obama thinks that Israel's status as a Jewish and democratic nation can best be assured via this route. Romney, however, claimed that Obama had "thrown Israel under the bus," while Perry described the plan as "insulting and naive."

Sheldon Kirshner

in Toronto

And in a further bid to curry favour with targeted voters, Perry has lambasted Obama's "policy of moral equivalence" in which Israel and the Palestinian Authority are equally blamed for the impasse in the peace process.

In an attempt to besmirch Obama, their ideological bedfellows have bought full-page ads in major American newspapers.

Last September, in a surreal assertion, the David Horowitz Freedom Center claimed that Obama is "the most anti-Israel president in American history," a claim that John Bolton, the former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, echoed.

The centre, in a litany of unsubstantiated accusations, said that Obama had publicly "humiliated" Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, demanded that Israel "surrender its right to defend its border," compelled Israel to make dangerous concessions to the Palestinians and treated Israel "as an enemy."

Meanwhile, the Emergency Committee for Israel has suggested that Obama is not pro-Israel and has posed a rhetorical question: "Why does the Obama administration treat Israel like a punching bag?"

These fantastical claims have not surprised Obama or his supporters.

While campaigning in 2008, Obama aptly observed, "There is a strain within the pro-Israel community that says unless you adopt an unwavering pro-Likud approach to Israel that you're anti-Israel." Debbie Wasserman Schultz, the chair of the Democratic National Committee, has correctly labelled attacks on Obama's record as "deliberate distortions."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and U.S. President Barack Obama at a recent meeting in Washington, D.C.

More to the point, Republican claims are hotly disputed by Israel's leadership.

President Shimon Peres has called Obama "a friend of the Jewish people and the State of Israel." Defence Minister Ehud Barak has declared, "Obama is an ally and friend of Israel. The Obama administration gives backing to Israel's security in a wide, all-encompassing and unprecedented manner."

Praising Obama's opposition to the Palestinian unilateral declaration of independence at the United Nations last autumn, Netanyahu gushed that he had earned a "badge of honour." Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman, an arch conservative as well, described Obama's address as "the speech of an ally."

Surveying the current Israel-U.S. relationship, Zalman Shoval, Israel's former ambassador to the United States and a Likud stalwart, said, "I've never felt such strong support for Israel in Washington."

Shoval's assessment rings true.

Like his predecessors, Obama has had tactical, but not strategic, disagreements with Israel. These disputes have usually concerned the status of the territories captured by Israel in the Six Day War, the depth of the withdrawals Israel should undertake to achieve peace with its Arab neighbours and, now, the legality of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and the Golan Heights under international law.

To the Obama administration, the settlements are "illegitimate" and an obstacle to peace, as Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has stated. On the basis of this principle, Washington has condemned Israeli plans to expand settlements beyond the old Green Line. Nonetheless, the United States vetoed a UN resolution last summer condemning Israel's settlement activity.

Although Obama promotes an accord based on the 1967 armistice lines, he says that they are a starting rather than an end point for negotiations, and that peace cannot be externally imposed.

The Obama administration's pro-Israel record goes deeper. Apart from having opposed the unilateral Palestinian request for full UN membership, it cut off funding to UNESCO after its support of this position. Washington played a key role in mobilizing international opposition to last summer's Gaza flotilla, strongly backed Israel's right to defend itself after the publication of the Goldstone report and refused to attend a Durban anti-racism conference followup meeting. Washington, too, has been trying to block Iran's path to a nuclear arsenal and continues to defend Israel's legitimacy.

U.S. military assistance to Israel, which has reached the annual $3-billion level, is supplemented to the tune of $235 million so that Israel can deploy more Iron Dome anti-rocket batteries. And significantly, Israel is one of the few countries permitted to buy the F-35 stealth fighter jet.

Obama has repeatedly called U.S. bonds with Israel "unbreakable" and "unshakable," and, unlike previous presidents whose conservative credentials were unquestioned, he has not suspended the flow of weapons to Israel.

Obama has admitted that some of his encounters with Netanyahu have been tense. But to extrapolate from this that he is not pro-Israel is unadulterated nonsense.

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A roundabout proof of Israeli democracy

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

Last month, an unusual story by Herb Keinon appeared in the *Jerusalem Post*. Keinon revealed that Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, had decided to "respectfully decline" a request from the *New York Times* to submit an opinion piece to the paper.

And what was the reason for passing up this opportunity? According to Keinon, Netanyahu's senior media adviser, Ron Dermer, explained in a letter to the *Times* that the paper's hostile editorial stance toward Netanyahu and the fact that, since September, 19 out of 20 of the paper's opinion pieces on Israel were negative were key issues in the decision. In this atmosphere, an article by Israel's leader would amount to little other than tokenism. As Dermer put it: "We wouldn't want to be seen as 'Bibiwashing' the op-ed page of the *New York Times*."

Keinon explained that Dermer was referring to a November piece called "Israel and Pinkwashing" in which Israel was criticized for, as Dermer put it, "having the temerity to champion its record on gay rights."

The exception to the string of one-sided opinion pieces was the appearance of Judge Richard Goldstone's Nov. 1 piece, "Israel and the Apartheid Slander." Goldstone, the South African judge who headed the UN commission report on the Gaza war that bears his name, not only countered this false charge but also sought "to separate legitimate criticism of Israel from assaults that aim to isolate, demonize and delegitimize it."

Thomas Friedman *[Photo courtesy of Indiana University]*

Ironically, last spring, Goldstone's article recanting the principal charge in the Goldstone report – that Israeli soldiers had deliberately killed Palestinian civilians during the January 2009 Gaza war – had to appear in the *Washington Post* when the *New York Times*, as widely reported, refused to publish it.

The *Times*' standard editorial line places virtually all the responsibility for the impasse in the peace process at Netanyahu's doorstep (even though it's Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas who has been refusing to return to the negotiating table without preconditions).

Beyond this trend, what seems to have angered Israeli government officials was the appearance of a particularly troubling line in one of Thomas Friedman's December columns. After expressing concern about where Israel is headed and about the erosion of support for – and even interest in – Israel that he senses among secular American Jews, Friedman wrote something that to many, both in Israel and abroad, was not only intemperate but, uncharacteristically for him, smacked of an insidious anti-Israel canard: "I sure hope that Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, understands that the standing ovation he got in Congress this year was not for his politics. That ovation was bought and paid for by the Israel lobby."

Friedman also underscored his critique of Israel, including threats to its democracy, by commending *Ha'aretz* columnist Gideon Levy as a "powerful liberal voice." In fact, Levy and his colleague Amira Hass are avowedly radical and arguably anti-Zionist, and they're typically as harsh toward Israel, including its "liberals," as the self-proclaimed "anarcho-syndicalist" Noam Chomsky is toward the United States. Yet, as Friedman must know, the *Times* would never have Chomsky as even a guest columnist, let alone a resident one. When *Ha'aretz* no longer has, or is allowed to have, Levy and Hass writing for it (an event that's difficult to foresee), people who bemoan the erosion of Israeli democracy will genuinely have reason to express bitter disapproval.

None of this is to say that Israel need have no concern about safeguarding its democracy, including being vigilant about efforts to introduce illiberal legislation or accept certain practices that erode equal treatment for women, the Arab minority, and so on. It does mean, however, keeping Israel in perspective, treating it with equanimity. We cannot forget that most Israelis came from countries with no democratic tradition and have since lived through wars, terrorism and constant threats that would have made normal life unbearable for almost any other society. Indeed, the real story is why Israel has been able to remain so democratically resilient – even vibrant – under extraordinary circumstances.

Paul Michaels is director of research and media relations for the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs.

Freedom of Speech and Hate Speech in Canada:
A Delicate Balance
Nathalie Des Rosiers
Richard Warman
January 10, 2012, 7 pm
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Winnipeg federation gets new president

Myron Love
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Israel Ludwig (Rael to his friends), the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg's newly appointed president, says he's lucky to be leading the community at a time when things are going well.

In his first address as president, at the federation board meeting Dec. 8, Ludwig noted that Winnipeg's CJA campaign is continuing to grow (the goal is $5.5 million this year) while most other campaigns are either flat or declining, the community is registering consistent population growth (with projections of reaching 20,000 within the next five years from an estimated 17,000 currently), and the kindergarten to Grade 12 Gray Academy and the campus daycare are both bursting at the seams.

"Those [crowded conditions at the school and day care] are good problems to have," he said.

A lawyer by profession, Ludwig is no stranger to the federation or community leadership. A lifelong Winnipegger who grew up in the north end, Ludwig was chair of the B'nai Brith League for Human Rights' Midwest region back in the early 1980s.

He was first recruited to the board of the Winnipeg Jewish Community Council (the federation's predecessor) by Marjorie Blankstein in 1985. In this first community involvement, he served on the board for 13 years. During that time, he also became a member of the executive of Canadian Jewish Congress and served as vice-president and chair of the Manitoba region.

He stepped down from the board in 1998 to concentrate on his legal career. He noted that he was encouraged to rejoin the federation board in 2004 by Neil Duboff, one of his partners at Duboff Edwards Haight & Schachter, who was federation president at that time.

In his first remarks as federation president, Ludwig praised his predecessor, Ben Cohen, as well as Hope and Howard Morry, the CJA campaign co-chairs for the past two years; federation executive director Bob Freedman and the federation's staff.

Israel Ludwig
[Myron Love photo]

Ludwig promised to be an accessible president. "I am available at any time," he said. "I encourage anyone to call me or send me an e-mail. My door is always open.

"Part of my philosophy is that all members of a board should be engaged," he added, as he encouraged every federation board member to sign up for a committee.

He said his primary goal as president is to work toward securing the Winnipeg Jewish community institutions' financial futures.

"There are a number of Jewish agencies and organizations that are not part of the federation," he noted. "I would like to see all of our community agencies under the federation umbrella, not only as potential beneficiaries, but also so that we can help with problem solving and outreach."

DREIDEL, DREIDEL

Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his wife, Laureen, play a game of dreidel with local kids at the Calgary Jewish Community Centre on the third night of Chanukah. ***[PMO photo by Jill Thompson]***

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Cash shortfall delays human rights museum

Opening now set for 2014 at earliest

Myron Love
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — The Canadian Museum for Human Rights has announced that a funding shortfall will delay its opening for another year or more.

While the physical structure will be completed next year as planned, the museum won't open in 2013, as had been previously announced. Due to a cash crunch that's reportedly as high as $45 million, the museum won't open until at least 2014, and possibly later.

"We are looking to our capital campaign to make up the shortfall," said Angela Cassie, the museum's director of communications and external relations.

"We are exploring all options in trying to determine what is feasible or achievable. We will have a better idea of how much we need in a few months time. We don't want to move ahead with the interior work until we can be sure that we can pay the contractors."

The three levels of government are most likely not the answer. On Nov. 30, Ottawa turned down a request from the museum's board for more funding, and the province is close to $1 billion in debt. The City of Winnipeg approved an additional $3.6 million for the project last spring after repeatedly turning down earlier requests.

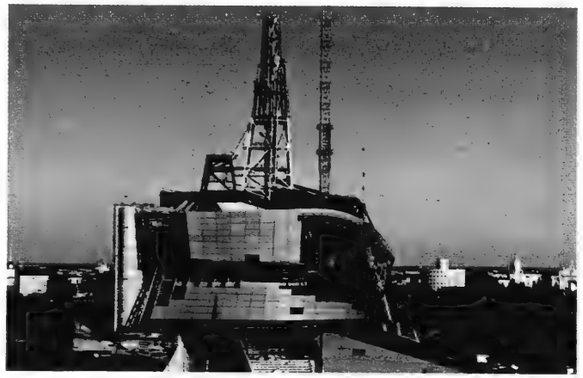
Thus far, the federal government has contributed $100 million for construction of the first national museum to be built outside Ottawa, and it has pledged to cover $21.7 million a year in operating costs. The province has provided $40 million for construction costs, and the city has given $20 million.

The Friends of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights – led by Gail Asper, daughter of media mogul Israel Asper, who first proposed the project in 2003 – has generated $130 million in private donations. The group's goal was $150 million.

And although the museum is still two years or more away from opening, *Winnipeg Sun* columnist Tom Brodbeck reported on Dec. 20, that staff salaries are already costing $11 million a year.

Bernie Bellan, owner, publisher and editor of Winnipeg's *Jewish Post & News* newspaper, isn't surprised about the current situation. He first reported on the museum's cost overruns in November 2010.

"When Israel Asper first proposed this project in 2003, the plan called for a $200-million structure to be completed in three or four years," he said. "Now it is $310 million and rising, and the opening date is still unknown. This project is out of control."



The museum currently under construction

Cassie put a positive spin on the delayed opening, saying it buys museum staff more time to fine-tune the facility's content and get it right. "This delay isn't a bad thing," she said. "We are working toward exceeding expectations."

Cash shortages aren't the only issues dogging the museum. Both its COO and chief knowledge officer resigned in 2011, and the chair of its board – prominent Winnipeg businessman Arni Thorsteinson – is resigning as of Jan. 1. Cassie noted, however, that he'll remain involved as a board member of the Friends group.

Then there is the ongoing question of where the Holocaust fits into the new museum. The original plan was for a separate gallery for the Holocaust, based on the role it played in the postwar development of international human rights bodies and legislation.

But from the beginning of the project, the uniqueness of the Shoah has been challenged by a number of different Canadian ethnic groups, in particular by the Ukrainian Canadian Civil Liberties Association.

Many in the Jewish community have expressed concern that the Holocaust gallery will be downsized or merged into a gallery that includes other large-scale atrocities. Cassie said the confusion may stem from discussion about a second gallery that shows how Canada has discriminated against minorities, including how it prevented Jews who were escaping the Holocause from entering Canada.

She said a standalone Holocaust gallery is still in the plans.

"The galleries [including a standalone aboriginal gallery] will unfold like the chapters in a book," Cassie said. "The journey needs to be seen as a whole. The Holocaust is an example of what happens when a society abandons the concept of universal human rights and dignity."

On a positive note, on Dec. 9, the museum and the government of the Netherlands signed a memorandum of understanding to collaborate for the promotion of human rights through joint projects and education.

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McGill student seeks key Liberal post

Zach Paikin criticized for 'right wing views'

Vicky Tobianah
Special to The CJN

Twenty-year-old McGill University student Zach Paikin is gearing up for the end of his campaign to become the next national policy chair of the Liberal party, to be chosen at its biennial convention Jan. 13-15.

Zach Paikin
[Kent Kuran photo]

But while Paikin, the son of Steve Paikin, host of TVOntario's *The Agenda*, says he has strived to run a positive campaign, he's been the subject of an attack from 18-year-old Mount Allison University student Max Naylor, his close friend and the son of University of Toronto president David Naylor.

The younger Naylor published a blog post criticizing what he calls candidate Paikin's "extreme right wing views," which he says are a bad fit for the party.

"I don't have a problem with him running for this position, but if you're going to be a conservative, you should say that's what you are," Naylor said. "He is more right wing than the majority of liberal Canadians, which is reflected time and time again in his writings."

Paikin is a featured columnist for the right-wing online student newspaper the Prince Arthur Herald and a frequent guest on the *Michael Coren Show*. He has also spoken out about his strong support for Israel and his belief that the Arab Spring was a "victory for Iran in the Middle East."

The rivalry between Paikin and Naylor has garnered the attention of major media outlets, and even of Interim Liberal Leader Bob Rae, who tweeted that it was "bulls--t."

Paikin and Naylor became friends when they were both volunteering for the Young Liberals of Canada in the riding of Toronto-Centre. Naylor maintains that they were exceptionally close and that he knows Paikin better than any of his endorsers or opponents.

On his blog, Naylor criticizes Paikin's hardline views on the Middle East, his strong support for Israel and what he calls Paikin's conservative views on the economy and his advocacy of a two-tier health care system.

"Not a lot of people are aware to the extent that he had right-wing views. I've seen him do this before, and if we're going to rebuild the party, he needs to be honest about what he believes in," Naylor said.

But Paikin counters that in order to bring the Liberal party back to its former glory, new ideas are necessary. "Anyone who goes out there and says we need to adhere to some sort of liberal orthodoxy is out to lunch. What we need is clear, bold ideas. That's going to require change," he said.

He has spent the past few months travelling across Canada to find out what change Canadians want to see.

"What struck me the most during the course of my travels is that Liberals across the country share the same values, which is ironic, because the Liberal party is criticized for not knowing what it stands for," Paikin said.

"I think the Liberal elite don't know what it stands for, and the time for that is over." He said his campaign plan focuses on increasing grassroots engagement, reducing obstacles to political involvement and creating a more inclusive party.

"We have inspired a lot of Liberals and have set a clear message to the elite that the grassroots of this party want change and want to embrace a new generation," he said.

However, Naylor says if Paikin is selected, he will create further divisions within the party. "You can't bring people together while having views that are going to divide people. He is very public on his hardline views on the Middle East, and he's said it's my way or the highway," Naylor said.

In an interview with CTV, Paikin called Naylor's blog post childish and full of baseless allegations. Instead, he said he wants to focus on running a positive and progressive campaign. "I don't let anything get in the way of what needs to be done: bringing Liberals together."

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What is this, chopped liver?

Actually, yes.

Has there ever been a Jewish food more maligned? The perennial punch line. The bridesmaid of the brunch. Well it's time to show chopped liver a little love.

"Every ethnic cuisine has at least one dish that produces either nostalgia or nausea, depending on who it's placed in front of," so we are told at Judaism for Dummies. "Ashkenazi Jews have *gehakte leber*, or 'chopped liver.' Chopped liver – a dense mixture of chicken liver, onions, and hard-boiled egg – is a heart attack waiting to happen. Nonetheless, just thinking about chopped liver makes our mouths water and reminds us of our childhoods. For those of us who grew up with it, chopped liver is nostalgia food." **[http://bit.ly/liver11]**

The nostalgia oozes out of Stacey's chopped liver, especially when she thinks about her Grandma Dorothy's dish. "She served it as a first course during Jewish holidays on a bed of iceberg lettuce (does anyone buy iceberg lettuce anymore?) and scooped it out with an ice cream scoop… She had an old-fashioned meat grinder which she would use to grind the calves liver after broiling… I make this delicacy for Passover only, and it brings back a lot of good memories." **[http://bit.ly/liver12]**

The line, "What am I, chopped liver?" certainly has the cadence of a Yiddish catch phrase. But does it really have its roots in the mamaloshen? Here's the response from the Ohr Somayach rabbi: "As far as I know, the origins of the phrase are not Yiddish. I believe the phrase was originally coined in America. Being that chopped liver was always considered a side dish and not a main course, the phrase is used to express hurt and amazement when a person feels he has been overlooked and treated just like a 'side dish.'" **[http://bit.ly/liver13]**

Jewish & Digital

Mark Mietkiewicz

For the premier ode to this love-it-or-loathe-it food, we must credit Cantor Henry Rosenblum, who delivers his tribute to the tune of *Ol' Man River* (with apologies to Jerome Kern):

When I return to my Shabbes table/ After I spend so much time in shul/ I am so hungry that I am not able/ To keep far away from the dish so cruel…

Cold chopped liver/ That heartburn giver/ I shouldn't choose it/ But I can't refuse it/ It keeps me groanin'/ Just keeps me groanin' oy vey! **[http://bit.ly/liver14]**

By the way, this rendition originated during the cantor's stint as music-scholar-in-residence at Toronto's Beth Tzedec Congregation.

Despite all attempts to reform the reputation of this food, it's a mighty challenge when it gets no respect from the commander-in-chief and leader of the free world! In August 2009, U.S. President Barack Obama paid a visit to Belgrade, Mont. But the crowd voiced a measure of disappointment that the First Lady wasn't with him:

The president (addressing the crowd): I am excited to be back in Montana. (Cheers) I want to…

Question from the crowd: Where's Michelle?

The president: Where's Michelle? (Pointing to himself) Come on, what is this, chopped liver here? (Laughter) **[http://bit.ly/liver15]**

Oh, the ignominy of it all.

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Spiritual lessons from the fire marshal

I occasionally attend Shabbat morning services in the basement of a local synagogue. The dingy room is uninspiring. The wallpaper is peeling, the celling is stained, the floor is uneven and there are no windows. There is one sign, however, that captures my attention and, in my moments of wandering, drives me back to prayer: "Occupancy by more than 125 people is unlawful and dangerous."

The fire marshal must have been an educator.

It strikes me that the sign needs to say that overcrowding is both "unlawful and dangerous." Prohibiting overcrowding on the basis of law alone would not suffice. We'd likely argue, "That's just a bureaucratic regulation!" and would ignore the sign. Similarly, justifying the rule solely on the grounds of reason wouldn't engender compliance. We would rationalize, "We'll make sure that there are extra fire extinguishers and that the exits are clearly marked, then we can squeeze in an extra 50 people, and it won't be dangerous." The fire marshal knew that in order to ensure compliance, she must apply both legal standards and moral compulsion.

In teaching Jewish practice, we take a similar approach. On one hand, we must teach our children communal norms. For some, these norms may be taught as the obligations of Halachah (Jewish law), by explaining to children that the Torah and rabbinic tradition command us to certain behaviours. For others, the obligation is represented as a set of communal or familial norms, binding children and community members to their practice. When a child asks, "Why can't I go to the

Class Act

Daniel Held

party on Friday night?" we may reply, "Because we are commanded to keep Shabbat," or, "Because on Shabbat we have dinner as a family."

For most Jews, however, establishing rules and expectations without grounding them in rational underpinnings undermines their legitimacy. For today's youth, "because that's what we do" rarely suffices. In this regard, we must imbue a sense of moral reasoning for the action and describe our understanding of their underlying value. We may describe Shabbat as special family time, a tradition reminiscent of God's creation or the world, or an opportunity to break from the regular workweek. We may speak of what Shabbat means to us and encourage our children to find their own meaning.

Michael Rosenak, a renowned philosopher of Jewish education, describes these two teachings as explicit and implicit Judaism. An explicit educational theology sees the rules as an end unto themselves. In Judaism, we are compelled by external commandments or communal expectations that dictate our actions. An implicit philosophy, on the other hand, seeks deep personal meaning and resonance for religious behaviours. An implicit education teaches Jews to explore both inter- and intra-personal motivations for ritual observance.

When my thoughts wander during Shabbat morning services and I see the fire marshal's sign, I am reminded of both explicit and implicit reasons for communal prayer. I recognize that I am commanded by Halachah and by communal norms to pray. At the same time, I find in prayer deep personal meaning, imbued by moments of introspection and spirituality. In teaching children, I strive to share these explicit and implicit motivations with my students.

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A letter to the hilltop youth

Rabbi Shlomo Riskin
JTA

Guest Voice

As an educator, I know it's impossible to preach to people who believe that they are the holy defenders of the Land of Israel, that they wave the banner of the genuine Torah, that they are eliminating the conciliatory behaviour of thousands of years of exile.

"Price tag" rioters – right-wing nationalists who act violently to protest Israeli government policies – attack Palestinians who have done no wrong, desecrate mosques and see themselves as similar to the ancient heroes of Judea who fought the Greek-Syrian rabble that desecrated the Temple and forced them to bow to idols.

And I say: You consider yourselves the new Hasmoneans, the Maccabees who don't bow to the Hellenizing priestly establishment, which today, you believe, wears the uniform of the Israel Defence Forces. Because you are convinced that all your deeds are for the sake of heaven, you will never admit that you have sinned.

I am telling you that you are making a fundamental mistake.

If a country can be sacred, if there is sanctity in earth and stones, then isn't it clear that there is sanctity in man – Arab or Jew – who was created in God's image? Don't you understand that there is no "portion of God from above," as Job described it, in furrows of earth, but there certainly is in peaceful Palestinians?

Do you have any idea how great that "portion of God" is, for example, in Col. Ran Kahane, the commander of the Ephraim Brigade you attacked some days ago, and in his soldiers, who daily risk their lives to defend yours and those of your families from the terrorists who work to take them? How do you dare to desecrate these holy people? How did your love of the land become so distorted that it turned into love of bricks and cement and caused you to forget all the rest?

You did not throw stones at me, and still you have mortally wounded me. You have stolen one of the assets most sacred to me. I love the Land of Israel with all my heart. I left the United States, my birthplace, to help to build my beloved city of Efrat and to be built up in it. Wherever I speak, I present myself as a "proud settler." And you have robbed me of this pride. You have turned the term "settler" into a dirty word. You have caused me to be ashamed of being a settler, to be ashamed to be called by the same name as those whose love for the land has turned into hatred of human beings.

The Torah praises the Land of Israel, but it never commands us to "love" the land. It commands us to "love thy neighbour as thyself." And since the words that end that verse are: "I am the Lord," the medieval commentator Abraham Ibn Ezra explains that "thy neighbour" is every human being created in the image of God.

There is a direct and tragic connection between those who perpetrate "price tag" activities against Arabs and those who attack the IDF.

Simon and Levi, two of Jacob's sons, murdered all the men of Shechem, an act of revenge that did not distinguish between the guilty and the innocent. They ended up harming their own brother, Joseph, for, a midrash says, they were the motivating forces behind his sale into slavery in Egypt.

Please, change your minds and repent, before it's too late. Don't sell your souls, your portion of God from above, even in exchange for our holy land.

Rabbi Shlomo Riskin is the rabbi of Efrat. This essay appeared first in Ha'aretz.

A need for balance in our lives

Sephardi Window

Rabbi Ilan Acoca

There is a famous Midrash (Tanchuma Lech Lecha 9) that states "*ma'asai avot siman lebanim*" (the acts of our patriarchs are a sign for us). In other words, whatever our forefathers experienced should serve as a lesson for us. With that in mind, let me share with you a verse in Genesis that might at first seem perplexing.

When Abraham is seeking to purchase a burial plot for his wife, Sarah, he approaches the Hittites and says (Gen. 23:4), "*Ger v'toshav anochi imachem*" (I am a stranger and a citizen together with you).

Abraham's statement seems to be contradictory. On the one hand, he says that he's a stranger, and, on the other hand, he says that he is a citizen? How are we to understand this? Many different explanations are given, one of which I find extremely relevant to our lives and which I would like to share with you.

Abraham's two-word description of himself summarizes, in an odd fashion, not only his own place in society at this critical moment of his life, but also the place his children will assume in the world through the ages.

Throughout history, we Jews have maintained a delicate balance in order to survive and thrive. When given the opportunity, we have been "citizens," contributing to society by playing important roles in governance, contributing to the culture of the country and enhancing it in many other ways. At the same time, we were also "strangers." We have participated in the life of society at large, while maintaining our traditions and our belief system. Not infrequently, we have died sanctifying God's name because we chose not to accept ways that were antithetical to our beliefs.

This balance is crucial to our nation's continued existence.

Abraham our forefather, the first to face this dilemma, approaches the Hittites who want him to become part of their society. They declare him a prince among them, they offer him a free burial plot for his wife. Yet Abraham is not impressed by all of this. He knows that, if he agrees to take this land for free, he will be obliged to follow an alien way of life. This, Abraham most certainly will not do; he will not be beholden in any way whatsoever to people whose philosophies are foreign to his.

On the other hand, Abraham declares himself a citizen, ready to muster his considerable resources in order to contribute to society.

I am often asked the question, especially by students who come back from Israel after spending a year or more in yeshivot and seminaries, "Which is the real world? The yeshiva world or the world to which we've just returned?"

The answer is simple: both worlds are real. Paramount is the balance between them.

Let us all try to create a healthy balance – the "balance of Abraham," as it were – in our own lives and avoid extremes.

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March 8 - ***PURIM*: THE SCROLL OF ESTHER, CREATION OF AN ILLUSTRATED *MEGILLAH***
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JORDAN KLAPMAN gives a stimulating talk. Enjoy live music accompaniment & early recordings.

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DR. LESLEY WIESENFELD, Psychiatrist, *Mount Sinai Hospital*, talks about some of the challenges - transitions, possible losses, depression, loneliness - strategies to address these, opportunities & resilience.

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The versatile cauliflower

Eileen Goltz
Special to The CJN

A strange looking kind of vegetable, the cauliflower is part of the mustard family (its cousins are cabbage, brussels sprouts, broccoli, kale and kohlrabi). It can be found in white, purple and green. The cauliflower has an earthy, mellow flavour that can be appreciated in both its raw and its cooked state.

As they say in that old commercial, most parts are edible (yes the leaves and stalks are edible), but most of us just go for the flowerets, the part known as the curd. You should look for a head that is firm and has an even colour and no black or dark soft spots. The leaves should be green and the stalks firm. You should store your cauliflower in its wrapping in the crisper section of the refrigerator and use it within a week of when you purchase it.

CHEESE AND CRUNCH CAULIFLOWER

2 heads cauliflower, washed and cut into flowerets and steamed crisp and tender
1/4 to 1/3 cup minced onions
1 stick butter or margarine
1/4 to 1/2 cup panko breadcrumbs
1 1/2 tbsp. chopped parsley
3 tbsp. Parmesan cheese
salt and pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 350. Grease a 9x13-in. baking dish. While the cauliflower is cooking, melt the butter in a small pan and sauté the onions for about 2 minutes. Add the breadcrumbs and cook, stirring constantly until everything is lightly golden. Remove the mixture from the heat. Season with salt and pepper.

Sprinkle a little of the breadcrumb mixture on the bottom of the greased baking dish. Drain the flowerets, pat them dry and place them on top of the breadcrumb mixture. Sprinkle the remaining breadcrumb mixture over the top. Sprinkle the top of the casserole with the parsley and Parmesan cheese. Bake for 20 minutes. Serves 6 to 8.

Continued on page 19

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Cauliflower part of the mustard family

Continued from page 18

CREAMY CAULIFLOWER SOUP

2 heads cauliflower
juice from 1 lemon
2 tbsp. minced onion
2 celery stalks, minced
1/4 cup butter or margarine
1/4 cup flour
4 cups chicken or vegetable broth
2 cups cream or non-dairy substitute
dash of nutmeg
salt to taste
grated Parmesan cheese (optional)

Wash the cauliflower and break into flowerets. Cook with the lemon juice in a small amount of boiling water until tender. Drain and whirl cauliflower in blender until pureed, or force through a food mill. Sauté the onion and celery in the butter for 2 to 3 minutes. Blend in the flour and stir in broth. Cook, stirring, until slightly thickened. Stir in the cauliflower, cream, nutmeg and salt. Garnish with cheese. Makes about 6 servings.

GIADA DE LAURENTIS PARMESAN BROCCOLI AND CAULIFLOWER SALAD

2 1/2 cups bite-sized broccoli florets
2 1/2 cups bite-sized cauliflower florets
2 eggs, lightly beaten
1 cup grated Parmesan
1/2 to 1 cup olive oil
1/2 tsp. kosher salt
4 cups lightly packed fresh spinach leaves
1/2 lemon, zested
1 lemon, juiced
1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
salt to taste
1/2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper

Place the broccoli and cauliflower in a large bowl. Toss with the beaten eggs to coat evenly. Place the Parmesan in a large tray or baking dish and dredge the vegetables in the cheese, pressing to coat evenly.

Pour olive oil into a large, heavy skillet until the olive oil is 1/4-inch deep, about 1/2 cup depending on the size of your skillet. Warm the olive oil over medium-high heat. When the oil is hot, carefully add the Parmesan-coated vegetables. Do not overcrowd the pan. Cook in batches, if necessary. Let the vegetables cook until a crust forms, about 3 minutes per side. Turn the vegetables only when they easily release from the bottom of the pan. Drain on paper towels and season with salt.

Place the spinach in a large bowl. In a small bowl, whisk together the lemon zest, lemon juice, extra-virgin olive oil, salt and pepper. Drizzle the spinach with the vinaigrette and toss to coat. Add the Parmesan coated vegetables. Toss and serve. Serves 8. Recipe from Giada De Laurentiis.

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Students get crash course about political life in Ottawa

Harrison Jordan
Special to The CJN

Guest Voice

It was another normal day in Ottawa. They punched the snooze bar at 6:30 a.m., suited up in their finest business attire, and walked up the steep steps to Parliament for back-to-back meetings with cabinet ministers, opposition members and even party leaders.

The daily life of a politician might seem long and arduous, but for more than three dozen of Canada's youngest political junkies, a weeklong crash-course in Ottawa's political life was nothing short of exciting.

The Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee's (CJPAC) Fellowship Conference in November brought together 38 multi-partisan post-secondary students from across Canada.

They had come not only to strengthen their own political understanding but also to bring back to their campuses the skills and resources to engage their peers in the political process.

"There really isn't any program similar to this in the entire country," says Mark Waldman, CJPAC's executive director.

"The students will go back to their campuses among an elite few who have the skills, training and networks to truly excel in Canadian political life."

Next semester, every fellow is expected to hold an event on their respective campus to introduce their peers and community members into the political process.

They will draw on the expertise acquired during the conference, and CJPAC staff will provide guidance for the fellows during the organization and promotion of each event.

What began as a small delegation in 2005 with a handful of participants has now grown into a prestigious annual conference that politicians are eager to participate in.

The program is now more diverse than ever, with student representation from all sides of the political spectrum and an increasing contingent of female participants.

Almost one-third of this year's fellows come from non-Jewish backgrounds. The fellows are united in their belief in the importance of ensuring that Jewish and pro-Israel issues remain political issues for all Canadians.

Aside from meeting politicians and traversing Parliament Hill, participants also heard from many behind-the-scenes, "war room" players from the last federal election and key figures in Canada-Israel relations.

There were even visits from fellowship alumni who now work on Parliament Hill, participating directly in Canada's most important democratic institutions.

One of the exercises had the fellows split up into groups to participate in an election campaign simulation.

Each group developed a campaign plan for a mock election. Their plans were presented on the last day of the conference, and CJPAC staff crowned a winning team based on the integration of the skills the students had acquired during the conference.

Some groups went all out – creating fake websites and Twitter feeds to boost their virtual candidate.

"The fellowship is a completely unique opportunity for young Jewish and pro-Israel political activists to build lifelong friendships and partnerships," said Emile Scheffel, a fellowship co-chair.

"The program is also a huge benefit to Canada's political parties, in that it provides them with a talented and dedicated pool of volunteers, staff and future leaders."

"There's a joke in Ottawa, that kids run Parliament," says Eleanor Johnston, the CJPAC director who co-ordinates the fellowship.

"That's the goal of the CJPAC Fellowship – to show young Jews across the nation that they can get engaged and change the world."

Harrison Jordan is a student at the University of Guelph and a first-year CJPAC fellow.

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שוטים מנהיגים את המדינה שלנו, ועוד כמה מדינות,
מאירן ועד בורמה, מהדו ועד בוש.

במאה הזאת
מיליונים נהרגים במלחמות ומתים ברעב וממחלות,
אלא שהמעם הכל מצלם ומתוקשר, מסודר ומשודר.
הנכדים מלמדים אותנו להשתמש במחשב ובשאר אביזרי האלף השלישי.
הייתי רוצה להרגיש בבית....
ואינני יכול".

סרטים שכדאי-חלק ב'

עוד סרט ששווה מאוד להקדיש לו שעתיים בפגרת סוף השנה: "האַרטיסט" הוא סרט צרפתי רב עוצמה שעשוי בשחור לבן ולא בכדי: הוא מתאר את שנות העשרים של המאה שעברה, כאשר הסרטים היו אילמים. זהו סיפורו של כוכב ענק של דור הסרטים האילמים שמסרב להסתגל למהפיכת הסאונד ואיננו משכים שיהיה סאונד בסרטים שלו- וכך הוא מוצא את עצמו מחוץ לביזנס, מחוץ לחיים, וחייו הולכים להסתיים בעוני ודלות ובלא כלום. אלא שלצידו מופיעה שחקנית צעירה ומקסימה שהוא מירגן לה בימי הסרט האילם, ושהמכה ביניהם לכוכבת העל של הסרט המדבר, והיא מחזירה אותו לחיים. למותר לציין שהסרט כולו עשוי בשחור לבן, והוא, מתחילתו ועד סופו- סרט אילם!

כבר לא הייתי זמן רב בסרט בטורונטו, שבסיומו עמדו הצופים ומחאו מחיאות כפיים רמות! זוהי הפקה מדהימה ומרתקת, ולאלה מיכם שעלולים לחשוש שמא זה סרט משעמם- "האַרטיסט" מרתק מאין כמוהו. עשר בסלם קורן.

ובאותו עניין

הלכתי לי לתומי במרכז הקניות שליד ביתי וגיליתי שחנות הוידיאו "בלוק באסטר" רבת העוצמה נסגרה, כמו אלפי אחיותיה ברחבי היבשת. פשוט אנשים התחילו להשכיר סרטים "און ליין" והם אינם זקוקים עוד לשירותיה, ומערכת של מיליארדי דולאר פשטה רגל, כשהיא זורקת לרחובות אלפי אנשים שנותרו חסרי עבודה.

זה החזיר אותי לסרט ה"אַרטיסט" ומה קורה למי שאיננו מצליח להסתגל לשינויים המהירים שסובבים אותנו.

ובאותו הקשר- אני מהרהר על מה שקרה למיליוני יהודים שראו את היטלר עולה ושירבו להסיק מסקנות אישיות ולברוח. "יכולת ההסתגלות"- כמה אכזריות יש באי היכולת של אנשים להסתגל לשינויים מהירים, גם כשהם ברורים ביותר. כולנו שונאים לשנות את הרוטינה, אפילו כשהדרך מובילה לפי התהום. אבל שישאר בינינו.

More GIDI KOREN at www.gidikoren.com

The Susan Zajdner and The Fay Mosoff Seniors' Lunch & Learn Program

Join us on the following **Tuesdays** for a nutritious lunch and a variety of entertaining and educational programming for seniors:

Jan 17: Sandra Cohen, *Big Band, Jazz & Blues Singer*
Jan 31: Paul Mathew, *European & Klezmer Entertainer*
Feb 14: Denise Williams, *Soprano Singer*
Feb 28: Robert Uritz, *Singer*
April 17: Andy DeCampos, *40's, 50's and 60's, Swing & Easy Listening Singer*
May 8: Ben Steinberg, *Jews & the Birth of Pop Music*
May 22: Rabbi Michael Dolgin, *Current Topics in the Jewish World*
June 5: York Jazz Band, *Swing, Jazz & Big Band Music*

12:00 noon
Council House – 4700 Bathurst Street
$7 per person
Reservations required: 416-633-5100

National Council of Jewish Women of Canada, Toronto Section

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GREETING CHANUKAH

Senior kindergarten students from Associated Hebrew Schools' Posluns branch on Neptune Drive danced and sang on Dec. 20 for their neighbours at the Reuben Cipin Healthy Living Community. Residents of the Baycrest condominium joined with the lively young entertainers in singing traditional Chanukah songs and enjoyed the ceremonial lighting of the holiday's first candle.

GETTING READY

Ella Reingold, left, and Hayella Kerbel of Torah Tots get ready for their favourite holiday, Chanukah.

HOLIDAY FUN

Before the start of Chanukah, students at the Joe Dwek Ohr Haemet Sephardic School celebrated the holiday with various activities and events, including the school's annual Chanukah carnival. Pictured trying to pin the candle on the menorah is Marcus Cohen.

Mazel Tov

מזל טוב

Rochelle & Ron Greenwood announce the recent marriage in Jerusalem of their daughter Sara to Glen, son of Sue & Don Weinberger of Fairfield, N.J.

Mazel tov on your 50th wedding anniversary, Aug. 20, Mom & Dad, Bubba & Zaida, Penny & Eric Bowman. Love, your children and 10 "grands"!

Happy 65th anniversary Ab & Frances Nisker. A loving couple, parents, grandparents and great-grandparents. Continued good health, love and happiness. Michael, Ryan and Danielle

Mazel tov to Karen & Andrew Kramer-Lee, on their recent marriage. Proud parents are Mary & Howard Kramer, and Loreen & Rod Lee.

Mazel tov Belle & Sam Feldman on your 65th anniversary! We love you so much. Love, your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

With love and knishes from Bubbie Leah to her great-granddaughter Gabrielle Fisher, who turned five years old just before Chanukah.

Email your digital photos to cblackman@thecjn.ca or go online to www.CJNews.com and click the "Family Moments"

Social Networking @ The Canadian Jewish News for the :-) generation

What's New

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Deadline reminder: Jan. 9 is the deadline for the issue of Jan. 19. Jan. 16 is the deadline for the issue of Jan. 26. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; e-mail whatsnewcjn@gmail.com, or fax 416-391-0829.

Sunday Jan. 8

HEBREW CLASSES

Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue is offering a free 5-session Hebrew reading crash course for beginners, Sundays starting today at 9:15 a.m. Call 416-633-3838.

FEMALE JEWISH FIREFIGHTER

Adina Kaufman speaks about "Being a Female, Jewish Firefighter," Lodzer Synagogue. Breakfast at 9:30 a.m.; lecture at 10:15 a.m. 416-636-6665.

Monday, Jan. 9

PREVENTING FALLS

Baycrest is offering a fall-prevention program for seniors starting today. Call 416-785-2488.

Tuesday, Jan. 10

BARNEY'S VERSION

The movie *Barney's Version* will be shown at Beth Tikvah Synagogue at 2 p.m. with commentary by **Larry Anklewicz**, programming co-ordinator of the Toronto Jewish Film Festival.

BIBLE COURSE

The Canadian Yeshiva & Rabinical School is offering a course on the Bible, in English, Tuesday evenings starting tonight at the University of Toronto. To register, e-mail ravtan@cdnyeshiva.org.

Thursday, Jan. 12

JEWISH HISTORY LECTURES

Martin Lockshin discusses "The Jewish Spanish Diaspora," as part of Congregation Darchei Noam's Jewish history series, 7:30 p.m.

SHLOMO CARLEBACH

Cantor Marshall Loomer presents the story of **Shlomo Carlebach**, the rabbi who revolutionized worship and prayer through music. Beth David Synagogue, 7:30 p.m. 416-633-5500.

Other News

BEREAVEMENT GROUPS

Support groups for people who have lost a child or a loved one begin in January at Hospice Thornhill. Call **Bonnie Strand**, 905-764-0656, ext. 227.

A TINY PIECE OF LAND

Teatron Toronto Jewish Theatre presents *A Tiny Piece of Land*, Jan. 4-15, Toronto Centre for the Arts, Studio Theatre. Call 416-781-5527 or www.teatrontheatre.com.

MINYAN RESUMES

Beth Radom Congregation is resuming its evening minyan, Monday to Thursday, 6 p.m., 18 Reiner Rd. 416-636-3451, ext. 24.

YIDDISH CLASSES FOR ALL

Yiddish classes for all levels are offered Sunday mornings starting Jan. 15 at Beth David Synagogue.

Yiddish classes for kids in junior kindergarten or older, with art, drama and music taught by **Ruth Gerlock** begin Jan. 15 at Beth David Synagogue. Call **Ester Klimitz**, 416-635-2883, ext. 5189, or send an e-mail to this address: committeeforyiddish@ujafed.org.

Continued on page 23

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The Andrea and Charles Bronfman Chair of Israeli Studies

Daniel C. Kurtzer

Revolution, Repression and Reconciliation: The Arab Awakening and the Prospects for Peace

Daniel C. Kurtzer is the S. Daniel Abraham Visiting Professor of Middle East Policy Studies at Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. During a 29-year career in the U.S. Foreign Service, he served as the United States Ambassador to Israel and as the United States Ambassador to Egypt.

Wednesday, January 25 at 5:30pm
Robert Gill Theatre, Koffler Student Services Centre, 3rd floor, 214 College Street

This lecture is free and open to the public. Please join us.

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Continued from page 22

MELTON MINI SCHOOL

Melton Mini School classes are open for registration. Bereshit II -Midrash and commentary will be taught by **Loretta Tanenbaum** Wednesday mornings, starting Feb. 15. Call 416-789-7400 or visit www.melton-toronto.org.

MEKOROT CLASSES

Mekorot offers a class exploring biblical family relations, "Moshe, Aharon, Miriam: A Family Story," taught by **Shayna Kravetz,** Monday evenings, starting Jan. 16, Or Chaim Yeshiva. Men and women welcome.

A class studying some of the best-known Psalms will be taught by **Rebecca Rotenberg Nadler** Thursday mornings, starting Jan. 12, 208 Coldstream Ave. Call 416-877-2050 or www.mekorot.ca.

HARBORD CI REUNION

Anyone who ever attended or taught at Harbord Collegiate Institute is invited to its 120th birthday party, April 26-27, 2012. www.HarbordClub.com.

JEWISH MEDIATION

Howard Warren discusses "Mediation in Jewish Family Matters," Jan. 15, 7 p.m., the Lodzer Synagogue.

Rabbi Moshe Meirovich, Daphna Grossman and **Brian Goldman** discuss "Jewish Medical Ethics," Jan. 29, 7 p.m., Lodzer Synagogue. 416-636-6665.

MEDICAL HALACHAH

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner discusses "Taking Call on Shabbat," Jan. 23, 8 p.m., Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue. 416-781-1777 or info@torontotorah.com.

JEWISH DIABETES MEETING

Pharmacist **Tino Montopoli** discusses "Prescription And Non-Prescription Drugs For People With Diabetes," at the Jewish diabetes chapter meeting, Jan. 17, 8 p.m., Pride of Israel Synagogue. 416-363-0177, ext. 7403, or www.diabetes.ca.

BOOK REVIEW

Heather Kassel reviews the book *The Free World* by **David Bezmozgis** Jan. 17, 8 p.m. at Adath Israel Synagogue. Call 416-499-6920 or 416-493-3626.

EXERCISE AND LIFESTYLE

Cindy Mortimer discusses "Therapeutic Exercises and Ways to Have a Healthy Lifestyle," Jan. 17, Temple Har Zion. Bring your lunch at noon, program begins at 12:30. 905-889-2252.

JEWISH-ITALIAN PROJECT

Michael Chazan, of the Archaeological Centre, University of Toronto, discusses "The Birth of a Project: The 2011 Excavation at Huqoq, Israel," 7:15 p.m., Jan. 19, Carr Hall, Room 404, St. Michael's College, 100 St. Joseph St.

APPROACHING RETIREMENT

Amy D'Aprix discusses "Making the Most of Life's Transitions: Before and After Retirement," Jan. 19, 7:30 p.m. at Temple Har Zion. 905-889-2252.

BIBLICAL HEROINES

Chabad of Markham is offering a 6-week course for women on heroines of the Bible, starting Jan. 16, 83 Green Lane, Thornhill. Register by Jan. 6 at 905-886-0420, ext. 221, or www.chabadmarkham.org.

SHABBAT SHIRAH

Temple Har Zion's 40th anniversary celebration continues Feb. 3-4, Shabbat Shirah, when musician **Alan Goodis** participates in services and a concert. Call 905-889-2252.

FOOD CONFERENCE

Shoresh Jewish Environmental Programs is holding a conference on Jewish tradition and contemporary food issues, Feb. 5, at the Miles Nadal JCC. To register, call 416-805-8382 or Sabrina@shoresh.ca.

EARLY-BIRD PRICES

Early-bird prices are now available for Beth Tikvah's spring lunch and learn series. Call 416-221-3433, ext. 352, or helen@bethtikvahtoronto.org.

FOR SENIORS

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park. (55+). **Valerie**, 416-395-7881. Hairdresser/barber Jan. 5, 9-11 a.m.; Line dancing Jan. 5, 10 a.m. Casino Rama Jan. 18. Tuesdays, gentle exercise tailored to seniors 10 a.m.; Wednesdays, duplicate bridge 12:30 p.m.; Thursdays, social bridge 12:30 p.m. Non-members welcome.

Beth Tzedec Congregation Haverim present the opera singer **Renee Barda**, Jan. 9, 1:30 p.m. 416-781-3511.

LZA Seniors Cultural Club meets Tuesdays, 10 a.m., Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell. 416-630-9444.

New Horizons is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club that offers kosher food, casino trips. Romi and ulti card players welcome. Call 416-256-1892.

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 18

Adath Israel Congregation. Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub. Refreshments $2. Call **Pearl**, 416-635-6317, or **Sheila**, 416-665-3333.

Bernard Betel Centre 416-225-2112. Jan. 13, Zumba class, 9 a.m. Jan. 17, **Mark Freedman** discusses "Substance Abuse," 10 a.m.

Active Seniors, Miles Nadal JCC, 416-924-6211, ext.155. **Iain Scott** discusses "Great Opera Singers: Placido Domingo at 70," Jan. 12, 1:30 p.m.

Computer beginners course starts Feb. 14 for 8 weeks. Small class with personal attention $70.

Active 55 Plus Speakers Series, Miles Nadal JCC 416-924-6211, ext. 526. **George Torys** discusses "Signs and Symptoms of Alzheimer's Disease and How to Reduce the Risk of Developing the Disease," Jan. 18, 12:30 p.m.

Seniors Gentle Fitness Club offers tai chi classes at Edithvale Community Centre, 131 Finch Ave. W., Tuesdays 10 a.m. or Wednesdays 7:15 p.m. Call **Helen**, 416-665-9050.

PROSSERMAN JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com.

Daycare and preschool registration for the 2012-13 school year is open. Spaces available for preschool, nursery, junior kindergarten and senior kindergarten. Call **Kailah Rubin,** ext. 4351.

Duplicate bridge, Thursdays, 12-3:30 p.m.

Register now for all winter children's programs. Call **Monique Shapiro,** ext. 4012.

MILES NADAL JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org.

Tickets for the Toronto Jewish Film Society's 2012 season are on sale now. Call **Joelle Malka,** ext. 139.

The adult daytime choir is looking for members, Tuesdays 1 p.m. No auditions needed. Winter session starts Jan. 10. gillians@mnjcc.org.

Shabbat programs for children begin Jan. 13. Call ext. 277 or sarahbn@mnjcc.org.

Kevin Courrier teaches a course on "American Movies and the Politics of Idealism," Mondays starting Jan. 16. Call ext. 606 or e-mail film@mnjcc.org.

Adult Hebrew courses begin the week of Jan. 16. Call ext. 154 or sharonis@mnjcc.org.

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner teaches a course on "Icons of Spanish Jewry," Thursdays 8 p.m., starting Feb. 9. Call ext. 154.

Textiles, an exhibit by **Sheree Rasmussen**, is at the gallery until Jan. 30.

The Michael Bernstein Chapel, on the third floor, holds services every Thursday at 7:15 a.m. and Sunday at 8 a.m. followed by breakfast. Call **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200.

JRCC HONOURED: Toronto Coun. James Pasternak, right, presents a scroll on behalf of the city of Toronto to the Jewish Russian Community Centre (JRCC) of Ontario in recognition of its 30 years of work in the community. The scroll was presented at the JRCC's annual Chanukah menorah-lighting ceremony in Mel Lastman Square. Pictured with Pasternak, from left, are Igor Korenzvit, chair of JRCC Ontario's board of governors, and Rabbi Joseph Zaltzman.

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De-stressing the lives of women

Holistic nutritionist pens new book

Carolyn Blackman
Staff Reporter

Rosalie Moscoe's goal is to de-stress and de-frazzle the lives of women.

A registered holistic nutritionist, Moscoe, 66, is the author of *Frazzled Hurried Women, Your Stress Relief Guide to Thriving... Not Merely Surviving.*

Moscoe, who has given about 800 talks on the subject, said that women who work full-time jobs, raise children, and do daily household chores, juggle more tasks at a faster pace than ever before.

Her book is a guide, she said, with easy-to-follow solutions for these busy women. "If you are overtired, overstressed, overwhelmed, over-worried, overeating or just plain overdoing it, there are practical, stress-relieving strategies in this book that can help you."

Moscoe was a children's singer and performer – she sang with the duo Jim and Rosalie and then solo – and said that her own life was stressed when she was busy being a daughter, wife and mother – she is now also a grandmother – on top of working.

"My mother died in 1986, but I didn't change my life until three years later, when I had a medical scare and a family member developed a mental illness. That is when I decided to get my family member and myself well.

"Leaving the music business was difficult, but I went on to study wellness, health promotion and holistic nutrition. Helping people became my passion."

Rosalie Moscoe

She advocates therapeutic nutrition to prevent illness, she said. "If you eat better and look after your well-being, your mental and physical health will improve. You need to eat well to reduce stress. Wellness and stress relief go hand in hand."

She spent about five years writing the book, "but it was in my head for about 15 years. I tried to make it fun and poignant."

Each chapter begins with a cartoon that sums up the chapter. *Overcommitment and Stress* begins with a woman holding a baby while using her computer, cooking and holding her husband's hand.

"The frazzled woman, the one who copes with repetitive stress, looks tense and tired, Moscoe said. "She can't focus too long on any one conversation, often thinking other thoughts while you talk to her."

Moscoe said that first of all, you must have a commitment to yourself. Make a list, "and decide which commitments you can drop. This is not about abandoning responsibilities, but remembering your responsibility to your own needs. Adrenal fatigue can make you tired and run down."

You have to help others, she said, "but you have to take a step back and relax. Sometimes you have to say no."

She feels for women, she said. "In my book, I'm bringing them some ideas about how to be who they want to be."

OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Ada Tanni	Dec 11/11	7 Townsgate Drive
Hilliard Conway	Dec 11/11	625 Avenue Road
George Pick	Dec 12/11	70 Montclair Avenue
Syd Roth	Dec 10/11	33 Delisle Avenue
Edith (Dita) Harris	Dec 11/11	234 Lonsmount Drive
Siegfried Kruh	Dec 11/11	360 Ridelle Avenue
Lisa Jessica Cohen	Dec 16/11	2239 Eglinton Ave. E.
Leonard Caplan	Dec 15/11	561 Avenue Road
Sidney Jakin	Dec 17/11	2075 Bayview Ave.
Leon Atteslander	Dec 15/11	22 Maynard Blvd.
Harriet Epstein	Dec 16/11	55 Skymark Drive
Lily Rosenbloom	Dec 17/11	131 Beecroft Rd.
Evelyn Cole	Dec 17/11	
Molly Frankle	Dec 17/11	306 Finch Ave. E.
Jack L. Tully	Dec 17/11	5444 Yonge St.

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Aviva Schwartz	Dec 16/11	1105 Ashgrove Crescent

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Turner, Sylvia	Dec. 8/11	91 Townsgate Dr
Schonberger, Edith	Dec. 8/11	1 Clark Ave. W
Yurman, Mickey	Dec. 10/11	46 Binscarth Cres
Haas, Sonia	Dec. 11/11	12 Stonedene Blvd
Phillips, Cecile	Dec. 11/11	205 Cummer Ave
Kates, Leatrice	Dec. 12/11	3560 Bathurst St
Friedlander, Robert	Dec. 12/11	Private
Bokser, Helen	Dec. 12/11	9 Dornell St
Itsekson, Evir	Dec. 12/11	Private
Diamond, Estelle	Dec. 13/11	10 Tangreen Crt
Greene, Harry	Dec. 14/11	Private
Stern, Max	Dec. 14/11	145 Almore Ave
Zucker, Abus	Dec. 14/11	Private
Mostyn, Joan Maxine	Dec. 15/11	4001 Don Mills Rd
Goldgrub, Mary	Dec. 15/11	343 Clark Ave. W
Ogrudek, Yael	Dec. 15/11	Private
Benchimol, Carlos	Dec. 15/11	
Wells, Allan	Dec. 12/11	

It is with a deep sense of appreciation
that the family of

Edith Schonberger ז"ל

thank you for your words of comfort,
visits during shiva and generous donations
in her memory.
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will always be remembered.

Olga & Alex Eisen, Howard & Cindy Schonberger and Monica Lightman

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Watch this space each week for monument dealers & shiva caterers

SEWAGE SOLUTIONS

In Grade 7, students at Robbins Hebrew Academy's Beth Tzedec campus had to create a public service announcement or poster to propose sewage treatments for a town, as part of a science unit on solutions. Pictured are Melanie Rose, left, and Sydney Cohn.

January Sale on Tap

Ring in the New Year with Extra Savings on these and more Bath and Kitchen Fixtures

All Advertised Prices Are Available While Supplies Last!

Taps Shower Kit #14

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Rubinet Genesis Faucet

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$227

Brushed Nickel $297

Grohe Ladylux3 Café Kitchen Faucet

Dual spray pull-down allows for effortless water control. SpeedClean anti-lime system promotes a like-new appearance. Priced in Starlight Chrome.

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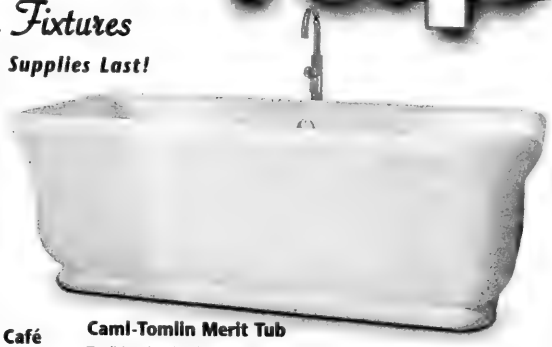
RealSteel $637



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71" x 33.5" x 24.5" $1727

Mirabelle Key West Suite

Includes elongated toilet 1.28 gpf with slow-close seat and 24" pedestal basin. Priced in white.

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Company takes the pain out of standing in line

Paul Lungen
Staff Reporter

Is there anything more annoying than standing in line for one, two or three hours to transact business that takes just a few minutes to conclude?

Jay Kimel-Fleishman

If you think queuing up is a complete waste of time, Jay Kimel-Fleishman is the guy to see. Founder of File My Tickets, he offers stressed-out and time-strapped individuals an easy way to avoid the lines. For a fee, his company will stand in line for you at government offices and request a trial date to fight parking and traffic tickets.

At $12 for a traffic ticket, $7 for a parking violation – there are discounts for multiple tickets – File My Tickets handles from 750 to 1,000 tickets a month. Business has really picked up since September, and "it's just growing. Everyone gets tickets, unfortunately," Kimel-Fleishman said.

"We help people set the date," he said.

So far, the business is proving to be profitable and he's hired eight people to work for him, full time and part time, either in the office or in line.

It's not his first business. "I grew up in the family business" handling national accounts for City Water International, a provider of point-of-use water filtration systems.

Kimel-Fleishman, 33, came up with the idea for the company as a result of personal experience. "I got a lot of tickets when I was younger," he said. "I always wanted an opportunity to fight them."

He learned time and again that appearing in court to set a trial date was a real pain. You missed work, lost income and sometimes even got another parking ticket while waiting in line.

Looking at the faces of others waiting their turn, "I thought they'd rather be someplace else, like at work."

But the fear of a conviction, demerit points and possible loss of licence or insurance was motivating them, he concluded.

"It's a huge waste of time," he said, but with the prevalence of the Internet and all kinds of online services, he wondered why government officials weren't offering something to make the process easier.

Could it be that making it easier wasn't on their agenda? "They don't want to encourage something that would cost them money," he suggested.

"I thought, if they [the ministry] won't do it, I will."

Kimel-Fleishman set up the web service at www.filemytickets.com and, mostly through word of mouth and some advertising, clients started to sign up. A small number were fighting parking tickets, the vast majority were ready to head to court to plead not guilty to traffic offences.

What the service offers is a warm body to stand in line for you and file a Notice of Intention to Appear, the legal document that tells the Ontario court system you intend to fight the traffic or parking violation.

File My Tickets won't actually fight the ticket for you; it merely offers clients the convenience of doing the time-consuming legwork for them.

"We're just processors," Kimel-Fleishman said.

With the arrival of the new year, File My Tickets is planning to add several new services. In addition to setting court dates for clients, it will change court dates, search records to determine if a driver was suspended, go to government offices and pay fees to reinstate licences that were suspended for non-payment of fines, file change of address notices, pick up disclosure documents and order transcripts of court proceedings.

Kimel-Fleishman expects fees to range from $15 to $20 per service, although "our bread and butter is definitely setting trials. But people will really appreciate these services."

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Israel increases defence budget

Zvi Zrahiya
Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — The Knesset finance committee recently made a hurried decision to increase the defence budget by NIS 779 million ($210 million), despite the many calls by the Finance Ministry and the Trajtenberg committee to cut the defence budget instead.

The proposal to increase the budget – to a total of NIS 60.7 billion ($16.4 billion) – came at the end of the finance committee's meeting and was approved within minutes, without an intensive discussion.

Committee members were not told precisely how the money would be used. Instead, the details will be passed to a joint committee composed of Knesset finance, foreign affairs and defence committee members.

The Trajtenberg committee, appointed in the wake of last summer's cost of living protests, had called for cutting the defence budget in order to fund more social programs. A three per cent cut to the defence budget had been discussed.

Sources say the budget increase was most likely approved at the beginning of the year as part of an agreement between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the Finance Ministry and the Defence Ministry. Economic leaders argued the deal had been hashed out between Netanyahu and his close associate Defence Minister Ehud Barak, who has been pushing for a budget increase.

Increasing the defence budget comes at the expense of the welfare budget, which is losing NIS 70 million ($18.9 million); the National Insurance Institute, which loses NIS 113 million ($30.5 million); the Housing Ministry, which loses NIS 24 million ($6.5 million); as well as other government ministries and budgets. Also going under the knife are funds to assist demobilized soldiers and the Environmental Defence Ministry.

Finance Minister Yuval Steinitz said the budget increase was merely a technical matter. Knesset finance committee chair Moshe Gafni was among those voting in favour.

Knesset members from the Kadima, Labor and National Union parties voted against the budget increase.

MK Shai Hermesh (Kadima) slammed the move for coming at a time when talks were underway to cut the defence budget. "This is a slap in the face to anyone who wants transparency," Hermesh said, noting the committee had recently met twice with Barak and demanded that the defence budget become more transparent.

Gafni tried to calm Knesset members by stating that the increase related to money that hadn't been used by other ministries.

The Defence Ministry stated in response that it was not receiving any money beyond what was called for in the 2011 budget, which the government approved.

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Segregation in Beit Shemesh causes uproar

Mary Oster
JTA

JERUSALEM — Beit Shemesh in central Israel has been the site of on-again, off-again religious violence for several years.

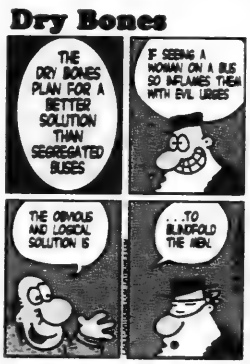
But it wasn't until the plight of a fearful eight-year-old girl from a modern Orthodox immigrant family from America was broadcast on Israel's Channel 2 over the weekend that the religious tensions in Beit Shemesh captured the nation's attention, including that of Israel's prime minister and its president.

In the broadcast, the girl, Na'ama Margolis, told a reporter that she is afraid to walk the 300 yards from her home to her modern Orthodox girls' school for fear that the haredi men who protest outside of the school will hurt her. Video showed Na'ama's mother encouraging her to walk the short way to school punctuated by the girl's whimpers and cries of "no, no."

Some haredi residents of Beit Shemesh, which has a population of about 80,000, are upset about the opening last September of a modern Orthodox girls' school, Orot, across the street from their neighbourhood. Confrontations between haredi activists and modern Orthodox concerning the school have waxed and waned since the beginning of the school year, and often resulted in violence.

Haredi protesters have thrown eggs and bags of excrement at the young girls and called them "sluts" and "shiksas." Haredi opponents of the school say the girls and their mothers dress immodestly, with sleeves and skirts that are not sufficiently long.

After the story aired over the weekend, the dispute in Beit Shemesh became national news and the violence ratcheted up a notch.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...TO BLINDFOLD THE MEN.

On Dec. 25, haredi rioters surrounded and threw stones at city workers removing signs calling for the separation of the sexes on city streets. When haredi activists put up new signs to replace them, the police who returned the next day to remove them encountered rioting by about 300 haredi men who threw stones at police and burned trash cans, according to *Ha'aretz*.

Fisticuffs also broke out when news teams from two Israeli television channels were attacked by haredi extremists when they attempted to film in the city.

On the evening of Dec. 27, some 2,000 defenders of the girls – secular and modern Orthodox – struck back with a rally at the school against attempts to exclude women from the public sphere in Israel.

Israeli President Shimon Peres urged Israelis to attend the rally. "Today is a test for the nation, not just for the police. All of us, religious, secular, traditional must as one man defend the character of the State of Israel against a minority which breaks our national solidarity," Peres told reporters.

"Free Israel from religious coercion" read one sign at the rally. "Stop Israel from becoming Iran" read another.

"We are struggling over Israel's character not only in Beit Shemesh, and not only over the exclusion of women, but against all the extremists who have come out of the woodwork to try and impose their worldview on us," opposition leader Tzipi Livni, head of the Kadima party, said at the rally.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has called on the Israeli Police to act aggressively against violence aimed at women. Netanyahu also reportedly spoke with Attorney General Yehuda Weinstein to make certain that laws against excluding women from public spaces are enforced.

"The exclusion of women goes against the tradition of the Bible and the principles of Judaism," Netanyahu told participants at a Bible contest on Dec. 27.

Kadima lawmaker Nachman Shai submitted a bill to the Knesset on Dec. 29 that would make "publicizing, inciting, preaching or encouraging gender segregation in the public sphere" a criminal act punishable by three years in prison.

The haredi Orthodox mayor of Beit Shemesh, Moshe Abutbul, decried the violence against young girls and the exclusion of women.

Following the violence, the Beit Shemesh municipality said it would install hundreds of security cameras in areas where harassment of women was occurring.

In related developments, a haredi man who insulted a female soldier after she refused to sit in the back of a city bus was charged on Dec. 29 with sexual harassment. Moshe Fuchs, 44, was indicted in a Jerusalem court, a day after he was arrested by Jerusalem police for calling the soldier, Doron Matalon, 19, a "whore" and a "shiksa" on a Jerusalem bus. Other passengers on the bus joined him in insulting Matalon. The bus driver pulled over and called police.

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CIJA deplores extremist behaviour

Continued from page 1

Canadian and American Jewish groups condemned the public violence against women in Israel.

"We deplore that there are those who are perverting Jewish tradition in this way and, at the same time, are gratified at those in Israel who are reaffirming the need for respect for everyone as individuals regardless of gender or orientation," said Shimon Fogel, CEO of the Centre for Israel and Public Affairs.

Fogel added that he believes Netanyahu's remarks also reflect the feelings of the Canadian Jewish community.

Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, said in a statement that it stands firmly against discrimination with regard to gender, religion and race.

"We denounce recent attempts by extremists to segregate and discriminate against women in public spaces in Israel," the organization said. "All of our institutions… are fully committed to equal opportunity for all."

Hadassah praised Netanyahu and Israeli President Shimon Peres "for their public statements and [called] on religious and political leaders everywhere to join them in condemning and committing to end extremist positions against women."

The Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) also praised Netanyahu and members of the government for their public condemnations of religious extremism and violence against women.

"Our movement includes Jewish people from all streams and persuasions. Yet, despite our differing backgrounds, we unite today to strongly condemn, with one clear and loud voice, all acts of violence, intimidation, coercion and extremism, especially those that are undertaken, incredibly, in the name of Judaism," said Jerry Silverman, president and CEO of JFNA. "We know that '*derachehah darchei noam*' – the Torah's paths are ways of peace. We stand firmly and resolutely behind the voices of reason and moderation in Beit Shemesh and throughout Israel."

With files from Andy Levy Ajzenkopf and JTA.

Haredim seek media's help to be rid of extremists

Yair Ettinger
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — One after the other, the haredim approached the reporters. Some gave their full names, some refused to give any name or – as with one leading rabbi – asked that their names not be published. Some came forward in the streets of Beit Shemesh, some made a phone call.

They are reaching out to plead for the help of journalists working for secular newspapers, which many haredim now think will play a decisive role in increasing public pressure on the extremists living in Beit Shemesh and Jerusalem.

They want the police and the government to get on the extremists' case, because the leadership vacuum created by politicians, rabbis and newspapers that serve the haredi world has left mainstream haredim looking for help in places they normally wouldn't go.

Changes are afoot even within the haredi media. True, the haredi *Yated Ne'eman* newspaper warned in its lead headline on Dec. 26 of an "incitement campaign" against haredim, which it said was aimed at breaking up the coalition alliance between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the haredi political parties, as well as putting a damper on the goal of making more Jews Torah-observant. But several writers for haredi websites are consistently and vigorously attacking the extremists – and even declaring them to be enemies of the haredim.

"This is the time to create a barrier between us and the extremists," said Aryeh Goldhaber, an activist in the Tov movement, which represents moderate haredim on the Beit Shemesh and Betar Ilit city councils. "People, even among the secular population, are beginning to realize that those who are going wild in Beit Shemesh are a crazy, extremist group spreading fear through the streets, beating people, vandalizing, using violence. The public is afraid of them, the rabbis are afraid of them. This has to stop."

Tov representatives, who paid a visit to the home of Na'ama Margolese, an eight-year-old girl who was spat upon by haredim protesting the "immodesty" of religious schoolgirls on their way to class, see themselves as an alternative to the haredi parties United Torah Judaism and Shas. In addition to seeking a crackdown on the extremists, Tov also wants to develop a different model for haredim, Goldhaber said.

For instance, though many haredi men refuse to work for a living, Goldhaber does, and he is trying to foster a larger group of haredim who both work and learn Torah. He helped found a haraedi yeshiva, Metivta Beit Shemesh, one of the few haredi yeshivot in Israel where high school students take the bagrut, the official Israeli matriculation exams.

He says haredim like him fall between the cracks. "Instead of helping us, the establishment ignores us or makes it hard for us," Goldhaber said.

The Beit Shemesh municipality did not allocate land for the yeshiva, forcing the founders to solicit donations from the parents of prospective students and rent a building. Goldhaber said the Education Ministry does not officially recognize the yeshiva and that it has faced many bureaucratic obstacles.

"The more support we get from the outside, the more effective we will be able to be," he said. "But if we aren't granted legitimacy, both from the public at large and from the ultra-Orthodox population, if we don't manage to establish more normal yeshivas where you can take the bagrut, then we're on the sure path to civil war."

Another area resident, a chassidic man who lives in Ramat Beit Shemesh, called on the police to take action against the extremists.

"The police have to crack down on them," he said. "They're violent, they threaten us, they're strangling us and their own rabbis. They don't let anyone live."

The man said his wife quit what he said was her "kosher" job, for which she studied at a haredi institute for professional training, because extremists warned them they would put up flyers condemning them if she didn't.

"Their rabbis don't dare say a word to them," the man said. "I think that the ones responsible for excluding women here are the state, the police – for not doing anything about them."

Marriage bill passes first reading

JTA

JERUSALEM — A bill that would allow couples wishing to marry to register with any rabbinate in the country passed a preliminary Knesset reading.

The bill was approved 57 to 15, and was opposed by the religious Shas and United Torah Judaism parties, which voted against the legislation. The bill was initiated by the Yisrael Beiteinu party. It must still pass second and third readings in the Knesset.

Currently, Jewish couples must register with the rabbinate in the city or region of residence of one member of the couple.

The legislation comes more than a month after Tzohar, an organization of modern Orthodox rabbis that performs alternative religious wedding ceremonies for non-religious couples, was given approval to register couples in the community of Shoham, where the head of the organization serves as chief rabbi.

A Jewish couple must have a religious ceremony in Israel in order to be recognized as married. Many travel abroad to marry in secular ceremonies.

The new law also would be a boon to converts to Judaism, especially those who convert through the Israel Defence Forces, according to *Ha'aretz*, who will be able to register to marry with more moderate Orthodox rabbis who recognize their conversions.

Israel's population 7.8 million

© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — Israel's population stands at 7.836 million people, the Central Bureau of Statistics (ICBS) indicated last Thursday in its year-end survey.

According to the ICBS report, Jews comprise 75.3 per cent of the country's population, with 5.901 million people. Arab citizens comprise 20.5 per cent, or 1.610 million. Another 4.2 per cent of Israel's population, some 325,000 people, are non-Arab Christians and those whom the Interior Ministry doesn't classify by religion.

The survey also indicated that 2011 saw a 1.8 per cent increase in Israel's population – 141,000 people – a rate comparable to the figures of the last decade. In Israel, 166,800 babies were born during the year, and about 17,500 new immigrants arrived in the country.

Iran threatens to cut off world oil supply

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JERUSALEM — The United States is in no position to advise Iran against cutting global oil supply in case of sanctions against its petroleum industry, a top Iranian commander said last Thursday.

The comment by deputy chief of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Hossein Salami came after the U.S. Fifth Fleet said it will not allow any disruption of traffic in the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial waterway in the distribution of worldwide oil supply.

"The free flow of goods and services through the Strait of Hormuz is vital to regional and global prosperity," the U.S. Navy said in a written response to queries from Reuters about the possibility of Iran trying to close the strait.

Responding to the remark by U.S. forces, Salami told Iranian state television Press TV that the "Islamic Republic of Iran asks for no other country's permission for the implementation of its defense strategies."

According to the Press TV report, the senior Iranian military official also said that U.S. pressure had failed to prevent Iranian action on other issues in the past.

Hossein Salami

The U.S. Navy's comments came a day after Iran's first vice-president warned that the flow of crude will be stopped from the crucial Strait of Hormuz in the Gulf if foreign sanctions are imposed on its oil exports, the country's official news agency reported. "If they [the West] impose sanctions on Iran's oil exports, then even one drop of oil cannot flow from the Strait of Hormuz," IRNA quoted Mohammad Reza Rahimi as saying.

About one-third of all seaborne oil was shipped through the strait in 2009, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, and U.S. warships patrol the area to ensure safe passage.

Tensions over Iran's nuclear program have increased since the International Atomic Energy Agency reported on Nov. 8 that Tehran appears to have worked on designing a nuclear bomb and may still be pursuing research to that end. Iran strongly denies this and says it is developing nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

Iran has warned it will respond to any attack by hitting Israel and U.S. interests in the Gulf, and analysts say one way to retaliate would be to close the Strait of Hormuz.

Most of the crude exported from Saudi Arabia, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Iraq – together with nearly all the liquefied natural gas from lead exporter Qatar – must pass through a 6.4-kilometre-wide shipping channel between Oman and Iran.

Clay seal discovered

JTA

JERUSALEM — A tiny clay seal that likely certified the purity of ritual objects used in the Second Temple was discovered in an excavation near the Temple Mount. The seal, which may have been used on the cruse of oil that lit the Temple's menorah after the victory of the Maccabees over the Greeks, is the first "direct archeological evidence of activity on the Temple Mount and the workings of the Temple during the Second Temple period," according to the Israel Antiquities Authority, which announced last month.

The seal, which is about two centimetres in diameter, or the size of a button, was discovered during a sieving process of the soil removed from the excavation. It is stamped with a two-line Aramaic inscription.

"The meaning of the inscription is 'Pure for God,'" according to the excavation directors on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority, archeologists Eli Shukron of the IAA and Prof. Ronny Reich of the University of Haifa. "It seems that the inscribed object was used to mark products or objects that were brought to the Temple, and it was imperative they be ritually pure. This stamped impression is probably the kind referred to in the Mishnah as a *chotem*, or seal."

The artifact was discovered among the layers of soil covering the foundations of the Western Wall, about 15 metres north of the southwestern corner of the Temple Mount, excavated beneath Robinson's Arch.

This tiny seal could have been used as a "voucher" certifying the ritual purity of an object or food in the Temple Mount compound and in the Second Temple.

Other artifacts dating to the Second Temple period were discovered, including some that date earlier to the time of the Hasmoneans, such as oil lamps, ceramic cooking pots and a fusiform juglet that may have contained oils and perfume, as well as coins of the Hasmonean kings, such as Alexander Jannaeus and John Hyrcanus.

Germany adds compensation benefits to some Soviet cases

JTA

NEW YORK — Germany has agreed to changes in one of its restitution programs that will add payouts of approximately $3,300 to some 10,000 Jews, the Claims Conference announced.

The changes, which will affect the hardship fund, will expand the class of World War II survivors eligible for one-time payouts to include those who fled Soviet areas between June 22, 1941, and Jan. 27, 1944, that were never occupied by the Nazis, but were within about 62 miles of the Nazi line.

Until now, only survivors from areas that were eventually occupied by the Nazis were eligible. The new rules, which were to go into effect Jan. 1, recognize that even if their cities never fell to the Nazis, the Jews' flight from them under the threat of Nazi occupation constitutes hardship caused by Nazi Germany.

"We are gratified to be able to attain recognition for these now-elderly Jews who suffered," Gregory Schneider, the executive vice-president of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, told JTA. "Jews who lay in the path of the Nazi onslaught had every reason to fear they would be massacred. Having fled to avoid this fate, their experience as Jewish refugees deserves acknowledgement."

The change will expand eligibility to Jews who fled Moscow and Stalingrad –now known as Volgograd – as well as those who fled Leningrad prior to the Nazi siege of the city. However, the payouts are open only to those who have since moved to the West. Those currently living in former Soviet bloc countries remain ineligible.

Other changes to the hardship fund to take effect Jan. 1 include payments to citizens of certain western European countries during the Nazi era who have not received any other payment from German sources, and payments to Jews living in former Soviet bloc countries who were born after 1927 and were orphaned as a result of the Nazis' actions.

Israel Briefs

Hadassah in debt

The Hadassah Medical Center hasn't been able to pay its suppliers, an Israeli business daily has reported. Hadassah's debt to its suppliers is reportedly about $2.65 million, according to the *Calcalist*, a publication of *Yediot Achronot*. The Hadassah Medical Center does not receive any Israeli government support, as it is owned by Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America. The Hadassah organization lost about $90 million in the Madoff Ponzi scheme. Following the Madoff affair, Hadassah cut its annual support to the hospital, according to *Yediot Achronot*. Hadassah told Ynet that "unlike other hospitals, Hadassah does not receive any budgeting from the government or the state health system. This is a temporary setback in a minor portion of the payments, due to the fact that Hadassah has not received all of its due payments from various parties."

Babies separated in utero

Surgeons at Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem separated conjoined twins in utero. The babies shared a placenta and major blood vessels. Their lives were in danger in the womb of their 25-year-old mother, from a Palestinian village, who was in her 20th week of pregnancy. The babies' blood supply was separated using a laser device inserted in the womb.

Attackers from capital

Many of the activists who vandalized an army base in the West Bank two weeks ago came from a yeshiva in Jerusalem, police told Israeli media. Some 40 of the activists arrived near the West Bank outpost of Ramat Gilad on a chartered bus from the Mercaz Harav Yeshiva in Jerusalem. The arrangements reportedly were co-ordinated by three Mercaz Harav students from the West Bank currently residing in Jerusalem after being banned from the West Bank by the Israel Defence Forces. The organizers reportedly planned the attack on the Ephraim army base in advance, using maps and intelligence on troop movements that they had collected, according to Ynet.

Convoy Attacked

Israel's air force allegedly attacked weapons convoys travelling from Sudan to the Gaza Strip, Sudanese media reported. The two convoys reportedly were smuggling Iranian weapons to Gaza earlier this month when they were hit by warplanes. At least two people were killed and several wounded in the strikes, according to the reports. Israel has not responded to the reports, which have been denied by the Sudanese army. Sudan's foreign minister in April blamed Israel for a bombing attack on a car near the country's port city, Port Sudan, which killed two.

U.S. worried about treaty

Israeli media reported that according to Egyptian opposition figure Mohamed El-Baradei, the United States is secretly talking with Egypt's ruling military council to ensure that the country's democratically elected regime will maintain its peace treaty with Israel. Islamist parties have won the first two rounds of the elections. Recent reports have been contradictory and confusing regarding the intention of the Islamist parties to honour Egypt's peace treaty with Israel.

– *With files from JTA and Ha'aretz*

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EYE ON ARTS

By BILL GLADSTONE

THEODORE BIKEL PLAYS LEAD ROLE IN *VISITING MR. GREEN*

Actor **Theodore Bikel** stars in *Visiting Mr. Green*, the well-received play by **Jeff Baron** that is opening in Toronto this month under the auspices of the Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company.

Bikel stars as Mr. Green, who is almost hit by a car driven by a young corporate executive, played by **Aidan deSalaiz**. Found guilty of reckless driving, the young exec is ordered to visit Mr. Green weekly for six months. What starts off as a comedy about two people who resent being in the same room together develops into a gripping and poignant drama as family secrets are revealed and old wounds opened.

Jane Mallett Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre, 27 Front St. E., Jan. 28 to Feb.18. Official opening night is Jan. 31. $39.50 to $69.50. 416-366-7723, www.stlc.com.

* * *

A Tiny Piece of Land: The Teatron Jewish Theatre Company presents the Canadian premiere of *A Tiny Piece of Land*, by **Joni Browne-Walders** and **Mel Weiser**. The play focuses on an American dentist who impulsively visits Israel after the death of his wife and reunites his long-estranged brother. Their political clashes and a couple of terrorist attacks heighten the emotional drama of the play.

The cast features **Bob Legare**, **Tara Nicodemo**, **Geoff Kolomayz** and **Nicole Marie McCafferty**. Toronto Centre for the Arts, Studio Theatre, 5040 Yonge St., January 4 to 19. www.teatrontheatre.com

* * *

New in Print: Vilna-born Montreal composer **David Botwinik** presents his life's work, a collection of 56 original musical compositions titled *From Holocaust to Life: New Yiddish Songs*. The pieces include solo and choral works, with lyrics by various poets, complete with English translations, piano accompaniments and chords. Prepared for publication by **Alexander Botwinik**, published by the New York League for Yiddish. http://botwinikmusic.com

* * *

Yiddish Film: Friends of Yiddish presents

Aviva Chernick

American Matchmaker, the last Yiddish movie of **Edgar G. Ulmer**, introduced by film critic **Shlomo Schwartzberg**. Actor **Leo Fuchs**, who was once known on Second Avenue as the Yiddish **Fred Astaire**, plays an elegant and eligible bachelor who can never seem to close the marriage deal. Yiddish with English subtitles. Members free, guests $5. Beth Tikvah Synagogue, 3080 Bayview Ave. Sunday Jan. 15, 2 p.m. Please RSVP by Jan. 11 to Sandy, 416-458-1440, yiddish18@yahoo.ca

* * *

Arts in Brief

• As a result of a highly successful opera program in September about **Luciano Pavarotti**, Active Seniors has organized a two-part miniseries on Great Opera Singers with opera educator Iain Scott at the Miles Nadal JCC. On Thursday Jan. 12, 1:30 p.m., Scott presents a program on the great tenor **Placido Domingo** at 70, with opera video excerpts. The following week (Jan. 19, 1:30 p.m.) he presents *La Stupenda: Dame Joan Sutherland*. $5 per program, includes refreshments. 416-924-6211, ext. 155.

• Ashkenaz and the Morris Winchevsky School offer A Jewish Music Journey Through the Ages, a new musical program for students in grades 1 to 6. The journey includes cantorial, Sephardi, Mizrahi, Ladino, klezmer, Yiddish and Israeli music. Facilitators include **Aaron Bensoussan**, **Aviva Chernick**, **Mitch Smolkin**, **Eric Stein** and **Avital Zemer**. At the school's new downtown location, 918 Bathurst St., from January 8 to February 12. 416-789-5502, www.tsjcs.com

• Critic and author Kevin Courrier examines how American movies of the last 40 years reflect the political and cultural ideals of their era. His Media Mondays series of talks, "Reflections in the Hall of Mirrors: American Movies and the Politics of Idealism", begins Jan.16 and runs to March 26, Mondays, 7 to 9 p.m. at the Miles Nadal JCC. Nine lectures, $100; or $12 drop-in, students $6. film@mnjcc.org, 416-924-6211, ext. 606.

* * *

At the Galleries: Koffler Gallery presents Museum of the Represented City, a first public solo exhibition by Toronto artist **Flavio Trevisan**. Trevisan creates an ephemeral "museum of the present" that reflects on the current state of Toronto and conveys a fragmented yet revealing cartography of the city's "built" history. Curated by **Mona Filip**, the exhibition is on view at 80 Spadina Ave., Suite 501, Jan. 19 to April 8. Opening reception, Thursday, January 19, 6 to 9 p.m.

• Celebrations is an exhibition of textiles by **Sheree Rasmussen**, who uses fabric like paint and scissors like a brush. At the Miles Nadal JCC Gallery until Jan.30.

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TEATRON Toronto Jewish Theatre presents
A Tiny Piece of Land
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Directed by Ari Weisberg
After the untimely death of his wife, American dentist Barry impulsively makes his first trip to Israel. Happiness at the reunion with his long-estranged younger brother, Yossi, is put to the test by events beyond their control. The play premiered last year in Los Angeles where it played to sold-out houses.

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International orchestra's common language is music

Kathryn Kates
Special to the CJN

The International Chamber Soloists are truly international, coming from Australia, Brazil, Belarus, Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, New Zealand, Poland, Russia, Taiwan and the United States.

"We come from many different backgrounds, but through the music we find a common language," says the renowned violinist Dmitri Berlinsky, the group's founder.

Berlinsky brings his orchestra to Toronto's Walter Hall in the new year, as part of the Mooredale Concerts.

Originally from St. Petersburg, Russia, Berlinsky immigrated to the United States in 1990. In 2004, he founded the International Chamber Soloists at the Michigan State University, where he is on the faculty.

The group has evolved from his most extraordinary young string students and members of the MSU faculty to include a professional ensemble, boasting members of major orchestras as well as advanced players from other leading music schools.

Berlinsky himself has won several violin competitions, including the Paganini Competiton in Italy and the Montreal International Violin Competition.

Since Berlinsky toured as a soloist for many years, the idea of forming the International Chamber Soloists appealed to him. Berlinsky says he was inspired by other chamber orchestras from his homeland, including Vladimir Spivakov's Moscow's Virtuosi.

Dmitri Berlinsky performs in St. Petersburg, Russia.

"When I heard these wonderful chamber orchestras, it wasn't just a bunch of musicians, but they were all accomplished players on their own," says Berlinsky. "The way they played was something really spectacular. I had always wanted to do this since I was young, but it took a long time.

"I played at a festival in Costa Rica a couple of times with another chamber orchestra from Sweden, in which I had to work without a conductor, so when the music director saw me working, he suggested that I bring my own group in a year or so. It took two years to create the group, and one of our first tours was to Central America," he says.

Berlinsky has performed in Toronto before, with the Toronto Symphony Chamber Orchestra.

For their Toronto debut, the International Chamber Soloists will perform Mendelssohn's youthful *Concerto for Violin and String Orchestra in D Minor*, with Berlinsky as soloist.

"It is not Mendelssohn's most famous, but it is a wonderful piece, written when he was 13 years old or even younger. He was a child prodigy, a genius. You can hear some Mozart influence in his music," says Berlinsky.

The first half of the concert concludes with two of Argentine composer Astor Piazzolla's famed tango-inflected works, *Four Seasons of Buenos Aires – Verano Porteno (Summer) and Primavera Porteno (Spring)*. Berlinsky says it is one of the greatest pieces originally written for a string sextet.

After intermission, audiences will be treated to Tchaikovsky's *String Sextet in D Minor, Op. 70 (Souvenir de Florence)*, with its Russian folk-like melodies in the last two movements.

In addition, Berlinsky and the International Chamber Soloists will perform a one-hour, interactive version of their concert for children, Music & Truffles, before the main performance. The series is designed to awaken love and appreciation of classical music in children five to 15. Adults wishing to learn more about music and music-making are also welcome. This concert culminates with a chocolate truffle for all.

The International Chamber Soloists perform at Walter Hall at the University of Toronto Faculty of Music, Edward Johnson Building, 80 Queen's Park, on Jan. 15, 2012, at 3:15 p.m. The concert for children, Music & Truffles, starts at 1:15 p.m. Tickets at www.mooredaleconcerts.com or by calling 416-922-3714, ext. 103. www.InternationalChamberSoloists.com.

Bikel returns to Toronto stage

Kathryn Kates
Special to The CJN

Legendary actor Theodore Bikel will grace the stage of the Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company (HGJTC) once again, this time in the Toronto premiere of Jeff Baron's *Visiting Mr. Green*, at the Jane Mallett Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, starting Jan. 28.

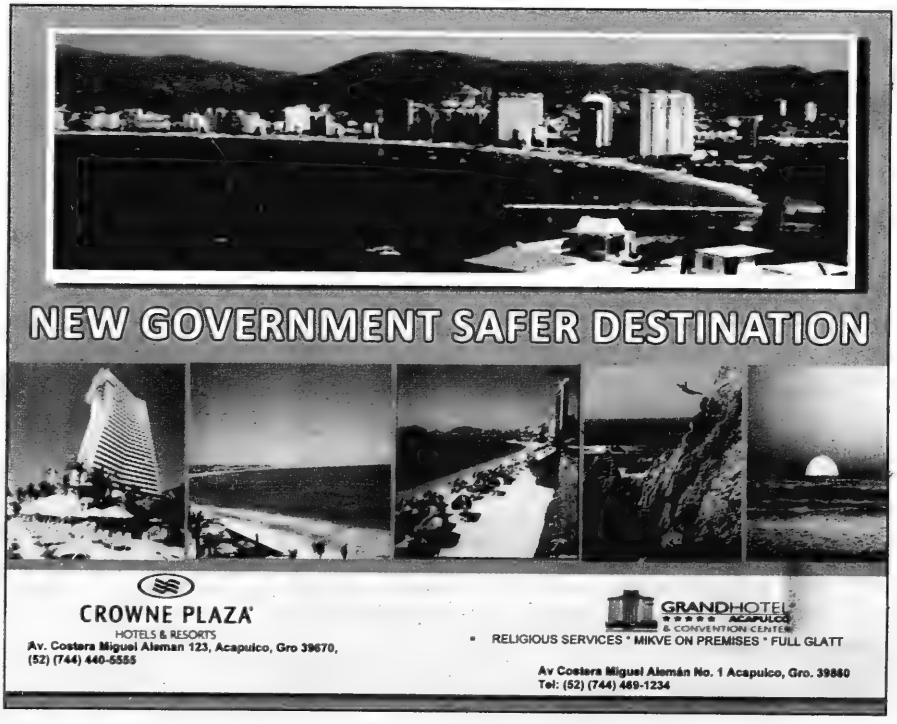
In 2009, he starred in *Sholom Aleichem: Laughter Through Tears*, for which he won a 2010 Drama Desk Award for outstanding solo performance.

Visiting Mr. Green is one of the most-produced plays in the world, boasting more than 300 productions around the world, and it's been translated into 22 languages. Jen Shuber directs this production.

"Eli Wallach did it off-Broadway and on tour," says Bikel, who comes to the role of Mr. Green for the first time. "I'm drawn to the play, because it has an intimate setting and it's not diffuse. It doesn't go off in 20 different directions. It concentrates on the relationship between two human beings who start out quite disparate from each other to the extent that they have nothing in common and will find nothing in common. At the end of the play, you realize that each of them fulfils a need in the other."

The younger man is forced by a court order to visit the older man as punishment because he almost hit the older man with his car.

Continued on page 32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Play examines Middle East conflict

David Silverberg
Special to The CJN

How can Israelis and Palestinians live in harmony? What land belongs to whom? What is it like being an Israeli in the Holy Land?

These are some of the heady questions explored in *A Tiny Piece of Land*, presented by Teatron Theatre and running at the Toronto Centre for the Performing Arts until Jan. 15.

This modern American play tells the story of two brothers with opposite worldviews: Yossi (Geoff Kolomayz) ended up moving to Israel and embraced Zionism, while Barry (Bob Legare) is a typical middle-class American Jew who wants nothing to do with Israel. The play explores the tense family dynamics arising from the brothers butting heads over who's right and who's misguided.

"The beauty is that it's not really a political play, but a family play," says Ari Weisberg, artistic director of Teatron Theatre. The writers, Joni Browne-Walders and husband Mel Weiser, not only wanted to show both sides of the Middle East conflict, but also explore the relationships of a family divided by their entrenched beliefs.

Still, Weisberg points out, "you can't be a Jew in Israel without having an opinion on politics," and *A Tiny Piece of Land* frames the brothers' arguments in a way that lets audience members make their own decisions on this thought-provoking issue.

The production, directed and set-designed by Weisberg, also stars local actors Tara Nicodemo, and Nicole Marie McCafferty.

Theatre aficionados will also hear echoes of another Middle East play on this stage: Weisberg says the writers were influenced by *My Name is Rachel*, the controversial play about activist Rachel Corrie, who died while protesting the demolition of a Palestinian home by Israeli military bulldozers. The writers have said they wanted to create a response to the play showing Israel's point of view.

In a 2010 interview, Browne-Walders said that other Israeli issues also inspired the play. "We discussed the pullout from the Gush Katif [Gaza] in August 2005. The government forced the settlers out to let Palestinians move in, but the Palestinians have since used the land to shoot rockets into Israel. They've destroyed everything there, even though they were living there. Why? Because the Israelis had used it."

A Tiny Piece of Land doesn't just focus on serious topics. It also includes flashes of humour, and Weisberg believes the play isn't so heavy that young adults won't enjoy it. "I want the audience to be left with a deeper understanding of the family challenges in Israel," he adds.

A Tiny Piece of Land follows Teatron's 2011 run of political plays, such as *Deceived*, the story of American-Jewish spy Jonathan Pollard. Teatron plans to go a bit lighter in 2012, staging the comedy *Can I Really Date a Guy Who Wears a Yarmulke?* in March. Weisberg says Teatron is also considering staging a production of Chaim Potok's *My Name is Asher Lev* at some point in 2012.

Bob Legare as Barry and Nicole Marie McCafferty as Rachel in *A Tiny Piece of Land*

A Tiny Piece of Land runs at the Toronto Centre for the Performing Arts from Jan.4 to Jan. 15. For tickets, visit www.teatrontheatre.com.

Bikel best known for his role as Tevye

Continued from page 31

"The old man was shaken up, but remembers very little of this accident. He wasn't hospitalized or really hurt in a major way. The young man is ordered to come once a week and help, but the old man doesn't want his help... His wife passed away recently and he's a loner," Bikel says.

The two-man play also stars actor Aidan deSalaiz, a veteran of the Stratford Festival. The two starred together in a musical version of the Ted Allen play *Lies My Father Told Me* at the Segal Centre for the Performing Arts in Montreal last May.

It was no coincidence that they're working together again, as Bikel strongly recommended deSalaiz for this production.

"He was magnificent in *Lies My Father Told Me*. He never left the stage throughout the play," says Bikel. "He was present at all times, but almost disappeared into the scenery when he needed not to draw attention to the character. It was an extraordinary feat that he accomplished in that play."

Theodore Bikel

The California-based actor says that he hopes the audience gets not only what is obvious on the stage, but also the subtext of the characters.

"If you're lucky enough, the audience gets it. As in life, what is actually said is only part of the story. In any conversation, we ask ourselves, 'Why did this person say that in the manner in which they said it?' Is there an agenda beyond what was actually expressed in words? If people watch a good film, it's not what the characters say, but in their face, their eyes and the attitude. On stage, it's a little more difficult to express. The characters eyes and expressions can't really be seen beyond the second row of the audience. And yet, good theatre does precisely that."

Bikel was nominated for an Academy Award for *The Defiant Ones* and for a Tony Award for originating the role of Captain Von Trapp in *The Sound of Music*, but he's best known for playing Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof*, performing it more than 2,100 times on Broadway.

Bikel says he has worked more in Canada in the last two years than in the United States. He plans to bring the show to Montreal's Segal Centre this summer, and he's currently turning the play into a film. He was also in Montreal last summer with his folk group, Quartet Serendipity 4.

Visiting Mr. Green runs from Jan.28 to Feb. 18. For tickets, call 416-366-7723, or visit www.stlc.com. For more information, go to www.hgjewishtheatre.com

Bikel will also be appearing at a special "Broadway Shabbat", a Kabbalat Shabbat service on Jan. 20, 6 p.m. at Temple Sinai, 210 Wilson Ave. Tickets are $90 and include dinner. Call 416-932-9995, ext. 221.

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Left vs. right in the Hollywood film industry

Sheldon Kirshner
Staff Reporter

Conventional wisdom has it that the Hollywood film industry has always been a bastion of the political left, a claim that was probably perpetuated by the FBI, which as early as 1918 dispatched secret agents to Los Angeles to maintain close surveillance over suspected radicals. The notion that Hollywood was a nest of leftists was reinforced by the so-called Red Scare during the Cold War.

The fact of the matter is that Hollywood has had a longer history of conservatism than liberalism, argues movie historian Steven J. Ross in *Hollywood Left and Right* (Oxford University Press), a fine book that debunks this myth once and for all.

Politics has been part and parcel of Hollywood since its rise as America's movie capital.

During the silent era, Charlie Chaplin became the first major star to use movies for political ends. But in the main, actors stayed clear of politics, fearing that such activities would alienate audiences or jeopardize their careers.

Louis B. Mayer, a Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer executive, had no such qualms. As Ross puts it, "Mayer was responsible for bringing the Republican party to Hollywood and Hollywood to the Republican party."

The onset of the Depression and the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt as president prompted many actors to become politically active. Yet stars who strayed too far from the mainstream were blacklisted.

Edward G. Robinson in *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*

The dissolution of the studio system in the late 1940s encouraged still more actors to speak their minds on a wide range of issues. But the Cold War emboldened right-wing actors.

Ross tracks the evolution of politics in Hollywood by focusing on actors and studio moguls who reflected the left/right divide. The first, second and third chapters are on Chaplin, Mayer and Edward G. Robinson, while the remaining chapters focus on George Murphy, Ronald Reagan, Harry Belafonte, Jane Fonda, Charlton Heston, Warren Beatty and Arnold Schwarzenegger.

To Ross, Chaplin – who was often mistakenly identified as Jewish – was an important figure who represented "the evolving intersection of movie stars, politics and celebrity culture."

As fascism spread its tentacles across Europe, he joined forces with Orson Welles, Robinson, Melvyn Douglas and other like-minded liberals to denounce Nazi Germany and the economic injustice at home.

Chaplin's biting feature film, *The Dictator*, a parody on Adolf Hitler and his regime, was almost never made because Hollywood's self-censorship board, the Production Code Administration (PCA), prohibited filmmakers from attacking or mocking foreign governments.

Indeed, the PCA tried to halt production of Warner Brothers' *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*, the first explicit anti-Nazi film to emerge from Hollywood.

According to Ross, Mayer – a Jew from Ukraine whose parents went to Canada before immigrating to the United States – was finely attuned to conservative political causes and passed on his knowledge to the Republicans.

"Being Jewish and coming from poverty, he felt a desperate need to be recognized as a success," he says. "What better proof could there be than being accepted by the party of the wealthy WASP establishment and then moving up in its ranks?"

When his business interests clashed with Jewish interests, Mayer always chose the former. Warner Brothers closed its office in Germany in 1934, but Mayer refused to follow suit. And on the eve of World War II, he invited 10 leading Nazi newspaper editors to his movie lot.

As he grew older, Mayer moved further to the right, coming out in support of Senator Joseph McCarthy. Imagine how miffed Mayer must have been when a liberal, Dore Schary, replaced him at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Mayer's polar opposite, Robinson, was born Emanuel Goldenberg in Romania. Affected by the scourge of anti-semitism in his native land, Robinson was committed to eradicating social injustice and participated in progressive causes.

Robinson, whom Ross describes as a left liberal, issued denunciations of Nazi Germany, assisted German Jewish refugees and demanded equality for African-Americans. In response, reactionaries fired off a torrent of antisemitic letters branding him as "stinking Yiddish riff-raff."

Once one of Hollywood's best-paid performers, he paid dearly for his political beliefs after being accused of associating with Communists.

Although this accusation was patently false, Robinson's career ground to a halt. The only offers he received were minor roles, at greatly reduced pay scales. The marquee director, Cecil B. DeMille, handed him a plum role in *The Ten Commandments*, but three years elapsed before he was offered another major role.

In profiling Robinson and other notable figures, Ross writes with authority and panache, proving his case that conservatism has usually trumped liberalism in Hollywood.

More books

On a cold, frosty winter day, you can do no better than to curl up with captivating general-interest books.

Hemingway: A Life in Pictures (Firefly Books), by Boris Vejdovsky and Mariel Hemingway, is a treat, especially if you're an admirer of this great American novelist and short-story writer. The 350 photographs of Hemingway, culled from family albums by his granddaughter, have never been published before. The commentary is by Vejdovsky, a specialist in American literature.

Fifty Plants That Changed the Course of History (Firefly Books), by Bill Laws, is fascinating. Weaving together economic and political history, the author cogently explains what impact such plants as bamboo, coca, rubber and vanilla have had on our lives down through the ages.

If you live in this province, you don't have to travel far to feast eyes on wonderful sights. *Top 100 Unusual Things to See in Ontario* (Boston Mills Press), by Ron Brown, will take you to a ghost town, Canada's version of Gibraltar and the Grand Canyon, and Ontario's oldest trees, among other tempting destinations. The photographs add lustre to this volume. Similarly, *Waterfalls of Ontario* (Firefly Books), with photos by George Fischer and text by Mark Harris, transports a reader to heavenly places.

China is changing as you read these lines. *From Mao to Market: China Reconfigured* (Columbia University Press), by Robin Porter, is a blow-by-blow account of how this great nation has transformed itself in a generation.

In *Allah, Liberty & Love* (Random House), the Canadian Muslim writer and community bridge builder Irshad Manji reflects on the spiritual journey she has taken since the publication of her first book, *The Trouble with Islam*.

Food aficiondos will delight in poring over Ken Hom's *Complete Chinese Cookbook* (Firefly Books), which is comprehensive yet accessible. And if you savour desserts, look no further than *Annie Dam's Cake Couture* (Firefly Books), a lavishly illustrated compendium on modern cake design. – *SK*

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Movie/TV mogul Paul Bronfman did it his way

Sheldon Kirshner
Staff Reporter

"I wanted to be my own man," said Paul Bronfman in no uncertain terms. "My name was frankly a pain in the ass."

By virtue of his surname, he was once ironically regarded as a mere appendage of the Bronfman clan, the powerful Montreal Jewish family that amassed a fortune in the alcoholic beverage business and was a formidable force in Canada's Jewish community for decades.

"When I was much younger, people had preconceived notions about me," said Bronfman, whose late father, Edward, was one of the owners of a legendary brand, the Montreal Canadiens hockey team, which won four Stanley Cups in the 1970s.

"Perhaps they thought I was spoiled and had a sense of entitlement, none of which was true," he mused the other day in his office in a semi-industrial area in western Toronto. "My name was more of a negative than a positive when I lived in Montreal. In Toronto, it doesn't matter."

Bronfman, 54, is no longer afflicted by the "curse" of his heritage, to say the very least.

A towering figure in the Canadian film and television industry, he is chair of Comweb Group Inc., William F. White International Inc. and Pinewood Toronto Studios Inc.

Providing production services, studio facilities and specialized equipment to movie and television shoots in Canada, these companies have been instrumental in the making of such feature films as *Titanic*, *The Incredible Hulk*, *Total Recall* and such TV shows as *Being Erica*, *Nikita* and *Heartland*.

"We offer reliability, integrity, transparency and depth of production," said Bronfman. "We are Hollywood's back lot after Los Angeles and New York."

Bronfman's guiding credo has been the key to his success as an entrepreneur. "I always try to exceed expectations," he explained. "I do my best to satisfy clients. I go beyond the call of the job."

He could easily have joined his father's firm, Edper Enterprises, known today as Brookfield Asset Management, a multi-billion dollar conglomerate. But he never even considered the option. "I had no passion, or interest, in his business."

He always knew that he would have to leave Montreal to succeed in his own right. "I couldn't wait to leave," said Bronfman, who, contrarily, was a Toronto Maple Leafs fan. "I loved Toronto from the day I got here in 1977."

Something of a gadfly, he launched his career in show business while still in high school, where he met his wife, Judy, the mother of his three children and a real estate agent for the past 30 years.

An aficionada of rock 'n' roll, he and his friends played classic rock music at bar mitzvahs, sweet sixteens and weddings. In the mid-1970s, the concert promoter Donald Tarlton hired him as a "roadie" for the band April Wine.

"I schlepped equipment and cases of Coke," said Bronfman, who regularly worked 20-hour days and rarely got enough sleep. "I was 10th in a crew of ten."

After about six months of this grind, he joined another band, Supertramp, as an assistant manager, but the going was just as rough.

"I enjoyed it, but I didn't want to make a career on the road, or age prematurely," said Bronfman, whose musical tastes are reflected in bands like Rush, Pink Floyd and Led Zeppelin. "It was not a lifestyle I wanted to pursue."

Thanks to a connection with Harold Greenberg, the proprietor of Astral Bellevue Pathe, he landed a gig after arriving in Toronto. Bronfman worked at Astral, now Astral Media Inc., for a decade, first as a sound studio co-ordinator and then in executive positions.

He did all this as he studied commerce at the University of Toronto.

"I learned a lot from the picture editors at Astral. They weren't afraid to pass on their knowledge. I learned how to provide service and technical support and to make sure the customer was happy."

Paul Bronfman

These skills would prove useful.

At Astral, Bronfman met Hollywood producer and screenwriter Stephen J. Cannell, who would be his first business partner. Cannell sought a Canadian partner because he wanted to open a movie studio in Vancouver. Greenberg introduced Bronfman to him, and they hit it off.

"Cannell took a chance on me. It took a leap on his part to bring me into this partnership," said Bronfman, who described it as a turning point.

During the late 1980s, the pair built and administered North Shore Studios, where *The X-Files* was made.

He and Cannell sold their interest in the studio to Lionsgate in 1996. "It was an offer we couldn't refuse," he recalled.

At around the time he was building North Shore Studios, Bronfman founded Comweb Corp., a private, horizontally integrated company.

Today, Comweb is a behemoth, holding shares in Astral Media and Pinewood Toronto Studios, a 260,000-square-foot facility with a 45,000-square-foot stage.

Comweb, too, has a controlling interest in William F. White International Inc., a provider of state-of-the-art lighting, grip, camera support and related film and TV production equipment with six offices from Halifax to Vancouver.

Having expanded its reach, William F. White International is now partners with Sparks Camera & Lighting Ltd., a Budapest-based motion-picture-production equipment company that services the western and eastern European markets.

In 1993, Comweb established Protocol Entertainment Inc., which developed, financed and produced TV shows and movies for the North American and global markets. Bronfman sold it in 2005.

Two years after forming Protocol, he learned he had that most debilitating and devastating of diseases, multiple sclerosis, or MS, which devours the nerves connecting the spinal cord to the limbs.

The first disconcerting symptoms were tingling toes and feet, followed by an inability to move his hands and feet. Today, he cannot walk, much less get out of bed or feed himself without help.

"It has had a major impact, but it has made me even more stubborn," said Bronfman, who requires two special assistants to get him through a day and on his business trips.

"I won't let this bloody disease beat me. I've got a great wife and great colleagues. Despite this disease, I'm pretty blessed."

Much to his satisfaction, his wife and 24-year-old daughter, Alexandra, work in close proximity with him.

Judy helps in customer relations. "My clients like her more than me," he quipped. Alexandra wears two hats, working in property management and corporate events.

His son, Jonathan, 23, is a producer's assistant in Toronto and his youngest son, Andrew, 20, is a third-year student at McGill University in Montreal.

Bronfman – a member of the board of governors of the Canadian Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies and of Toronto's Mount Sinai Hospital – is riding high these days.

The economy may be running into turbulence, but Comweb is thriving. "We actually turned a profit, and we're looking forward to another good year."

Sonny Goldstein, CFP
President

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American football continues to grow in the Holy Land

Andrew Gershman
JTA

JERUSALEM — It's a cold Thursday night in Jerusalem, and by the looks of it, you'd think there was a meeting of the United Nations under way. Men are speaking in Hebrew, English, Arabic, Russian and French, but they're not talking peace. They're here to settle the score – literally.

The cross-section of Jews, Arabs and Christians are here to play American tackle football as part of the Kraft Family Israel Football League (IFL). Entering its fifth year, the IFL has more than doubled since its launch in 2007 – it now has 10 teams.

The IFL traces its history back more than two decades, to a group of touch football players – mostly American immigrants and post-high schoolers studying in Israel – who established a football league in 1988. Six years later, the modest effort would grow into American Football in Israel, a non-profit organization recognized by Israel's Ministry of Education as the sport's governing body, which today has dozens of men's and women's flag football teams across the country.

Itay Ashkenazi, the son of former IDF chief of staff Gabi Ashkenazi, is seen in action with Big Blue Jerusalem Lions of the Israel Football League.
[Yossi Zamir/Flash 90 photo]

With the growth of flag football, a separate group of guys who had been playing tackle football had someplace to call home, and the IFL was created under the umbrella of American Football in Israel.

"It was these players who came to our organization, American Football in Israel, to set up a more organized league, which led us down the path to where we are today," said Uriel Sturm, the IFL's commissioner.

The league consists of two teams from Jerusalem, the Kings and the Lions; one from Gush Etzion, the defending champion Judean Rebels; and two from Tel Aviv, the Sabres and the Pioneers. The Be'er Sheva Black Swarm, Haifa Underdogs, Northern Stars, Petach Tikvah Troopers and the Hatikvah Hammers round out the roster. And while the overwhelming majority of players are Israeli citizens, they hail from countries as far afield as Ukraine, France and Barbados.

"I think the IFL needs to be known in every city, and the way to do so is to expand while keeping a good level of play," said Roey Ziv, a league veteran who once played for the Haifa Underdogs and now suits up for the expansion Northern Stars.

The level of play has continued to improve over the league's five-year history. Players range in talent from football newbies to Division I college talent. The latter category includes offensive lineman "Big Mike" Gondelman, a former player at Troy University in Alabama. At six-foot-nine and 402 pounds, Gondelman is an addiction and crisis counsellor in Jerusalem who believes football can be therapeutic.

"There are thousands of studies proving that, as well as personal stories I've seen through my work and in the IFL," Gondelman said.

Jeremy Sable, an offensive lineman/linebacker for the Tel-Aviv-Jaffa Sabres, played a year of football at Cheltenham High School in suburban Philadelphia but had to quit because the games were played on Shabbat. When he moved to Israel following his graduation from the University of Maryland, Sable connected with one of the Sabres players through a fellow Philadelphian.

"When I walked away from high school football, I thought I would never have a chance to play again," Sable said. "Here in Israel, I am able to fulfil my dream of living in the Jewish state, while once again playing the sport I love."

Israeli-born Chen Doron, a wide receiver for the Beersheva Black Swarm, had never played football before the IFL. He took up the sport at age 23.

"I was attracted to tackle football because it's a sport for any given size or speed or weight and so on," Doron said. "I also like football because of the team play that is required, rather than being a one-man game."

As an amateur league, one downside of the IFL is the cost to play. Players must buy their own uniforms and equipment, purchase insurance and cover the costs of travel to and from games. Ziv says it's the league's biggest problem.

"You can't ask a guy who has never played football before to spend all that money," he said. "Brand-new gear costs approximately 2,000 shekels (about $500), and pants, jerseys, insurance and everything else cost around 1,000 (about $250)."

Even for an experienced player like Gondelman, the financial commitment can take a toll.

"I've spent the last seven months rebuilding the Kings, working some months as much as 40 hours a week just to play ball," he said.

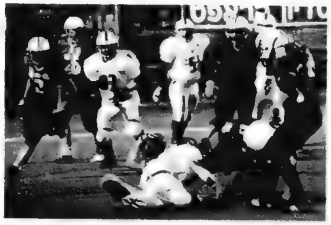
The league also struggles with transitory players. Many players are in Israel for just a year of study. Job offers and military service also get in the way of their consistent attendance. Last year's most valuable player, Alex Swieca of the Judean Rebels, was a walk-on redshirt freshman quarterback this fall at the University of Michigan.

But the constant turnover also creates excitement. The Rebels lost six key players from last year's championship squad but have managed to add some new talent.

"We are embracing the target painted on our back, although that is no different than last year," said Betzalel Friedman, head coach of the Rebels. "I am interested in seeing how all of the teams improved."

For some participants, playing football in Israel is about much more than sports.

"Our team's success comes from the fact that the majority of us really love and care for each other," Sable said. "We don't simply block for each other because we want to win, but rather because we won't allow anyone to hit or hurt our friend and teammate.



The Israel Football League is proving popular among Israelis and others who love the four-down game. The league now boasts 10 teams.
[Yossi Zamir/Flash 90 photo]

"The greatest moment of my IFL career has to be prior to the Israel Bowl, in 2010 and in 2011. Nothing beats the emotion I felt standing on the field at Kraft (Stadium in Jerusalem) singing *Hatikvah* with my teammates prior to the championship games."

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'Jewish lobby' gets the blame

Paul Lungen
Staff Reporter

The moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Canada is being accused of employing antisemitic language in criticizing Israeli policy toward the Palestinians.

Canadian Friends of the Simon Wiesenthal Center said in a statement that Rev. Rick Horst repeated "a common antisemitic canard, attributed 'injustices' perpetrated against the Palestinians to 'Zionist and Jewish lobbies in the west.'"

"The Presbyterian Church of Canada's allowing itself to be a vehicle of antisemitism and the enabling of terrorism is something to be condemned in the strongest terms," the Wiesenthal Center said on its website.

Rev. Horst categorically rejected any suggestion his remarks were anti-Semitic.

"Clearly they were not," he told *The CJN*. "I quite love the Jewish community. I always have and I always will. It doesn't mean you can't love the Palestinians as well."

Rev. Horst said his comments expressed his concern over an "imbalance of power" between Palestinians and Israelis. "My concern is to see a redress of a balance of power that would allow both Jews and Palestinians to live with security."

Rev. Horst's controversial remarks were delivered Dec. 15 at St. Andrew's Church in Toronto, during a noon-hour reflection that looked back on his recent trip to the Middle East. In his remarks, Horst said, "Palestinians are daily harassed and abused and treated with indignities that are simply not allowable under international law, yet it continues to persist because of, frankly, the power of the Jewish lobbies both in America and, frankly, all around the world, including Canada."

"Palestinians are in fact not a terrorist nation but a terrorized nation," he went on to say. "Too many uncritical, simplistic, level Christians around the world believe that Israel's claim as God's chosen people allows it to do virtually anything under the guise of security in Israel/Palestine to protect their land."

Rev. Horst said he was "musing out loud" when he delivered his remarks. "I'm wondering how [Israel] has such a powerful impact and such a small voice for Palestinians."

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Travel organization founder has a social conscience

Rena Godfrey
Special to The CJN

The November sun streams through the windows of this busy Bloor Street office, situated in the heart of Toronto's Koreatown.

Books and papers are piled neatly here and there, and four young staffers sit side by side at their desks, excitedly engaged in conversation.

This is Operation Groundswell's (OG) headquarters, a non-profit travel organization for university students and graduates aged 18 to 30 who wish to volunteer abroad.

Established in 2007 by friends and avid travellers David Berkal and Jonah Brotman, OG is one of several startup companies Berkal has helped build and grow.

Berkal is proud of OG for being a successful social-enterprise model.

"We are not just trying to be a big-box volunteer travel organization, rather, we are looking to spark a 'groundswell' of backpackers committed to making a difference globally."

And making a difference is clearly evident in everything that Berkal does. The seeds of his work have been planted in Canada and abroad.

In 2009, in addition to OG, Berkal helped develop the Canadian Roots Exchange, a non-profit student-exchange program for 18- to 30-year-olds. Funded in the past by the Ontario government, the Canadian Roots Exchange sends groups of native and non-native students to aboriginal reserves across Canada to exchange and share knowledge, art and culture.

Boyishly handsome and casually dressed, 23-year-old Berkal looks like a laid-back kind of guy. He speaks softly when he describes his achievements over the last few years, making it all sound so easy.

Having recently obtained a degree in peace and conflict studies at the University of Toronto, Berkal already has a list of accomplishments that would make a 40-year-old blush.

Since high school, Berkal has not only been recognized for his academic prowess, but also for his leadership role at U of T and throughout the Toronto community.

He was awarded the Dean's Student Leadership Award in 2011 – U of T's most prestigious leadership award given to only one student a year.

Last summer, Berkal was the valedictorian for The Next 36 Entrepreneurial Leadership Institute. Each summer, the institute helps 36 undergraduate students from across Canada launch their careers through a program that consists of academic and personal mentorship from some of Canada's business leaders.

David Berkal

Refreshingly humble, Berkal almost forgets to mention that he has just been nominated for Oxford University's Rhodes Scholarship, one of the most acclaimed postgraduate awards in the world.

Growing up in Toronto with his parents and older brother, Berkal claims he was raised "with an eye to social justice."

These values were further instilled while he attended Hashomer Hatzair's Camp Shomria in Perth, Ont., for much of his childhood and adolescence.

In fact, it was during the summer of 2006, after he graduated from high school, that the idea of creating a volunteer program for young adults took root.

Berkal's close friend, Brotman, had just returned home after doing an internship in Ghana and was disappointed with his experience abroad.

While planning his own gap year, Berkal was disheartened with the existing student volunteer options.

Together, Brotman and Berkal thought that they could create a more meaningful student volunteer program.

In October 2007, Berkal travelled to Ghana for two months, to design a volunteer program using the contacts Brotman had made. Back in Toronto, Brotman did the groundwork, assembling the first group of OG participants, who were scheduled to depart the following May.

The feedback from the first OG trip was positive, and in the last six years, the organization has served more than 200 participants from around the world.

Programs are offered year-round to destinations such as Guatemala, the Middle East, East and West Africa, Peru, Southeast Asia, India and Haiti.

More news for young Jews on heebonics.ca

A group of Operation Groundswell volunteers in Southeast Asia in 2010

OG's 2012 lineup now includes volunteer touring trips for high school students and 12-day programs for empty nesters. Each group of eight to 12 participants has two leaders. The importance of working together as a group is evident in all of OG's programs. Berkal credits OG's focus on group work to his involvement with Hashomer Hatzair.

"When people are travelling for the first time to the developing world, there's a lot to take in. Having a group experience definitely makes the trip more meaningful," Berkal says.

Educating volunteers about what it means to be an ethical volunteer is also at the forefront of OG's mission.

"We do backpacking with a purpose. We explore the culture, and have a genuine experience mixed with important community-requested projects. We travel off the beaten track, not the typical tourist guidebook thing," Berkal says.

Accommodations include a mix of camping, living in "homestays" (renting from a local family) or apartments.

Berkal is pleased with the growth of OG, but he doesn't plan to dilute the underlying message of his non-profit organization, which focuses on creating a positive impact on the participants and many communities abroad.

"We're trying to build the best and biggest, ethical, genuine, affordable organization," he says.

A six-week volunteer excursion runs about $2,500, but Berkal understands that this cost may be out of reach for some people and offers a scholarship for those in need.

For more information, visit www.operationgroundswell.com.

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Making connections

Have you ever been in a conversation with a person and discovered a connection unrelated to your current situation? I recently had such an experience at the ClimateSpark Accelerate workshop, which took place in early December.

Ten teams that emerged from an online crowdsourcing competition that sought initiatives leading to significant local reductions in energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, which I described in my September column, were invited to participate in a session co-sponsored by the Toronto Atmospheric Fund and the Center for Social Innovation.

One of the 10 competition finalists came from the Robbins Hebrew Academy and the Leo Baeck Day School. Their entry focused on an inter-school effort to collaborate on ways to reduce energy consumption and quantify the amount of energy saved.

Sustainable Jew

Fred Winegust

Another entry, ZooShare, was being championed by Daniel Bida, president of ReGenerate Biogas Inc., a dedicated developer of community-owned biogas plants. ZooShare Biogas Co-operative Inc. is a non-profit renewable energy co-operative that's developing a 500-kilowatt community-owned biogas plant on the grounds of the Toronto Zoo. It turns the zoo's annual manure output and food waste from GTA-based grocery stores into electricity, heat, fertilizer and cash for the zoo. (http://bit.ly/cjntsj-zooshare)

I had heard of another biogas project from Shai Spetgang, a graduate of USDS, now the Robbins Hebrew Academy. Spetgang completed his environmental studies degree at York University's faculty of environmental sciences. He subsequently spent time at the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies at Ben-Gurion University, and he and his family made aliyah in 2009.

I met Spetgang in Israel early in 2011, when I was presenting at the fourth annual Renewable Energy Conference in Eilat. After that conference, Spetgang shared with me a link to a biogas project he had worked on.

In Susya, in the Southern Hebron hills, local families have to spend about $15 per 1,000 litres of water, and up to $20 for cooking gas. Alumni of the Arava Institute installed a biogas system that provides cooking fuel, fertilizes agricultural projects and reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

Another system installed by that team filters grey water – from the shower, kitchen or bath – then mixes it with sheep manure. It's allowed to ferment for a while in a sack where anaerobic fermentation takes place, producing combustible methane. (http://bit.ly/cjntsj-sheepgas)

Liquid compost is created when bacteria break down the organic matter. It is then used to irrigate and fertilize vegetables and olives trees. At the same time, the gas is diverted to a pressurized storage mechanism, which powers a stove.

Previously, families in the area cooked on wood fires that produced a lot of smoke, releasing greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. When they use the manure for cooking, much less methane is released.

When I shared this story with Bida, he immediately saw the value of using elements of the ZooShare biogas proposal to address certain social needs of people in some native communities in Canada.

This social angle, added to the existing commercial angle of the ZooShare team's proposal, may help them win the ClimateSpark competition. Interesting connections can lead to interesting results.

winegust@gmail.com

CREAMY ROASTED CAULIFLOWER SOUP

- 2 heads cauliflower cut into florets
- 1 onion, chopped
- 8 garlic cloves, chopped
- 6-8 c vegetable stock or parve chicken stock
- 1/4 c olive oil
- 2 tbsp. fresh dill, chopped
- salt
- white pepper
- 1 c light cream or substitute

Preheat oven to 300°F. Place florets, onion, garlic in bowl. Mix with oil until even coated. Place vegetables on cookie sheet lined with parchment paper in oven. Roast 60 min., turning over after 20 min. Remove from oven and cool. In large soup pot, heat stock. Add roasted vegetables, dill, salt and pepper. Bring soup to a boil, then simmer on low heat, covered 30 min. Remove from heat. With immersion blender puree soup in pot until smooth, or transfer to food processor and process until smooth. Return to heat. Stir in cream or substitute. Season with more fresh chopped dill, salt and pepper to taste. Cook until heated through.

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On cjnews.com

The CJN's French-language reporter in Montreal, Elias Levy, writes about:

French historian and journalist Alexandre Adler who explains why he feels it would not be a good idea for Israel to attack Iran.

In collaboration with the Sephardi community of Quebec, Rabbi Ilan Acoca, left, spiritual leader of the Sephardi community in Vancouver, recently launched the Sephardic Association of Western Canada (SAWESTCAN), in collaboration with the Sephardi community of Quebec, whose goal is to promote Sephardi culture with the Jewish population of Western Canada

French historian Georges Bensoussan who explains why he signed JCall, the Call to Reason, a European endeavour that calls for a two-state solution to the Mideast conflict.

Exclusive in Hebrew

Thoughts about Chanukah.

Also on the web

Twenty young Jewish people from Montreal and Israel are currently in Ethiopia on a joint humanitarian mission.

Building alone and together

I watched my son, Noah, playing in the brick house at the Ontario Science Centre with about 20 other kids.

I watched him for two hours and was mesmerized because I felt as if I was privy to a display of what children's natural behaviour is, both individually and collectively.

I stared as my son collected the grey, very lightweight bricks and carried them up a set of stairs to the second floor of this open wooden house. He did this over and over again, as did the other children, ages (about) three to seven.

Urban Writer

Avrum Rosensweig

The thing that really grabbed me was Noah and his fellow builders acted with such intent, as if this was a groundbreaking task. Like ants building the queen's castle, they ran up and down the stairs, mostly smiling, and with forward-looking gazes, as if they had been contracted to erect a special structure on a deadline. The entire scene looked like it had been created by an adult with knowledge of teamwork.

At the brick house, there appeared to be a unified objective. Yet when I looked at the group differently, I could see each child was also acting on his or her own. One child piled the bricks on the second floor. Another turned the wheel that cranked up a ladder-like structure to transport the play building material. In some ways, the children were flying solo, clueless or not interested in what was happening around them.

My son verified my perception when he told me, "Daddy, everyone was doing something different." This was after I asked him what was going on in the house. Interestingly, Noah said later that "all the kids" were building something together. He seemed to intuitively understand both dynamics.

While there was unity, with no fights, I also saw individuality in that house.

And I was baffled by the following actions: the children would build up the bricks so that they covered the pillars holding up the house, then, after great effort, they tore down the structure. This happened a lot.

I surmised that the kids were actualizing their natural drive to organize and create, as they do with Lego, then they were drawing upon another equally strong drive – destruction – the need to pull apart what they had made so they can once again rebuild, this time better.

At the brick house, children did get tired while creating this anthropological masterpiece. A few cried after being bonked on the head by a brick. But all of these expressions of frustration or venting came and went quickly, unlike what normally occurs on a jungle gym in a schoolyard, where aggressive interaction frequently leads to a breakdown of what seems like a symbiotic community.

I believe I was witness to something extraordinary at the Science Centre that day. First, I was able to be with my boy and watch him with great interest as he was the Noah for which God created this world – the individual. And I had the opportunity to study my son's behaviour as part of a collective – similar to the one that left Egypt and later constructed the State of Israel.

Throughout those two hours, I was an eyewitness to human nature at work and the sheer determination and sweat of toddlers and children expressing their essence alone, and together.

I was in awe.

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From Uganda and back

Young Jews from the village of Poti in Uganda will be studying at Yeshiva of Torat Yosef in Efrat with its head, Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, seen in the photo at right. At the conclusion of their studies the young men will return to Uganda to teach Judaism to their co-religionists. It is the first time that students from Uganda have been enrolled in an Israeli yeshiva.

[Flash90 photo]

Girl harassed by haredim has Toronto roots

Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf
Staff Reporter

The poster child for the recent conflict between radical haredim in Beit Shemesh, Israel, and their modern Orthodox neighbours has a direct link to Toronto.

Na'ama Margolese, the eight-year-old girl who in the past few weeks came to prominence by speaking out about her increasing anxiety of walking to her nearby school for fear of being attacked by haredi men and boys who consider her manner of dress immodest, is the granddaughter of Arlene Margolese, manager of Reena's faith and cultural services department.

Contacted by *The CJN* last week, Arlene said her granddaughter was coping well, but she laments the growing tensions in Beit Shemesh.

The hardest thing for Na'ama is that she's "growing tired" of all the media attention, Arlene said.

"But she's a typical little eight-year-old. One of the stories in the [Israeli] newspapers said she was seven. Her response was 'I'm not seven. I'm eight.'" Arlene said. "She's also had other kids ask her for her autograph, which is hysterical."

Arlene said that all the kids at Na'ama's modern Orthodox Orot school are "pretty well traumatized" after all the verbal and physical attacks they've endured from those haredim who continue to harass them on a daily basis.

The senior Margolese characterized the whole situation as "disgusting."

She said her granddaughter, as well as her schoolmates, have been spit on and had water bombs thrown down on them by haredi men and boys standing on the rooftops along their route to school, and the school's property has even been littered with dirty diapers containing feces.

Continued on page 14

Na'ama Margolese walks to school in Beit Shemesh with her mother, Hadassah.

[Flash90 photo]

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U.S. defence secretary says Iran won't get a nuclear weapon – see page 33

CANADA

PEJE Prizes Awarded

TORONTO — Robbins Hebrew Academy in Toronto and Vancouver's King David High School were among 27 North American Jewish day schools to win $25,000 from the Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education (PEJE). PEJE awarded $625,000 in total Dec. 21 to schools implementing initiatives to keep day schools afloat. A total of 127 schools applied. Winners focused on raising annual revenue, tuition affordability and endowments. Thirteen are community schools. Seven are Orthodox, six Conservative and one is Reform.

WORLD

Lego Work Bought

WARSAW — A Nazi concentration camp made of Lego that was criticized for trivializing the Holocaust was purchased by the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw. The museum reportedly paid $71,800 to a Norwegian collector for the 1996 piece by Polish artist Zbigniew Libera. It features crematoria and barracks made from Legos, as well as Lego inmates being beaten by Lego guards. It is "one of the most important works of contemporary Polish art," the museum said in a statement. It reportedly will go on display later this year.

Hacker Strikes Again

JERUSALEM — The Saudi hacker who released the credit card details of thousands of Israelis has released 11,000 more. The hacker, named OxOmar, is a member of the Saudi hacking group Group-XP. In a Jan. 5 Internet message, he said he has hacked some 80 Israeli websites and will release one million credit card numbers with personal information. Credit card firms said the information released Jan. 5 comes from newly issued cards that they cancelled before any transactions could be carried out. Earlier last week, the hacker released a list of 400,000 credit cards with personal information, but with duplicates and false information, the number of cardholders affected was about 15,000. OxOmar told Ynet in an e-mail interview that he will also release documents from military contractors and companies that manufacture surveillance equipment.

Prominent Jews Named to Order of Canada

OTTAWA — Businessman Aldo Bensadoun and musician Yuli Turovsky of Montreal, along with former eBay president Jeff Skoll and Toronto pediatrician Alvin Zipursky, have been appointed officers of the Order of Canada, while Toronto businessman and philanthropist Lawrence Bloomberg was named a member of the Order, Gov.- Gen. David Johnston announced Dec. 30.

Aldo Bensadoun

Bensadoun is executive chairman of the Montreal-based Aldo Group, a worldwide shoe-store chain he founded 40 years ago. He is cited for his "achievements as a business executive and for his social and philanthropic engagement."

Aldo was one of the first companies to join the fight against AIDS in 1985 and is a major supporter of Hope and Cope, Montreal's Jewish General Hospital-based psychosocial support program for cancer patients.

Turovsky founded I Musici de Montréal, an acclaimed chamber orchestra, in 1983 and was its conductor until his retirement last May. He's being recognized for his "contribution to the promotion of Canada's musical excellence as a teacher, and as an internationally renowned cellist and conductor."

The California-based Skoll heads the Skoll Foundation, which awards $80 million in grants annually. He was cited for his philanthropy. Zipursky, a doctor at Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children, was cited for his contribution to pediatrics here and in developing countries.

Bloomberg's many community activities include being chairman of Toronto's Mount Sinai Hospital.

Artist Charles Pachter and businessman Seymour Schulich, both of Toronto, were also promoted from members to officers of the Order.

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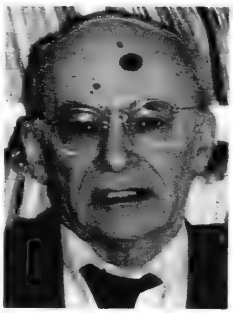
Russia bans human rights campaigner

Myron Love
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Nobel Peace Prize nominee David Matas, one of the world's leading human rights campaigners, has been banned from Russia because a book he co-wrote with former MP David Kilgour exposing China's abuse of Falun Gong members has been condemned as "extremist literature."

The ban was put into effect in 2008, yet neither Matas nor Kilgour were informed of the situation. Matas only found out when he was invited to be the keynote speaker at a conference Kyiv, Ukraine, last spring on Internet hate speech. Matas was quite surprised when a Russian participant informed him that his book on the Falun Gong was included on a list of books that had been banned in Russia.


David Matas

The Falun Gong is a Chinese grassroots spiritual group that China's Communist government considers a threat, Matas said, because the group is independent of the Communist party. Falun Gong was banned in China in 1999 and thousands of its adherents have been jailed and murdered, with the government removing their organs for transplants.

Matas and Kilgour wrote reports on the persecution of Falun Gong members and the theft of their organs in two reports in 2006 and 2007 and published their book, *Bloody Harvest*, in 2009. The earlier reports were translated into Russian and distributed in the country. A local court in Krasnodar in the east banned the reports in 2008 on the grounds that they might create a negative image of China.

"We weren't notified at all, and we played no part in the legal procedure," Matas said.

As to why a negative report on China should be banned in Russia, Matas said that he can't explain the Russian thinking. "I don't think the Russians can explain themselves," he said. "It may be a matter of authoritarian solidarity. Non-democratic governments tend to stick together."

Matas said Russian human rights and democracy activists appealed the ban, with Matas and Kilgour filing a statement for the appeal. Last month, a higher court in the Krasnodar region upheld the ban.

"I am not sure if our statement was read out in court," Matas said. "The next step will be to appeal to a higher court in Moscow and possibly to the European Court of Human Rights."

Matas has also asked the Harper government to protest the ban.

At the Kyiv conference last spring, Matas was invited to speak in Russia in 2012, but that is not going to be possible unless the ban is lifted.

"The people who will be disadvantaged by this are the Russian people," Matas said. "Without freedom of speech, they will not have access to all that is going on in the world."

Claude Rochon, spokesperson for Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, said the department is looking into the matter. "Canada takes matters of freedom of expression very seriously," she said. "The promotion of Canadian values features prominently in our ongoing dialogue with the Russian authorities."

Officials at the Russian Embassy in Ottawa were unavailable for comment last week, as the embassy was closed for the holidays.

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Seeing what can be

From the editor's desk...

We have always been taught that telling the truth requires telling the whole truth. Half a truth is half a lie.

Whether we are giving testimony under oath or recounting the details of an interesting event to our friends, we feel obliged as a matter of conscience and duty to tell the whole story. It is part of our culture to do so. It is part of the honour system of our values that underpins our open, democratic, fair play, rule of law way of life

We expect to hear and read the whole story.

And yet, when it comes to Israel, we seldom hear, see or read the whole story from the innumerable media outlets that camp out in Jerusalem or report on the Jewish state from every other conceivable spot on earth.

To be sure, it is impossible to report the whole story of any country on earth, let alone one whose society is as diverse and complicated as that of Israel. And of course, as with all countries on earth, there are also ugly stories that comprise the entirety of the truth of that society.

The recent extremist, misogynist behaviour among some small groups of haredim is one such ugly story from Israel that has, deservedly, received coverage in the media.

So, too, does Israel's conflict with the Palestinians, deservedly, receive a great deal of coverage in the media.

But the aggressive haredim or the conflict with the Palestinians is not the whole story of Israel.

The whole story of Israel includes the remarkable achievements of this tiny country of some 7.8 million people in every field of science, technology, health and the humanities.

The CJN is determined to publish more stories of these remarkable achievements. Occasionally, they will be discussed in this space.

It is important that we do this for the honesty of conveying more of the whole story about Israel. The ugly truths, we can be certain, will always be reported in friendly and unfriendly media. But the beautiful truths, we can also be certain, less so.

Another reason it is so very important for us to do this is to convey a sense of what could be in the Middle East if only some of its neighbours would set aside their atavistic hatred toward the Jewish state, and to convey a sense of what could happen in the wider world, with millions and millions of people benefiting from Israeli innovations and advancements that help and improve the lives of human beings.

One such story that went somewhat under the radar in the waning days of 2011 was the announcement by New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, that the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology in Haifa and Cornell University had won the bid to establish NYCTech, a new Applied Sciences Graduate School on Roosevelt Island in New York City. The schools' joint proposal was chosen from seven competing international institutions of considerable renown.

(Please see the related story on page 21 in this edition of *The CJN*.)

The campus will have a fantastic, futuristic look and comprise more than two million square feet when completed, home eventually to 2,500 students and 280 professors. Classes, however, will begin in temporary accommodations this year. The myriad spin-off benefits for New York City and the surrounding area will be enormous and long lasting.

Part of the joint project includes a promise by Cornell University's board of trustees to provide $150 million in venture funding to help get fledgling startups off the ground. As reported in the New York media, the new NYCTech campus "will provide all of the necessary legal and financial conditions to help ripe new businesses focused on urban planning, medicine, advertising and finance get off the ground. These will include a pre-seed financing program, legal support, partnership building and business competitions designed to spur innovation."

Not surprisingly, the announcement last month generated a great deal of excitement in the scientific community. In the community of the eco-concerned environmentalists however, the announcement was electric.

Susan Kraemer explained why in her article on the Green Prophet website dedicated, as its name suggests, to fostering and encouraging new environment-friendly technology and practices. "The Technion revealed that the NYCTech Campus will be among the most environmentally friendly campuses on earth.

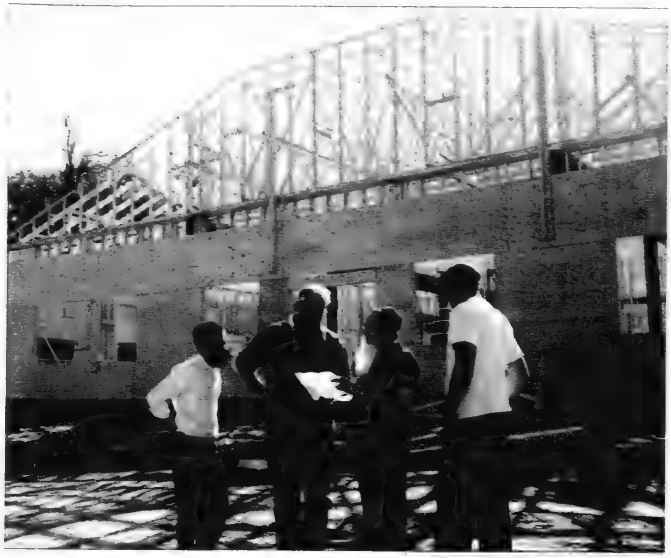
"If it were completed today, the hub would be the largest net-zero energy building in eastern United States, [as] energy will be derived from a 1.8-megawatt solar array and 400 geothermal wells that will cool the buildings in summer and heat them in winter. The NYCTech Campus will not only employ the world's most sophisticated environmental technology, but will also act as a living laboratory for the built environment hub."

Indeed, Israel's cleantech technologies are extolled throughout the electronic pages of Green Prophet. This, too, is not the whole story of Israel. But it is one of the beautiful truths that must be told.

–MBD

SeeJN

DAY OF MOURNING:
Haredim, including one covered in sackcloth, pray as if in mourning on the Tenth of Tevet at the Western Wall in Jerusalem. The fast day commemorates the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylonia. ***[Yonatan Sindel/Flash90 photo]***



Rabbi Itchy Grossbaum, left, and Rabbi Zalman Grossbaum, meet with contractors at the site of Chabad's new summer camp.

Chabad Ontario launches overnight camp

Frances Kraft
Staff Reporter

Chabad Lubavitch of Ontario will open an overnight camp in Haliburton this summer, some five years after the organization purchased a 200-acre lakefront site with 6,000 feet of shoreline.

It is the organization's second overnight camp in Canada. The other is in Quebec, and there are a handful in the United States.

Chabad has run a day camp in Thornhill for more than 30 years that serves 600 children each summer. In the early 1990s, it ran an overnight camp at a rented site for three years.

The new $6-million camp is expected to open in July with a four-week session for boys, to be followed by a session in August for girls.

The Sidney and Naomi Spiegel Camp Gan Israel was already zoned for overnight camp use. Lubavitch purchased an existing non-Jewish camp on Lake Basshaunt for $2 million in 2007, and has raised $5 million to date.

In an article on lubavitch.com, lead sponsor Sidney Spiegel, president of Crawford Metal, said he "was not fortunate enough to have the opportunity to go to camp" and that the outdoors is "very beneficial for all children."

Rabbi Zalman Grossbaum, the driving force behind the creation of the camp, said that Lubavitch overnight camps are called Gan Israel to honour the memory of the Baal Shem Tov, the 18th-century rabbi who founded Chassidism, whose given name was Yisrael. The late Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, named the camps because the Baal Shem Tov frequented the wilderness, Rabbi Grossbaum said. "That's where you serve God without interference," he added.

Camp activities will include daily Torah classes and davening, team sports, hiking, and waterfront activities like swimming, rowing, canoeing and sailing.

The camp recently received a grant for a full-size basketball court, Rabbi Grossbaum said. He added that the camp is based on a model serving 150 campers per session, but this summer he expects about half that number.

Enrolment for one session is approximately $2,000. The rabbi noted that the organization is working on a program to bring down the cost. "We're very sensitive to the challenges families have raising children – the cost of education and of camps."

Rabbi Grossbaum's son Rabbi Itchy Grossbaum, will serve as camp director. He will continue his involvement as director of Chabad's Friendship Circle, a program that pairs teens with special needs children.

The younger rabbi, 28, said he's excited about the new camp. As director, he aims to bring "a warmth of Yiddishkeit, and of life in general" to the campers, he said.

Having attended Chabad camps in Ontario and New York, he believes the experience creates unity and fosters long-lasting friendships.

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Canadians urged to shop Bed, Bath & Beyond

Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf
Staff Reporter

Canada's main pro-Israel advocacy group is urging Canadians to shop at housewares retailer Bed, Bath & Beyond in response to a call last month to boycott Israeli-made Ahava cosmetics and SodaStream home carbonation products being sold at the U.S.-based chain.

Buycott Israel, an initiative of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) that was started in 2009 to encourage consumers to support Israeli-made products in response to boycott actions, sent out an alert to its followers last week in response to a flash-mob demonstration in a Bed, Bath & Beyond store in Larkspur, California on Dec. 10.

Sara Saber-Freedman

There have been no reports of protests at the company's Canadian outlets – located in Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island – said Sara Saber-Freedman, the Montreal-based executive vice-president of CIJA and the lead on the Buycott file.

The boycott was organized by the U.S.-based group Codepink, which has targeted Ahava products in the past. The group describes itself as "a women-initiated grassroots peace and social justice movement."

It claims that Ahava cosmetics and SodaStream home carbonation products "are fraudulently labelled as 'Made in Israel,' but are in fact produced in illegal Israeli settlements, under the conditions of a military occupation in the West Bank, outside the internationally recognized borders of Israel."

Ahava counters that the minerals used in its products are mined in the Israeli part of the Dead Sea, which is undisputed internationally, and that Mitzpe Shalem, the West Bank kibbutz where Ahava products are produced, is not an illegal settlement.

Ahava and SodaStream products were targeted at some U.S. outlets.

Saber-Freedman said she was gratified that many U.S. Jewish organizations, such as the American Jewish Committee and the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, have latched onto the buycott method to fight such situations as they arise in the U.S.

"Buycott is a tool that's only as strong as the breadth of participation. We're proud to be a part of what continues to be one of the few examples of open-source advocacy," she said.

"We will follow up with Bed, Bath & Beyond. But the message to the people calling for this boycott is that the immediate result of them organizing a boycott is that there will be an increase in sales of the product they're boycotting," Saber-Freedman said.

A U.S.-based spokesperson said the chain won't pull the Israeli products.

"In order to offer our valued customers the widest selection possible, Bed Bath & Beyond carries products from all over the world," Rachael Risinger said. "As long as our customers continue to purchase and enjoy those products, we will continue to make those products available to our customers."

Saber-Freedman said said the buycott tactic has "worked pretty much every time" it has been employed.

In 2009, hundreds of pro-Israel consumers converged on a mid-town Toronto LCBO outlet to counter a call to boycott Israeli wines. Within a few hours, the store had sold out of its stock of about 150 cases of Israeli wine.

Last year, Saber-Freedman and Buycott Israel helped dispel rumours that The Bay had removed Ahava beauty products from its shelves as part of a boycott request from Canadian anti-Israel group Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME).

The Bay had in fact temporarily removed the products from its stores in order to make room for a rebranded Ahava line that it continues to sell.

Last week, CIJA refreshed the old Buycott Israel website and Facebook page to update its functionality and "feel," Saber-Freedman said.

For more information, visit www.buycottisrael.ca.

LONGTIME FIXTURE CLOSING

Negev Gift and Bookstore, which has served the community from its location on Bathurst Street south of Wilson, for many years, will be closing at the end of February. Owned by Arthur Kaplan, the store was founded by his father, David, in 1964.

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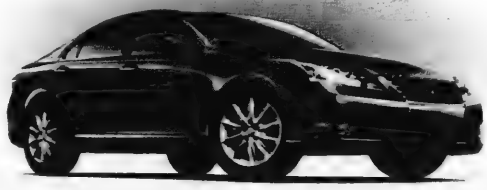

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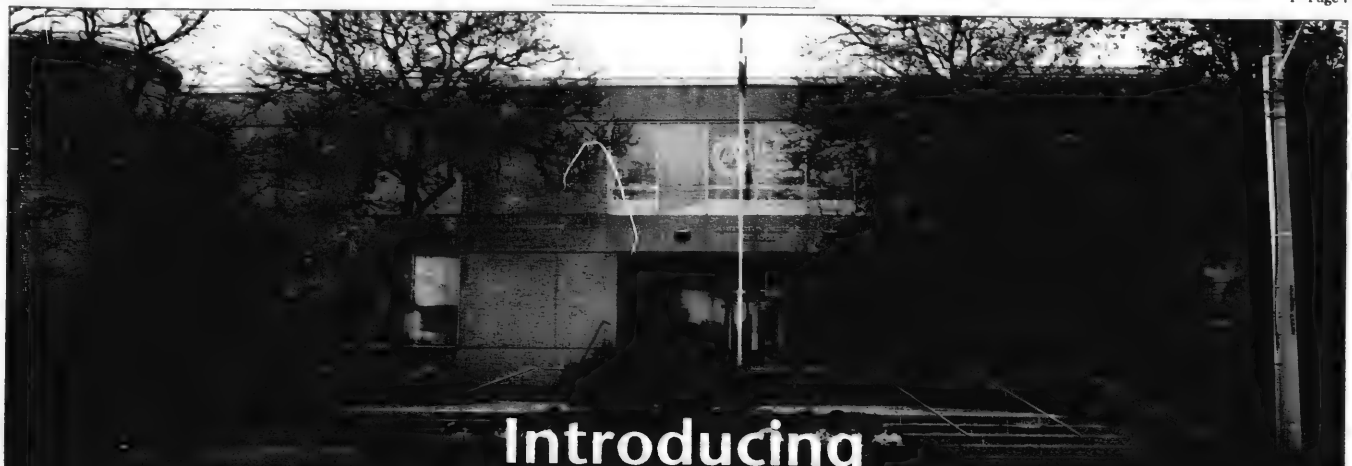

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A vile sight

The young, confused-looking child seen in the photo below was perversely exploited by a mean-spirited adult or group of adults. Intended to mimic the pose of the dramatic, iconic image of the Jewish youngster leaving the Warsaw Ghetto, surrendering to the sneering Nazis surrounding him, his hands held high, the lad below is nothing more than a grotesque prop in a hateful scene of twisted, depraved political theatre.

Two weeks ago, on motza'ei Shabbat, some 1,000 haredim took to the streets in the Mea Shearim neighbourhood of Jerusalem to protest what they described as intolerance and persecution by mainstream Israelis against their way of life. It was a reaction on their part to the condemnation by most of the Jewish world merely days before of the aggressive, extremist, even violent behaviour of a small band of other haredim in Beit Shemesh.

The Jerusalem protesters used images of the Holocaust to make their point, comparing the treatment they receive at the hands of mainstream Israelis to the treatment the Jews received in World War II at the hands of the Nazis. Many wore yellow stars with the word "Jude" written on them. Some young children were brought to a makeshift stage wearing yellow stars on the infamous striped prison garb. And of course, at least one young boy replicated the horrific scene from the Warsaw Ghetto.

Last week in this space, *The CJN* lamented the blatant disrespect for the rule of law among the small group of extremist, haredi zealots. This week we lament the blatant disrespect for their fellow Jews, qua Jews and even more fundamentally, qua thinking, feeling, sentient human beings. The behaviour by this group of brutal, callous ignorant people was so execrable that it cannot pass without comment. The history they so cavalierly abused is too solemn to go undefended.

As Elie Wiesel told *Ha'aretz*, his heart broken, his emotions enraged: "How dare they? To both desecrate the honour of the State of Israel and the memory of the Holocaust? In all the difficult moments and times of crisis which Israel and the Jewish people have seen, I don't remember seeing such a vile sight."

The leaders of the people who marched in so disgraceful a manner two weeks ago must reject and expunge such foul behaviour from their midst. They might suggest to the protesters the words of the famous 16th-century scholar and kabbalist, Chaim Vital, whose works many of them probably know and even study, if not actually follow: "If you hate your fellow Jew, it is as though you hate God who created them."

25 years ago in *The CJN*

Israeli interior minister Rabbi Yitzhak Peretz, head of the Orthodox Shas Party, resigned his cabinet post rather than confirm the identity of a Reform convert, calling such conversions a "travesty" that "threatened the survival of the Jewish People." His party's four-man Knesset faction remained in prime minister Yitzhak Shamir's governing coalition.

Dry Bones
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Building Jews, not buildings

Eli Rubinstein got it right in "Can education alone save the Jewish People?" (Dec. 8). Our ongoing struggle to ensure that Jewish education is available in our community and is supported by donors and by communal leaders is meaningless unless that education and learning leads to real action and to practice. Merely educating our children and the next generation about our traditions, our history and our customs without making a personal commitment to follow and to do will not secure our future. Building buildings or institutions, and providing teachers to teach in them, is not the essence; building Jews is, and that requires translating that education into personal practice.

Moshe Ronen
Toronto

* * *

Extremist haredi behaviour

While I respect the right of Israel's haredi Jewish community to observe Judaism as they see fit, with all its traditions and observances, I do not support the actions of that segment of Judaism trying to impose their views on secular Jews throughout Israel ("Netanyahu vows to end extremist haredi behaviour"; "Segregation in Beit Shemesh causes uproar," Jan. 5). Calling Israeli police and soldiers Nazis and dressing up children with outfits and Stars of David reminiscent of Holocaust times are an insult to those who perished at the hands of Nazi Germany as well as the fortunate Jews who survived. The rioting haredi Jews forget that Israel is a true democracy where the rights of other co-religionists and those of other religions must be respected. Their attacks on secular and less observant Jews are no better than what is being witnessed by the Taliban in Afghanistan and the Muslim fundamentalists in Egypt. The right to practise religious orthodoxy is not analogous to the intolerant practice of *sharia* law in Muslim countries.

Bert Raphael
Thornhill, Ont.

* * *

CJC needed a facelift, not burial

As a volunteer for the Canadian Jewish Congress National Archives for more than 25 years, I catalogued and sorted thousands of files. ("Legitimacy questions continue to plague CIJA," Dec. 22). Among them were CJC's plenary files. Every Jewish organization in Canada had the right to send a delegation to a CJC plenary, which took place every two or three years. The delegates cast their ballots to elect the officers of the CJC. Somebody please tell me, who elected the people of Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs? Who gave these people the right to make a power grab and kill the CJC? I grant, the CJC needed a facelift, and it would have so happened down the road, but not a burial.

Quoted in the article is an e-mail written by CIJA CEO Shimon Fogel. It states: "However, understanding of Congress and its legacy drops off very dramatically with the under-45 demographic within our community, who cannot relate to the name [or] the legacy (e.g., most don't even remember the USSR or Soviet Jewry)." The continuous daily stream of researchers to the CJC archives, however, shows a strong awareness of the past accomplishments of the CJC.

CIJA will have a difficult task to match the past accomplishments of CJC. The great leaders of the CJC of yesteryear left their everlasting imprint on the Jewish community of Canada. CIJA will have some catching up to do. So far, they have not even reached the starting line.

Willie Glaser
St. Laurent, Que.

LET THEM GO...

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz

* * *

Signs' message is chauvinistic

UJA Federation of Greater Toronto has received a notice from the city of Vaughan that its signs are a problem ("UJA signs violate Vaughan bylaws," Dec. 8). Although the complaint is only about the wording of the signs – "Jewish Toronto Lives Here" – since Vaughan is not Toronto, I, like letter-writer Bert Raphael (Nov. 24), cannot see the purpose of these signs put up by the federation around the GTA. UJA campaign director Steven Shulman says that they have been put up "simply to create awareness of what federation does." I think this is far too costly a way to achieve this, especially since Vaughan city council may want a $24,000 fee for allowing the signs. Also, the message on the signs, which pinpoint Jewishly themed buildings or locations, appears to be unnecessarily chauvinistic.

Rudy Solomonvici
Toronto

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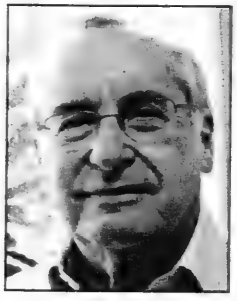
The indigent survivor: a global emergency

Dov Harris
Special to The CJN

They are our brothers and sisters, but we have not been their keepers.

According to the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, some 260,000 Holocaust survivors – about half of the approximately 517,000 who are still alive today – live in poverty. The majority of the poor, about 90,000, live in countries of the former Soviet Union and some 70,000 live in Israel.



Dov Harris

As time runs out for these elderly people, our moral failure to address the plight of survivors who were unable to reconnect with society and who now live out their lives at its edges, in penury and in poor health, is a colossal sin of omission of historic proportions.

It is by no means the purpose of this article to analyze the failure or otherwise of official bodies or non-profits that have undertaken the responsibility to deal with the situation. Such an analysis would shift the focus from where it should be: to expose our baffling response to the plight of the destitute survivor.

Our relationship to the survivor, our living link to the most appalling calamity in our history, is quite unlike any other. We are bound at the most primal biological level: our Jewish birth. For survivors, it meant the most horrific consequences; for us today, the privilege to be part of a people writing a glorious chapter in its history. We cannot undo history, but consider how just it would have been had all survivors, even the poorest, been treated as treasured beings by their resurgent people, a people risen from the ashes. The mystery is why it never happened.

In 2011, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee's (JDC) Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute carried out a study in Israel, where some 208,000 victims of Nazi atrocities live. Approximately 33 per cent or 66,000 live below the poverty line. A number live in "shameful conditions." Ron Kalinsky, the CEO of the Foundation for Holocaust Victims in Israel, told the *Jerusalem Post*. These survivors are among the poorest elderly in Israel. They die in indignity amid the plenty of a sovereign Jewish homeland.

As shocking as that is, the situation of survivors living in poverty in countries of the former Soviet Union is scandalous, despite the best efforts of the cash-strapped JDC. "An estimated 60,000 indigent elderly who can't afford a basic diet, let alone medicines, have been turned away… because we don't have the resources to help them," said Steve Schwager, CEO of the JDC.

This astounding number should roar across the Jewish world. How did we allow our moral compass to slip from our fingers? Pleading ignorance of their plight is damning. It is a non-starter. It should be our business to know.

Disturbing questions crowd the mind. Is it a case of wilful blindness? Is the presence of the poverty-stricken survivor so inconvenient to the Holocaust narrative that we choose to look the other way? Are they the spoilers stubbornly lingering on in dreadful circumstances inducing guilt and resentment and so better ignored, the crack running across the symmetry of a beginning and an end to the Holocaust nightmare? Or, is it simply a case of deluding ourselves, assuming they are being taken care of by official bodies, and then not asking how effective these organizations are, and if they are not effective, what can be done to redress the situation.

Some 2,500 people rallied in protest of Israel's decision to raise Holocaust survivors' pensions by less than 100 shekels a month back in 2007. Today over 200,000 survivors live in poverty, according to the Claims Conference. ***[Israel Sun photo]***

In Canada, the survivors we are likely to meet are by and large remarkable people who've risen from their past to forge successful lives. They are witnesses to the enduring and indomitable human spirit. We are reassured, even elevated, by their success. Few of us, though, ask the question, what has become of those survivors who have not succeeded in overcoming their pasts?

The measures taken to alleviate the survivors' poverty reflect the ambivalence we have toward the inconvenient survivor. The fumbling of successive Israeli governments is a case in point.

On Aug. 21, 2007, the speaker of the Knesset, Dalia Itzik, on behalf of the Israeli government, declared, "We are here to rectify the situation [of the plight of survivors] so that we may be able to look into the survivors' eyes and tell them on behalf of Israeli society, we apologize."

Such a declaration by the central organ of government could not have been more emphatic, and yet its implementation fell far short of expectations. And this is the situation in Israel, which has all the resources of a modern state and where the Diaspora could have played a partnership role. Where were we?

What of our impoverished brethren living in countries of the former Soviet Union and elsewhere? The indignity of the twice-cursed survivor living in poverty continues, first by an apathetic world and now by their largely apathetic people.

At no time in our history have we been better prepared to transform the situation than now. The past 65 years have demonstrated what a renascent people can achieve. It has been a golden age of achievement unprecedented in our history. Never have we had such means at our disposal, never have we been so organized, never have we been freer to mount a global operation to reach even the most isolated survivor living a life of suffering, let alone the impoverished survivor living in our community.

It is not as though nothing has been done. Shafts of light are provided by the superb work done by the JDC, the Jewish Agency, the Foundation for Holocaust Victims in Israel, NGOs and other organizations. Yet for all they do, it remains insufficient. Their frustration is palpable. So much more could be done.

How long will we, the Jewish community, consider the status quo as good enough before we recognize that this is a global Jewish emergency? Without that happening, any hope of rallying our organizations and the global Jewish community in a last act of chesed is dashed – and with it, any chance to salvage our own dignity.

Soon it will be too late. On average, 12,800 survivors die each year (35 people a day). At least a quarter of them will have lived their lives in poverty, and this in Israel! We would suppose the figure for those who lived their lives in poverty to be at least equal, if not greater, in the former Soviet Union.

When the last survivor dies in poverty, we and future generations will be left to ponder the conundrum of how it came about that a people whose central tenet of morality is "*Ve'ahavta lereacha kamocha*," to love your neighbour as yourself, could as well, with breathtaking irony, withhold this embrace from their very own.

Dov Harris recently retired as director of financial resource development, regional communities, with UIA Federations Canada.

Greece conquers the world through *Grease*

Travelling in Spain this Chanukah, my family and I experienced a strange worldwide phenomenon.

In Barcelona's renovated bullfighting arena, venerated as the site where the Beatles played in 1965, we saw an energetic, impressive production of the now-classic musical *Grease*. Watching the climactic moment when Sandy Dumbrowski, "the good girl," transforms into "the bad girl," becoming "the one that I want, ooo, ooo, ooo" in an incomprehensible foreign language was particularly depressing.

Gil Troy

in Montreal

The ease with which we all understood it underlined how iconic that moment has become. In fact, it symbolizes a broader transformation that has occurred since the decade of the 1950s, which the musical mocks, and even the 1970s, when the musical debuted.

For decades now, and throughout the world, *Grease* has been providing generations of young people with basic training in decadence and hedonism. Yes, *Grease* is cartoonish. And yes, *Grease* is entertaining. But *Grease* also has a message. In this world that so values being cool, Sandy Dumbrowski learns that to be cool, she must follow the fast, self-indulgent, pagan crowd.

In a different cultural context, *Grease* would be harmless fun. But let's face it, the Greeks won. Alas, it wasn't the Greece of Aristotelian morality and Sophoclean rigour that triumphed – although our world still benefits from Greek philosophy, science and metaphysics. Culturally, it was the Greece of *Grease*, the Greece of body worship and selfishness, the Greece of immediate gratification and excess.

We are lucky to be living in an age of tremendous freedom and widespread prosperity – even during these economically challenging times. Yet, we should also acknowledge the problem when freedom becomes licentiousness, when we are so liberated from tradition, from freedom, from community, that anything goes, and nobody matters.

We live in the ultimate disposable society – where nothing is enduring, not even the most basic family bonds. True, it was difficult and stultifying to live in a world that was so heavy-handed that every sentence ended with an exclamation point, but it is difficult in a different way – and unnerving – to live in a world so contingent that every sentence ends with a question mark. This Greek victory and the power of *Grease* daily challenge us as Jews. We risk raising a generation of live-for-today Jewish pagans and of being demanding, grasping and materialistic ourselves.

The challenge is so great that most of our institutions have simply surrendered. Ask yourself, when is the last time a Jewish institution stood up to the cultural bacchanal that is North America? Which rabbi, what teacher, which Jewish community professional, is ready to risk the wrath of the all-important donors out there and start a real, challenging, personal conversation about who we are, who our kids are and what we all are becoming?

Rather than being the proverbial squeaky wheels, most of our leaders, like most of us, slide along, with the path greased for us by fun, funny, yet fundamentally immoral and misguided cultural phenomena like *Grease*, in all its many languages and forms.

We should start pushing our leaders and probing ourselves. We must ask what all this materialism, all this indulgence, has wrought. Often, during economic troubles, people start posing deep, existential questions and become more altruistic, less careerist, more communitarian. If that has happened this time around, I, for one, have missed it. Most of the now-famous 99 per cent seem more dismayed at not being part of the proverbial one per cent, than outraged by their actions.

For too long, North American Judaism has been conventional, not countercultural. North American Judaism has been more effective in helping Jews acculturate to suburban norms than in liberating Jews from suburban peer pressure. Jewish civilization has much to say about how to live both individually and collectively. Yet we mostly keep the conversation confined to safe topics about the dos and don'ts of ritual rather than the rights and wrongs of ethical life. And far more of our children can quote long stretches from the musical *Grease* than from any of our great Jewish books, from the Bible to the Talmud, from Maimonides' *Guide to the Perplexed* to Theodor Herzl's *Jewish State*.

It is time for a Jewish reformation – we need more learning and more yearning, more ethics and more challenge; we need to put more elbow grease into personal transformation and growth rather than personal comfort and communal stasis.

Reform Judaism isn't what you thought it was

I last went to the Biennial Convention of the Union for Reform Judaism 20 years ago. A very large and professional conference, sometimes having as many as 4,000 or 5,000 people, it's meant for congregational leaders and congregational clergy from the 900 North American Reform synagogues to come together learn, share best practices, pray together, hear top-notch speakers, and recharge. I hadn't gone lately because, first of all, I wasn't serving a congregation, except for once a year on the High Holidays, and second, I felt a personal distance and even alienation from the heavy use of English in services, the emphasis on social action over religious study, and the lack of "Torah talk" in what I judged to be a religiously weak leadership.

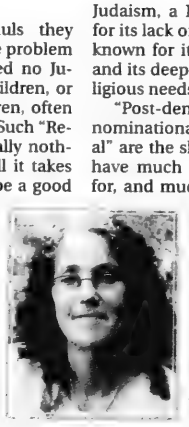
Well, this is not your father's Reform Judaism anymore, that's for sure. I walked around the recent biennial with my jaw dropped much of the time.

Services were conducted mostly in Hebrew, and everyone pronounced every word correctly. The music was awe-inspiring, featuring soulful tunes that matched the depth of the words they were accompanying. Serious Jews discussed serious topics. There were several minyanim to choose from every morning. Each evening, the whole convention came together in deep and heartfelt prayer, and Shabbat was mystical and magical, as 5,000 Reform Jews studied Torah with scholars. It was the first time in a long time I felt that Reform Jews were taking themselves seriously, without looking over their shoulders and always wondering what "they" (the Conservative, the Orthodox, whomever) were thinking of "us." It felt like a paradigm shift.

However, so many people are unaware of these changes and new models. Reform Judaism has gotten a bad rap, especially in "conservative" Toronto. Accused of being "church-like" and worse by people who may not have stepped foot in a Reform synagogue for years – or ever, for that matter – the movement is still the victim of many false assumptions: that it regularly celebrated Shabbat on Sunday (only a small handful of Reform temples actually did that in the 1890s, and later that was dropped); that services are all in English (not true at all); that all Reform temples have choirs and organs (not true, although many use musical instruments to enhance Shabbat services), or that anything goes (not true: Reform Judaism has clear standards and expectations).

How much do people know about today's "new" Reform Judaism?

They do know which shuls they wouldn't be caught dead in. The problem is that Jews who have practised no Judaism at all since they were children, or since their children were children, often say, "Well, I guess I'm Reform." Such "Reform Jews," who practice virtually nothing, erroneously believe that all it takes to be a good Reform Jew is to be a good person. I often remind such folks that anyone who is a good person is not necessarily Jewish, and anyone who is Jewish is not necessarily a good person. It's false to say Reform Judaism has no expectations on you other than being nice and helping old people across the street. You can do that by being a Boy Scout.



Rabbi Elyse Goldstein

in Toronto

To my mind, a small revolution has occurred in the Reform movement and I witnessed it at the biennial. There I saw Reform Jews asking the question, "How can we make a spiritually alive Reform Judaism, a Reform Judaism not famous for its lack of structure and standards but known for its high level of commitment and its deep appreciation for people's religious needs?"

"Post-denominational" and "transdenominational" and "non-denominational" are the slogans of our age. I think we have much to criticize each movement for, and much to hope for in a community that strives to transcend these boundaries. But it's time to pack away those tired stereotypes (and it wouldn't hurt if we packed away all our denominational stereotypes) and all those unfounded assumptions (which often make us feel as if we are mavens, but prove us to be ignoramuses).

We should try to judge the movements – all of them – by their best adherents, not their worst, and by their paradigm shifts and not by old jokes, hearsay and information from a decade ago. We should be open to the possibility that each of them, with all their weaknesses, has grown and changed, has something to teach us, and has something to offer in our complicated Jewish world.

U.S. leaves behind a fragmented Iraq

The nearly nine-year U.S. military engagement in Iraq officially ended late last year – on Sunday, Dec. 18, to be exact –when a convoy of 500 troops in 110 vehicles left a base near the city of Nasiriya at 2:30 a.m. and headed southward. The convoy, guarded by overhead aircraft, rolled into Kuwait at around dawn, ending the United States' most costly and domestically divisive war since Vietnam.

In departing, the Americans left behind a tiny U.S. residual force whose tasks are to protect the massive U.S. Embassy, assist in training Iraqi soldiers and facilitate arms sales worth $11 billion.

Like Israel's stealthy withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 2000, the details of the United States' pullout from Iraq were deliberately kept secret to ward off possible attacks by anti-American insurgents.

That such precautions were deemed necessary speaks volumes about the parlous condition of Iraq as a new year begins.

Speaking at a White House ceremony to mark America's departure from Iraq, U.S. President Barack Obama accentuated the positive, declaring that Iraq had become a "sovereign, self-reliant and democratic" nation and a model for democracy in the Arab world. But striking a more balanced note, Obama observed that the U.S. role in Iraq would ultimately be judged by history.

The Obama administration, having inherited a war from president George W. Bush that claimed the lives of 4,487 Americans and cost U.S. taxpayers a whopping $1 trillion, has no illusions what may lie ahead now that the United States has terminated combat operations in Iraq.

In a sober assessment, U.S. Defence Secretary Leon Panetta said, "Let me be clear: Iraq will be tested in the days ahead..." Within 48 hours of the U.S. withdrawal, two separate developments validated his sombre prediction about Iraq's future.

A political crisis erupted when Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri Kamal el-Maliki, a Shiite, issued an arrest warrant for Vice-President Tariq al-Hashimi, a Sunni. Maliki accused him of running death squads to assassinate politicians and government officials. The accusation, heatedly denied by Hashimi, threatened an American power-sharing arrangement and summoned up the twin spectres of sectarianism and civil war yet again.

And in a reprise of the endemic violence that has convulsed Iraq since 2003, car bombs and improvised explosives shattered markets, apartment buildings and schools in Baghdad, killing 70 Shiite and Sunni civilians in the worst day of bloodshed in about a year.

Taken together, these events

Sheldon Kirshner

in Toronto

cast doubt on the ability of the country's quarrelsome ruling elite to forge peace and stability in Iraq, a nation that has stumbled from one disaster to the next in the past 30 years.

Saddam Hussein, Iraq's paramount leader from 1979 to 2003, led Iraq astray by waging war with Iran – its regional rival – in 1980 and by invading Kuwait in 1990.

Iraq's invasion of Iran touched off the longest war in the annals of the modern Middle East and cost Iraq dearly in terms of casualties and property damage and arrested development. Iraq's incursion into Kuwait, repelled by a coalition of countries in the 1991 Gulf War, led to United Nations sanctions that crippled and isolated Saddam's brutal Baathist regime.

Nuri Kamal el-Maliki

Washington, which had long hewed to a policy of dual containment in dealing with Iraq and post-revolutionary Iran, invaded Iraq in an attempt to stabilize the Middle East and make it more American-friendly.

The United States' military involvement in Iraq was preceded by its invasion of Afghanistan in the fall of 2001. The Bush administration struck Afghanistan to unseat the Islamic fundamentalist Taliban regime, which had harboured Al Qaeda, the organization that had ordered the destruction of the World Trade Center in Manhattan on Sept. 11, 2001.

The Bush administration, mired in an increasingly difficult war in Afghanistan, stretched its resources by targeting Iraq. Washington claimed that the Sunni regime in Iraq possessed nuclear, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction, and that Saddam, a prototypical secular Arab dictator, had co-operated with Al Qaeda's supreme leader, Osama bin Laden.

The first of these claims seemed plausible, but the second one was always highly questionable. Neither proved to be true, tarnishing Washington's credibility.

Once in Iraq, the United States found itself woefully ill-prepared to fight an insurgency, which has been largely characterized by a sickening spate of suicide bombings. By 2006, Iraq was slipping into a civil war pitting the majority Shiites against the minority Sunnis. In response to this crisis, Washington resorted to a "surge," dispatching yet more troops to Iraq. Within about a year, the United States had deployed 170,000 troops in Iraq. To an extent, the "surge" achieved its objective.

In a further effort to tamp down the spiral of violence, the United States co-opted Sunni tribal leaders in "Awakening" formations to combat Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia – an Al Qaeda franchise group – in restive Anbar province. The strategy, though somewhat successful, has not eliminated Al Qaeda as a threat.

Alongside these efforts to defeat the insurgents, consisting of a coalition of Islamists, disaffected nationalists and common criminals, the United States tried to improve everyday life, restore oil production to prewar levels and build a culture of democracy.

Almost a decade on, Washington's greatest achievement in Iraq was in uprooting the Baathist regime, in removing Iraq as a military threat to Israel, and in liberating Iraqis from Saddam's serial violations of human rights and his wasteful hegemonic ambitions. Iraqis are free at last, as exemplified by their unfettered access to the Internet and cable TV.

The liberation of Iraq may have been an underlying cause of the so-called Arab Spring, the popular rebellions that have ousted authoritarian leaders in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya.

Today, Iraq has all the trapping of a multi-party Jeffersonian democracy. A constitution has been written and transparent elections have taken place. In practice, however, Iraqi democracy is still a fragile flower that may yet wilt. Critics charge that Maliki, the prime minister, is a polarizing figure whose aim is to marginalize opponents and create a one-party state.

The Americans, to the best of their ability, papered over the deep sectarian divisions that continue to divide Shiites, Sunnis and Kurds. But now that they are gone, observers fear that members of Iraq's security forces will be more loyal to their respective sects rather than to Iraq itself. Last week, Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu warned that Sunni-Shiite sectarian tensions would be suicidal for the entire region.

Although violence is generally on the wane, Iraq still remains very volatile, with 500 to 750 attacks having been recorded per month in 2011. Nonetheless, street life in Iraqi cities has virtually returned to normal.

Anti-American feelings, fanned by Iran, are deeply embedded in Iraqi society. Moktada al-Sadar, a pro-Iranian Shiite cleric whose militia fought the Americans in two uprisings in the city of Falluja in 2004, has warned that U.S. diplomats and contractors are now fair game.

In retrospect, the United States left Iraq in better shape in terms of health care, education, sewage management and accessibility to electricity and potable water. But most Iraqis receive only a few hours of electricity a day, and oil production lags far behind 1970s levels. Indeed, an agreement on dividing Iraq's oil wealth has eluded its fragmented leadership.

At the start of 2012, Iraq is a budding democracy. But its flawed leadership and its unresolved problems may yet shape and define Iraq for years to come.

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Study finds Limmud builds peoplehood

Frances Kraft
Staff Reporter

Sociologist Steven Cohen, a self-admitted fan of Limmud, a group dedicated to Jewish learning, says that a "major calling card" of the program is its ability to attract participants from diverse Jewish backgrounds for intensive Jewish study.

Having recently co-authored a study on Limmud International, he said the program's "peoplehood-building element" has become clearer to him.

The Jewish learning festival began 30 years ago in England. Since then, more than 60 communities in 24 countries – among them Winnipeg, Toronto and Montreal – have held Limmud events. More than 30,000 people participate in the program annually.

Steven Cohen

"Normally," Cohen said, "when you have people who are intensively studying, they're doing it in their own environment, their own synagogues or camps, among people who are just like them."

A research professor of Jewish social policy at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and director of the Berman Jewish Policy Archive at New York University, Cohen co-authored *The Limmud International Study: Jewish Learning Communities on a Global Scale* with Israel-based sociologist Ezra Kopelowitz in late 2011. Almost all the research was performed pro bono "in the spirit of Limmud," it was noted in the study, the first on the subject from an international perspective.

The study, a comparative look at differences between Limmud participants in different countries, includes Canada in a grouping with Argentina, Brazil, Greece, Hong Kong, Mexico, New Zealand and South Africa, that made up 11 per cent of the almost 3,200 respondents (356 people).

Forty-nine communities were represented in the study, including those in Stockholm, Turkey, France, Ukraine and Germany.

The United Kingdom has the largest chunk of respondents at 42 per cent, followed by the United States at 20 per cent.

Cohen, who has participated in two Limmud festivals in England and two in the United States, told *The CJN* the group of Canada with other countries was based on numbers of respondents.

He said the study made him aware of "Jewish growth" among Europeans whose backgrounds are less conventional from a Jewish standpoint, often because their parents are intermarried or because they don't have many Jewish friends. "They're dealing with a less socially embedded Jewish life."

The study found that European participants were most likely to cite an impact on their Jewish learning and involvement.

In contrast, the study found that American and Israeli "Limmudniks" are more religiously oriented than those in other countries.

A majority of Israeli respondents have presented at Limmud conferences in other countries, leading the researchers to conclude that Israelis are an important resource for Limmud.

Cohen said he was surprised at the diversity of backgrounds and the age range of the respondents. "That type of diversity is very stimulating."

GROWING THINGS: Grade 3 students at Bialik Hebrew Day School – including, from left, Amy B., Jordan H. and Romi B. – took part in an international daffodils and tulips project as part of their studies in the school's Israel Interactive Centre. They planted tulips and daffodils at Bialik, and their peers in countries around the world, including Israel, did the same.

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Not all haredim condone actions of harassing kids: family

Continued from page 1

But her family wants to emphasize that while many in the media are making the story a "Jewish issue, which the world loves, of course," not all haredim conduct themselves this way or condone the actions of those harassing the children.

"It's just a small group of extremists. That has to be clarified. It's not a 'them versus us' situation. We're all Jews. *Am Yisrael chai.* We're all one," she said.

"These kids just need to be left alone and be part of society. Certainly they should not be terrorized like they have been," she said.

Asked whether her family would consider moving Na'ama to a different school if the attacks continue, Arlene responded "absolutely not."

"Orot is a brand new school that was built for these *dati leumi* [national religious] Zionist families," she said.

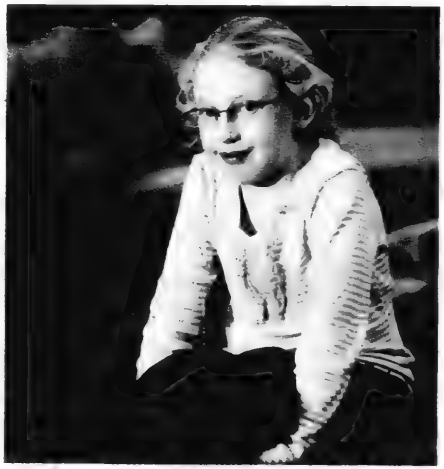
"I don't want this [conflict] to split the Jewish community. It's not all haredim. We all need to stick together as Jews. When something like this happens... when one of our children is affected, all of our children are affected. We all need to stand up for this," Arlene added.

She also noted that Na'ama's family has received support and encouragement from many haredim throughout this affair.

* * *

In related news, last week two haredi children said they were attacked in Jerusalem by non-Orthodox Jews in recent days.

An 11-year-old haredi boy filed a complaint with Jerusalem police on Jan. 3 alleging that two non-Orthodox teens attacked him and shouted at him at a bus stop in Jerusalem, and tried to prevent him from getting on the bus because he is haredi.



Na'ama Margolese

Two days earlier, a haredi girl, 11, told police that a non-Orthodox bus passenger on a Jerusalem bus spit at her and pushed her, saying "We will destroy the haredim."

The haredi news website Kikar Hashabbat reportedly opened a hotline for haredi people to report violence against them. It has reportedly received numerous responses.

With files from JTA

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דער יידיש ווינקל

דזשערי קעין

געוואלד!
ווו געפֿינט מען אַ בייגל
מיט אַ יידישן טעם?

איר האט פֿאַרשטיין פון קעפל אַז איך האָב טענות. ווען איז דאָס תּארט בייגל געווארן אַן ענגליש וואָרט? ווען איז דער בייגל געווארן אַ גרייסער מאכל – פֿאַרקריפּט אין די מילי־אָנען צו נישט יידן יעדען טאָג אין אַזעלכע רעסטאָראַנען חי מעקאָנאַלדס אין טים האָרטענס. און די מערסטע פון די קליינטן, חיסן אַפֿילו נישט אַז דער בייגל איז אַן עכט יידישער מאכל איינגעוואָרצלט אין דער געשיכטע און לעבן פון מיזרח אייראָפּעישע יידן פון וועמען די מערסטע פון אונדז אין קאַנאַדע שטאַמען.

פֿאַרשטייט מיך גוט. איך האָב גאָרנישט צו אַ וועלט וואָס האָט ליב אַ בייגל. אָבער דעם בייגל וואָס מען פֿאַרקריפּט הײַנט אין מעקדאָנאַלדס און טים האָרטענס האָט אין גאָנצן נישט קײן יידישן טעם. ער איז פֿלאַך, און חיידר – נישט וווּ דער בייגל איז געווען וען זײַן געשמאַק איז געווען באַהאַלטן בלויז צווישן יידן.

עס איז אַמאָל געווען אַ צײַט וען אַ בייגל האָט מען גערופֿן קײַען – גוט קײַען! עס איז נישט צעגאַנגען אין מויל וי אַ שטיקל לעקעך אָדער אַ בולקעלע. און די שולד פֿאַר דער ענדערונג איז דעם כאַראַקטער פון בײַגל מיט מען ליגן בײַ די פֿיס פון אינאָעם אַן אַמעריקאַנער יד מיטן נאָמען לענדער.

די פֿון אײַך וואָס האָבן אַ מאָל געבאַקט איינעם אייגענע בייגל וויסן אַז בייגל טייג איז ווייך אַ שטאַרקע טייג. מען מוז עס קנייטן און קנייטן. לענדער, אַ בעקער און אַ קלוגער זשעפֿסמאַן האָט נעזען אַז יידן זיך אַמעריקע מאַרעדזשירן זיך, און לעבן אין אַלע וויקעלעך פון לאַנד. האָט ער זיך געפֿרעגט די פֿראַגע – וווּ קען איך ברענגען די בייגל פון מיזרח אויזשטס צו די יידן פון גאַנץ אַמעריקע און וואָרף צו נישט יידן?

לענדערס ענטפֿער איז געווען צו פֿירן די בייגל. אָבער ער האָט נעהאַט אַ פּראָבלעם. דאָס טראַדיציאָנעלע טייג וואָס מען האָט נעוועט וען מען האָט געקנאָטן בײַגל מיט דער האַנט האָט צעבראָכן די עלקטרישע קנייט מאַשינען אין זיך אינדוסטריועלע בעקעריי. לענדער האָט נעזען אַז ער מוז ענדערן זיך רעצעפּט. דאָס נײַע טייג איז נעווען פֿלאַך און וויך. דער באַק מעשאַר האָט זיך אויך נעענדערט. אנשטאָט צו ערשט אַרײַנטונקען עטלעכע מינוט די בייגל אין קאָכעדיקע וואַסער האָט מען נעגעבן דעם בײַגל אַ שפּריץ מיט פּאַרע און דאַן אַרײַנגעוואַרפֿן אין אויוון. אנשטאָט וואָס אַ יוד האָט נעראָפֿט צײַען צו קײַען איז דער בייגל נעוואָרן אַ רונד, פֿלאַך, און וויך שטיקל טייג.

דער וויטיק איז אַז אַפֿילו אונדזערע קינדער און אייניקלעך, אין יידער מערסטנס, האָבן זיך אַסימילירט צו דעם גריסן טעם פון דעם מאָדערנעם בייגל. עס זײַנען נאָך דאָ אײַנציקע יידישע בעקער וואָס גיבן אונדז עפּעס צו קײַען. אָבער איך וויס נישט וווּ לאָנג זיי וועלן קענען אויסהאַלטן. דער מאַרק ענדערט אין מענטשן וווּ איך, זײַנען דינאָסאָוודערס.

וווּ לאָנג באַקן שוין יידן בייגל? איבער 400 יאָר. מיט האָבן די פּראָטאָקאָלן פון 1610 פֿאַר דער קראָאַדער יידישער קהילה. דאָרטן איז עשריבן אַז מען מוז שיקן בײַגל צו די אַקושערקעס וואָס שטייען מיט אַ פּורי וען די גייט צו קינד.

וווּ אַ טאָראָנטער מאָך איך אויך אָרט אויף מײַן טיש פֿאַר אַ גוט געבאַקענעם, קײַענדיקן מאָנטרעאָלער בייגל.

פֿון רעדאַקציע: אויב איר האָט נעדאַנקען וועגן אונדזער וויקלי לאָזט חיסן, דזוך פֿאָסט אָדער בליק- פֿאָסט: info@cjnews.com

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Only one way to reduce violence

Rabbi Wayne Allen

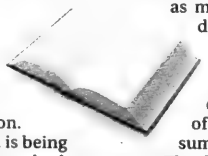
Just over one month ago, the *Toronto Star* announced that Toronto "may be the safest it has been in 25 years."

That assessment was based on what one analyst called a "dramatic decline" in the number of murders, from a high of 86 in 2007, to 42 (as of Dec. 1) in 2011.

But statistics are often misleading. While the murder rates have declined over the last four years, the rates remained consistently higher during the previous seven. In the United States, the rates of violent crimes have also declined of late. But over a longer stretch of time, the rates remain alarmingly high. Former U.S. secretary of education William J. Bennett published *The Index of Leading Cultural Indicators* in 1999, which indicated that there was an alarming 500 per cent increase in violent crimes from 1963 to 1993.

At issue is not simply a matter of how statistics are interpreted. At issue is whether or not people are becoming kinder, nicer, better. Steven Pinker, arguably one of the most respected cognitive psychologists and public intellectuals today, claims in his latest book, *The Better Angels of Our Nature*, that violence has declined because of what he calls "the civilizing process." This, he says, is a process that has managed to tame the inner demons of violence, domination, vengefulness and brutality, replacing them with the virtues of self-control,

Rabbinic Reflections



empathy, and compassion. Human nature, he insists, is being reformed – even transformed – by the sobering effects of modern society.

Would that this were true! But the sad truth is that people, being people, are always going to be caught between their basest animal urges and their noblest intentions. Only when people choose to follow the latter will they transcend the former. And choice is a function of will power.

What motivates a person to choose wisely and act kindly is not so easily identifiable. Cultural background, environment, peer pressure, genetic disposition, education are all factors. So is religion. A person who feels bound by the religious imperative: "You shall not murder!" is, no doubt, more likely to account for a reduction in the murder rate than someone who does not feel so bound. And a person who sees murder as a sin as much as a crime has a deeper reason to avoid committing murder.

For Jews, the future lies not in relying on "the better angels of nature," or even assuming that we have any. The future lies in teaching and insisting and convincing Jews and non-Jews alike that murder is unequivocally wrong, that a person who commits a murder is considered as if that person had destroyed an entire world, that all human beings are created in God's image and are worthy of dignity and respect. Only when that lesson is learned can we expect to see a permanent decline in murder and violence.

Rabbi Wayne Allen is the provost of the Canadian Yeshiva and Rabbinical School.

The Sunnybrook Jewish Chapel Committee
wishes to extend condolences to the
Smuschkowitz & Kichler Families
on the passing of
David Smuschkowitz ז"ל
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Beth Tikvah Synagogue

Make our house your home. Beth Tikvah Synagogue of Toronto, one of the most dynamic Conservative synagogues in North America, is seeking an Executive Director.

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We're looking for someone with an equally diverse skill set. This is a unique chance to make your mark on a new position, and help lead to Beth Tikvah's successful future. Duties include:

- supervising administration, office and maintenance personnel, financial planning/management, and purchasing;
- assisting synagogue committees in planning and executing their activities;
- assisting in fundraising projects, endowments, and membership campaigns;
- overseeing the implementation and maintenance of information technology/web;
- maintaining a calendar of synagogue activities and religious services, and providing for their implementation;
- participating in volunteer development;
- assisting members in matters relating to life-cycle events and other synagogue needs;
- overseeing synagogue buildings, grounds, security, and cemetery.

The Executive Director reports to the President of Beth Tikvah. He/she serves as the representative of the officers and directors and Board of Governors in administering the affairs of the congregation, and works in partnership with the clergy and lay leaders.

The ideal candidate should have at least seven years in a similar role. Experience in a not-for-profit organization and a degree in business administration/management would be a plus.

If you have the record, vision and passion to take on this exciting leadership opportunity, please send your resume to President@bethtikvahtoronto.org

Lessons of the past

It is that time of the year when I am asked why students of the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto should study history and, more specifically, ancient history. It is a fair question in our society, which is geared to business and the professions. This is even truer for us Jews, who tend to guide our children into the practical professions.

It is an understandable tendency on our part, since we wish our children to do well and be financially successful. However, this does not preclude gaining an appreciation for the past and its role in both our personal and collective lives. Sadly, today's world has lost its historical perspective, as the events of the last few years are showing us. Some of these events are relatively recent, while others take us further back in time.

The current financial crisis was partly brought about by the ongoing deregulation of the last few decades. It has allowed a few people to become obscenely wealthy at the expense of the vast majority. Many of the rules that were removed were put in place because of the lessons of the Great Depression of the 1930s. As that disaster faded from public consciousness, so did the rules that were put in place to prevent it from happening again. It is a lesson we forgot with dire consequences.

Politically, we have the lessons from the foreign-policy debacles of Iraq and Afghanistan. Whatever one may think of former prime minister Jean Chrétien, he had the historical foresight to keep us out of the Iraqi quagmire. But because of our treaty obligations, he initially got us involved in Afghanistan, which once again is destabilizing as we extricate

Past Forward

Alex Gropper

our troops from its bloody and war-torn soil.

The problems in Iraq can be traced back to the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, when the Turkish Ottoman Empire had the misfortune to be on the losing side. It was carved up by the victors, primarily Britain and France. It was the British who received the land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, which was known to the ancients as Mesopotamia and to us as Iraq.

When the Hashemite allies of the British were kicked out of Arabia by the victorious Saud clan, the British created the protectorate of Iraq for one of the Hashemites, while carving Transjordan out of the Palestine Mandate for the other. Neither of these states had a cohesive history to bind them together. Consequently, we are now paying the price for their instability.

The case of Afghanistan takes us further back in time to the conquests of Alexander the Great and his victim, the once mighty Persian Empire, neither of whom could maintain control over this desolate, mountainous and fiercely independent patchwork of hostile tribes.

More recently, the British tried to take it over in the 19th century and were defeated, while the Russians tried to do the same in the 1980s with similar disastrous results. As someone once said, those who do not learn the lessons of the past are doomed to repeat its mistakes.

The power in God and nature

The Torah readings that we're now getting involved with describe a horrible reality in Egypt and the beginnings of the plan for redemption. We're very familiar with the events of Egypt and the steps of Divine salvation that occurs through the upcoming plagues. We engage in the age-old Jewish debate that pits justice against mercy, and we anchor our perspective within the plague texts. We read of our redemptive moments and of the women who affirmed life, regardless of nation, religion or culture.

But one subtle point we don't focus on is the role of nature and its relationship with God.

From the very beginning, with the plague of blood, nature is woven into the plagues. We're so overwhelmed with the description of what's happening that we forget to ask fundamental questions about nature and the plagues. What is the relationship nature has with God? Is God bringing the plagues because God is omniscient or omnipotent?

In other words, if God knows nature is about to do something anyway and God takes advantage of that opportunity and frames a plague around it, God is manifesting an all-knowing, or omniscient, aspect of God's relationship with nature. However, if God is commanding nature to behave in a certain way and nature is obeying the command, God is manifesting an all-powerful, or omnipotent, aspect.

Some people argue the plagues were miraculous in their timing, but nature does these things any-

Midrashic Moments

Rachael Turkienicz

way. This would lead to a more subtle involvement of God in the world, in that God isn't initiating events but is blending Divine interaction with the flow of nature. Others argue that these are grand commandments, and God interacts with creation through commandment and it's our duty to obey. This would lead to a more structured and overt involvement of God in the world.

But why does any of this matter?

One of the fundamental Jewish questions that's often asked is, "Where was God?" Whenever there's a tragedy or crisis, we ask "Where was God?" And while some of us can answer in a way that satisfies us personally, there's no answer that satisfies us nationally.

The breakdown in answering the question lies somewhat in the fact that we didn't understand the question we were asking. If we believe God saves through omniscience, we're looking for different things than if we believe God saves through omnipotence.

We're so focused on the relationship humanity has with God that we neglect to learn of the relationship God has with all creation. And yet learning of that relationship will ultimately help us answer the questions of our heart.

The sages long ago understood this point when they stated that the entire world understood the language of creation and that the whole created world could communicate with each other. Humans are the only creatures that have forgotten this language.

Rachael Turkienicz is director of Rachaelscentre.org.

Toronto Memory Program

Do you know someone with Alzheimer's Disease?

Toronto Memory Program is currently inviting individuals to participate in a clinical research study evaluating an investigational medication for Alzheimer's disease. Participants must:

- have a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease
- be 50 - 80 years of age
- have a family member or friend available to attend appointments

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For more information, contact Toronto Memory Program at **416-386-9606** or write to us at research@memorydisorders.ca

Toronto Memory Program is an OHIP funded medical clinic specializing in the diagnosis & treatment of Alzheimer's disease and related disorders.
www.torontomemoryprogram.com

Offal yes, awful no: chopped liver

Last time, we looked at that oft-enjoyed yet oft-maligned staple of Jewish cooking, chopped liver. Whether this is one of your favourite foods or if you've decided it's time to give it a second chance, you've come to the right place.

If you'd like to try your hand at whipping up some chopped liver from scratch – and want to keep your kitchen kosher at the same time – you need to do some reading first. The raw liver you have just purchased may be kosher but still requires kashering before you can cook with it. Kashering liver is always done by broiling and requires special utensils. This site provides step-by-step information. **[http://bit.ly/liver27]** Once you've kashered your livers – or purchased kashered livers from your butcher – you are ready to get going.

"It's time for chopped liver to make a comeback." So writes Adam Roberts at amateurgourmet.com. He then does his part by providing a recipe along with a delicious series of photographs. **[http://bit.ly/liver16]** I note (with some amusement) that this recipe is taken from the book *Cooking with the Kosher Butcher's Wife*. Title of the chapter: *Awesome Offal*. **[http://bit.ly/liver29]**

If you'd like to watch a master at work, you can view the chef at hoffmankitchen cook up a traditional batch of chopped liver in a very good step-by-step video. **[http://bit.ly/liver18]**

But wait, there's more. The Jewish-Food Chopped Liver archives have 30 variations, including Muriel's Famous, *gehakte leber* and reduced-calorie (hold the schmaltz!). **[http://bit.ly/liver19]**

Ah, the schmaltz. Since so many authentic recipes call for this wonderful ingredient, I thought it merits its own paragraph. According to Wikipedia, "Homemade Jewish-style schmaltz is made by cutting chicken or goose fat into small pieces and melting it in a pan over low to moderate heat, generally with

Jewish & Digital

Mark Mietkiewicz

onions. After the majority of the fat has been extracted, the melted fat is strained through a cheesecloth into a storage container." Yum. **[http://bit.ly/liver20]**

Although chopped liver is high in protein, it also doesn't stint on the fat or cholesterol, either. But vegetarian and meatless "mock" chopped-liver recipes abound. Walnuts are often a key ingredient, along with:

- Green beans and peas **[http://bit.ly/liver21]**
- Lentils **[http://bit.ly/liver22]**
- or Mushrooms **[http://bit.ly/liver28]**

And for something different, there's Orange Salmon Pâté. **[http://bit.ly/liver24]**

New York Times food writer Mark Bittman grew up eating chopped liver but has hungered for a traditional, creamy pâté. In order to achieve that goal, Bittman admits his use of butter instead of chicken fat may have his grandmother spinning in her grave. Since I'd prefer to not add to her spinning, I say thank goodness for Jewish cuisine writer Joan Nathan. **[http://bit.ly/liver25]**

Nathan writes, also in the *Times*, "For a long time I thought that all chopped-liver recipes were essentially the same. Then someone shared this tasty French recipe, the perfect start to a dinner at Chanukah or on any other special occasion. French Jews took lowly chopped liver and turned it into pâté by passing it through a food mill, adding a little brandy and corn or potato starch and then pouring it into a terrine that they baked in *a bain-marie* (water bath) and cooled. **[http://bit.ly/liver26]**

"Voilà: completely kosher chopped-liver pâté."

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March grad starts anti-genocide group

Frances Kraft
Staff Reporter

Joseph Rothstein, a Grade 12 student at York Mills Collegiate Institute, credits his participation in last April's March of the Living for motivating him to start a group called "We're All Human."

"The entire message of the trip was to do something afterward," said Rothstein, 17, the chief founder and president of the group.

He said it was "very tough" visiting concentration camps and mass graves in Poland before he and fellow participants headed to Israel to celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut. "I learned from that."

On his return home, Rothstein, who has worked at Camp Walden and is a baseball umpire for 10-to-15-year-olds, asked himself what he could do to help his community "and stop this from happening again."

He decided to start We're All Human to educate young teens about racism and the importance of "embracing our differences.

"We talk about how racism has affected us in the past 100 years – we give examples of different genocides and atrocities, such as the holocaust in Rwanda and Darfur."

We're All Human president and chief founder Joseph Rothstein, second from left, with vice-presidents, from left, Chris Phillips, Myles Resnick and Dylan Johnston.

As well, a PowerPoint presentation details how genocides start. "There's a joke or a racist comment, and it escalates from there. We explain how they can stop it.

"We really try to get [students] to get involved and try to inspire them like I was inspired."

His friends and classmates Miles Resnick, Chris Phillips and Dylan Johnston work with him, and all of them take part in presentations. As well, they post frequently on the group's Facebook page.

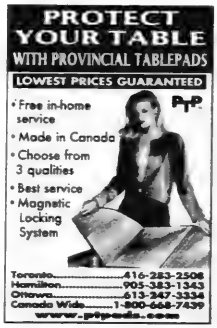
Recently, they spoke to 170 Grade 9 students at Windfields Junior High School.

Since the group's initial presentation at York Mills, We're All Human has made presentations to a dozen classes at three schools.

Rothstein, who wants to study commerce in university next year, would like to continue his involvement with We're All Human after he graduates from high school.

"Right now, I'm focusing on promoting this while I'm still in Toronto. I'm not quite sure what's going to happen to it next year. It's not just going to dissolve."

For more information, go to facebook.com/wereallhuman.



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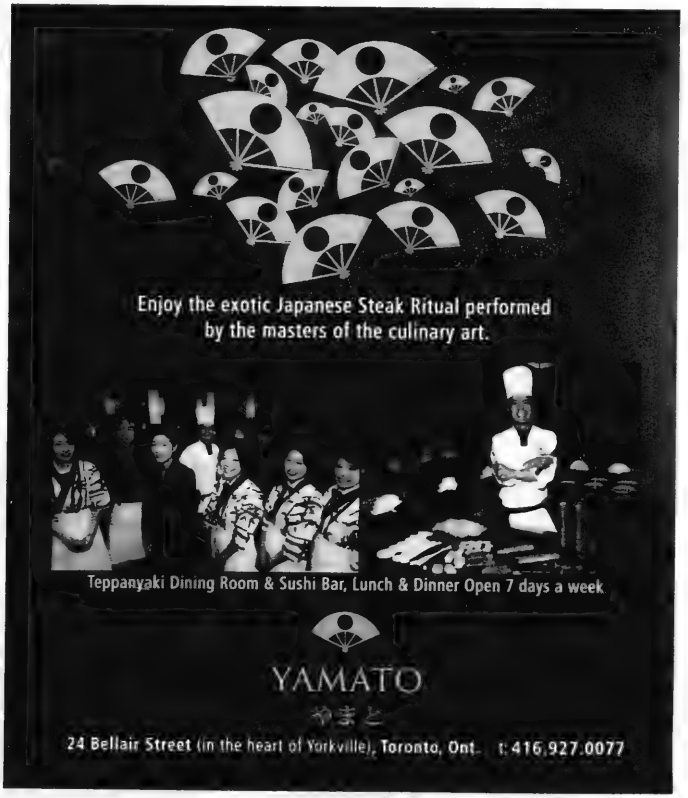
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EBook lays out Jews' legal claim to Israel

Paul Lungen
Staff Reporter

It's a common misconception that the State of Israel was created as a result of the UN partition resolution of November 1947.

Not so, says a researcher and author of a new electronic book (eBook) on the subject. In fact, said Salomon Benzimra, that General Assembly resolution, like all GA resolutions, was not binding and had no effect in law. The legal basis for the creation of the modern State of Israel goes back to the 1917 Balfour Declaration, which was adopted by the Allied powers that defeated the Ottoman Turks in World War I and which allocated Ottoman territories, including today's Israel and the West Bank, at the San Remo conference, through the Treaty of Sevres and through a subsequent League of Nations mandate.

The international community recognized the exclusive right of the Jewish People to sovereignty over captured Ottoman territories known as Palestine and enshrined that recognition in international law, said Benzimra, author of The Jewish People's Right to the Land of Israel.

"That right has never been revoked," he said, though British authorities, who were given a Mandate (trusteeship) over Palestine, carved off huge portions of the land – today's Jordan – and handed it to their Arab allies.

Benzimra said little is known of this history and of the legal rights of the Jewish People to the land. His eBook, he said is intended "to fight against untruths, against distortions of reality and to bring out factual events related to history that are ignored in diplomacy, everywhere."

The Jewish People's Rights to the Land of Israel was published recently as an eBook, a digital, downloadable book available at Amazon.com. At 100 pages in length and richly illustrated, it is intended to be accessible to anyone. It is extensively footnoted, allowing readers to click on hyperlinks and read the original source material to verify the author's findings.

A Hebrew translation of the book was offered to the government of Israel as an educational resource for graduating high school students. Moshe Ya'alon, minister for strategic affairs and deputy prime minister, was receptive to the offer, and it was slated to officially launch during Yom Ha'atzmaut 2011, but "logistics concerns" postponed the release, said Goldi Steiner, co-founder of Canadians for Israel's Legal Rights (CILR), a grassroots organization that is promoting the eBook and seeking international support for Israel's legal rights.

Steiner hopes the eBook will one day be made available to youngsters in Israeli schools, as well as to students attending Canadian Jewish schools, particularly those about to enter university. Being armed with the facts would make them better prepared to face the barrage of anti-Israel misinformation they're likely to encounter on campus, she said.

Benzimra believes Israel's hesitancy to adopt the book may be due to efforts to "appease the Arabs," "remain on good terms with Europe and America and not create too much upheaval of the Oslo process."

But Benzimra, a chemical engineer by profession, feels "there will be no peace unless basic facts are understood." And those facts clearly substantiate the Jewish People's legal rights to all the territory west of the Jordan River, including the lands Palestinians want for a state.

Under the treaties, documents and declarations that set out the legal basis for a Jewish state, Arabs were limited to civil and religious rights. "What Arabs don't have in Palestine are national, political rights… Palestine was reserved as a reconstituted state for the Jewish People," he said.

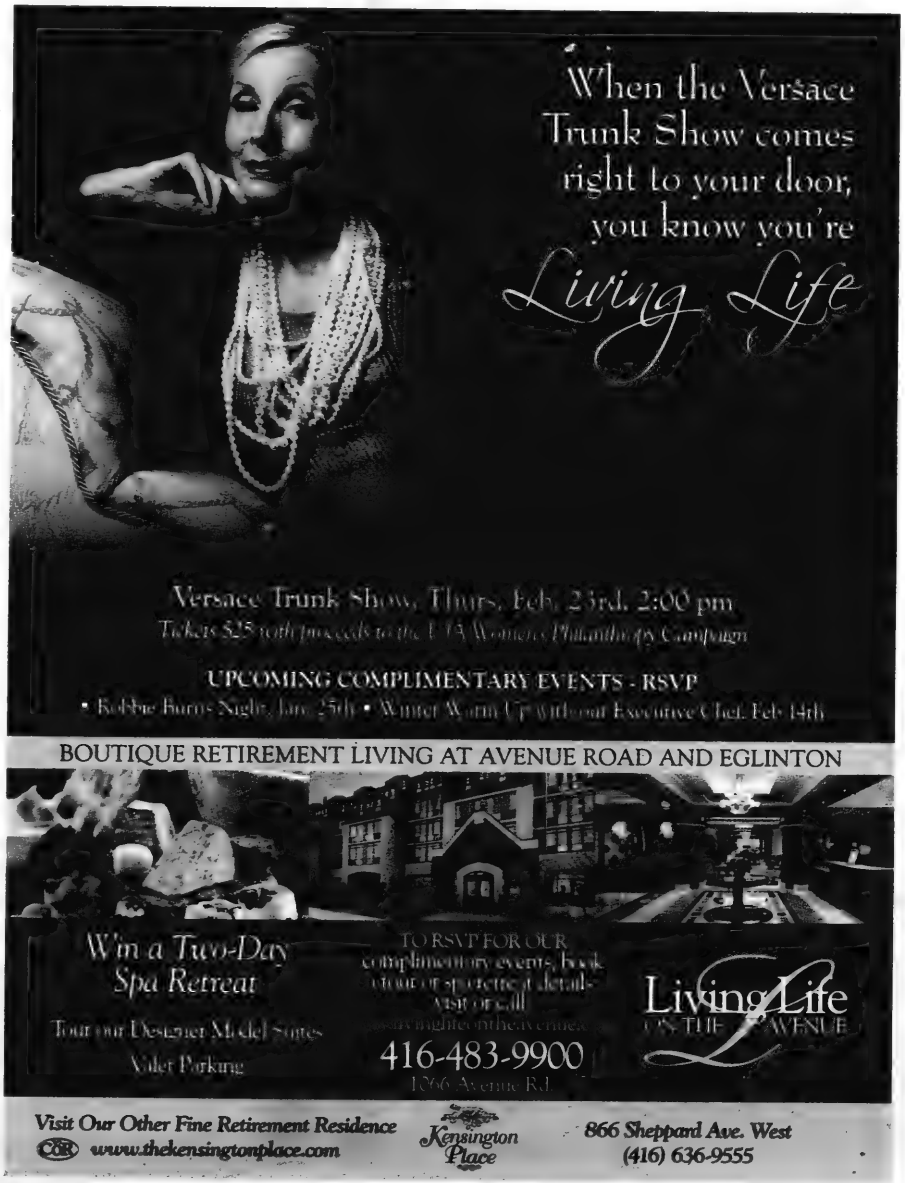
Palestinians could only obtain a state if a treaty with Israel creates one, he added.

The ebook contains numerous interesting revelations that contradict the accepted wisdom about the region.

One such item is the Arab claim they have been inhabitants of the land for untold generations. Benzimra, however, notes that Britain's 1930 Hope-Simpson report, which was supposed to examine Palestine's ability to absorb Jewish immigrants, found that British authorities were turning a blind eye to widespread illegal Arab immigration from Syria, Transjordan and Egypt. That was occurring at a time when Arab opponents of Jewish immigration were arguing the Jewish presence was impoverishing the local Arab population – but apparently not enough to keep their fellow Arabs from streaming into the country to share their fellow Arabs' misery, quipped the then governor of Sinai.

Citing other sources, the eBook notes that in just a few months in 1934, 30,000 Syrians entered the territory. The book also quotes U.S. president Franklin Roosevelt saying in 1939 that since 1921, Arab immigration to Palestine far exceeded Jewish immigration.

Steiner, a longstanding community volunteer, particularly in support of the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem, said CILR plans to make the book known to "political/diplomatic circles, the media, academia, and simultaneously… a Hebrew version. We hope to provide the multitudes of thus far uninformed Israeli public at large with the facts of their legal rights."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Kosher cheeses recalled voluntarily

JTA

For the first time in its 110-year history, the World Cheese Company, producer of Haolam and Miller's kosher cheese products, has issued a voluntary recall of some shredded cheese.

The recall comes after a packaging facility in Wisconsin that handles the shredding and packaging, not the production, of some of Miller's shredded products also packaged a different company's cheese that was found to contain the deadly bacteria listeria monocytogenes.

Kosher products packaged in the same plant all tested negative for the bacteria.

According to World Cheese, the state of Wisconsin requested the voluntary recall of all the products shredded in the plant following the discovery of the bacteria.

The recalled cheeses are all eight-ounce and 16-ounce bags of Haolam and Miller's shredded cheese (pizza, mozzarella, cheddar, fancy, muenster, R/F muinster, R/F cheddar) with an expiration of June 5, 2012, through Sept. 4, 2012; all 32-ounce bags of Haolam shredded mozzarella and gourmet blend and Miller's shredded mozzarella with an expiration date of Feb. 6, 2012, through May 7, 2012; all five-pound bags of Haolam and Miller's shredded mozzarella, cheddar, muenster and Monterey Jack with a pack-

age date of Sept. 8, 2011, through Dec. 7, 2011.

A company news release said that there was no health danger to people who consumed the listed products.

"Despite the fact that the products that we are being instructed to voluntarily recall, after having been tested, were found to be negative for the listeria monocytogenes, Haolam is complying with the state of Wisconsin's voluntary recall and removing all of the products from store shelves."

The release said the recall is not a kashrut issue.

Jennifer Bland, who works in file maintenance at Sobey's in the Spring Farm Plaza, Thornhill, said the store does carry the affected cheeses, and it has all been pulled from shelves.

Anyone who has the cheese at home can bring it in for a refund, she said.

World Cheese said that fresh cheese will be in stores shortly, and is being produced in a new shredding and packaging facility "where we have exclusive control over the cheese that is brought into the facility."

With files from Carolyn Blackman

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My Cooking Class books demystify baking and cooking

Sheldon Kirshner
Staff Reporter

To the uninitiated, baking and cooking can be a mystifying and intimidating exercise.

It needn't be so, especially if you consult the *My Cooking Class* series, published by Firefly Books.

Taking an innovative approach, these books present recipes in complete visual sequences, with every ingredient shown in the correct quantity and in the exact order in which it will be used.

If you faithfully follow the instructions, you'll learn to be a baker or a cook in no time at all.

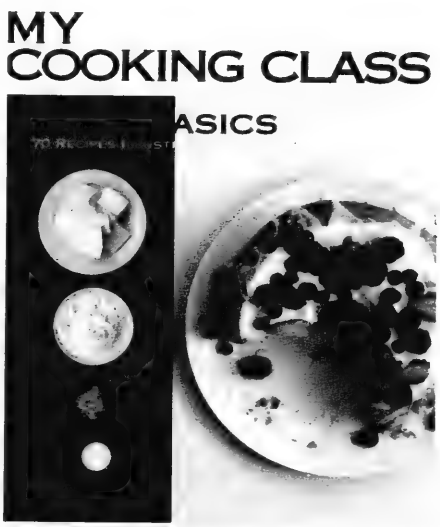
The latest batch of books from *My Cooking Class* will not only teach neophytes the essentials, but will help seasoned hands upgrade their skills.

Cake Basics, by Abi Fawcett, teaches you the fundamentals of baking, telling you how to whip up simple cakes, layer cakes, loaf cakes, chocolate cakes and cheesecakes.

Pick and choose from 70 recipes, running the gamut from a butter cake and a classic fruit cake to a lemon and poppyseed cake to a coconut and rum cheese cake.

These recipes *shmeck*.

Indian Basics, by Jody Vassallo, contains 85 mouthwatering recipes for soups and snacks, dals and vegetables, meat, chicken and fish, breads and rice, chutneys, pickles



and salads and desserts and drinks.

Vassallo lists 32 spices integral to Indian cuisine, from black onion seeds and green cardamom pods to white cloves and ground coriander.

Once you're ready to cook up a storm, you can make, for example, garlic ginger eggplant, lamb korma, saffron rice, vegetable pilaf, Goan fish and vermicelli pudding.

Preserving Basics, by the same author, is a primer on making homemade preserves such as jams, jellies, marmalades, mustards, chutneys and relishes.

Preserving fruits and vegetables in the form of jam and other preserves is an art that can be mastered, and in this volume, you'll learn how to make such delicacies as raspberry and lavender jam, pineapple and peppercorn jam, rhubarb and strawberry jam, pomegranate jelly, grapefruit marmalade, garlic and parsley mustard and fig, pear and pepper chutney.

Serve these preserves and impress your guests.

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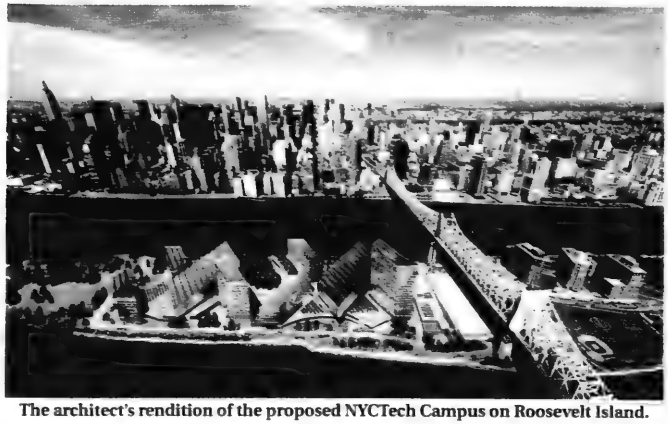

The architect's rendition of the proposed NYCTech Campus on Roosevelt Island.

Technion, Cornell to form new school

Abigail Klein Leichman
Israel21c

JERUSALEM — The Technion-Israel Institute of Technology in Haifa will team with Cornell University to establish NYCTech, a new school of applied engineering in New York.

The proposal from the two schools was chosen by New York from submissions made by seven competing international institutions.

The campus for 2,000 students will be built on New York City's Roosevelt Island using $100 million in municipal funds and $350 million from Charles F. Feeny of Duty Free Shoppers that will pay for the first phase of the building project.

The goal is to turn the Big Apple into the next Silicon Valley by leveraging the expertise and reputation of both schools. The Technion, often referred to as the MIT of Israel, is known worldwide for its engineering innovations and technology transfer successes. Its faculty includes three Nobel laureates.

New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg announced the selection of the winning proposal at a press conference Dec. 19 at the Weill Cornell Medical College in Manhattan. Technion president Peretz Lavie, who flew to New York for the event, stated that NYCTech is not meant be a branch of either school, but an entirely new and different sort of institution.

"I stand before you with great excitement and pride," Lavie said. "I just returned from Stockholm, where our Prof. Dan Shechtman was awarded the Nobel Prize in chemistry. My excitement today is no less than my excitement was there."

He added that the Technion is in the midst of celebrating the 100th anniversary of the laying of its cornerstone, which was made possible by the support of New York philanthropist Jacob Schiff.

"Today I feel that we are closing a 100-year circle, a circle of a partnership between New York and Haifa," Lavie said.

Bloomberg described the project as "transformative."

"Of all the applications we received, Cornell and Technion's was the boldest and most ambitious," he said

Cornell president David Skorton said NYCTech is expected to "fuel the city's growing tech sector" by generating jobs, startup companies and commercialized inventions.

The school is expected to open for the 2012-2013 academic year in temporary quarters while construction of the 2.1 million-square-foot, environmentally friendly campus gets underway. It is expected to include classrooms, science laboratories, a conference centre, housing and other facilities powered, at least in part, by solar energy and geothermal wells.

Israeli Consul General Ido Aharoni called the new partnership "more than just a collaboration between organizations, but rather an alliance of leading young minds."

Following the announcement of the tech campus agreement, the principals clasp hands. From left, Peretz Lavie, Seth W. Pinsky, and David Skorton. ***[Tova Kantorwitz photo]***

Advertising Feature

Robbins Hebrew Academy is the Best Choice in Jewish Education

This year, Robbins Hebrew Academy (RHA) is celebrating 50 years of excellence in Jewish education. RHA is the first Jewish day school in Ontario to be granted candidate status for the national organization, Canadian Accredited Independent Schools (CAIS). CAIS schools are recognized for their excellence in education, innovative goals, stellar staff, administration, and sound financial governance. Becoming an accredited member of CAIS would place RHA among the best schools in the country.

11 standards for CAIS accreditation

RHA has been recognized for its high standards of Jewish education and been granted the opportunity to build on its accomplishments. To become accredited, schools must meet 11 standards. These include Vision, Mission, Values and Strategy; Co-Curriculum and Learning Environment; Academic Program; School Leadership; Human Resources; School and Community; Admission Procedures; Governance; Finance; Physical Plant, Health and Safety and Commitment to School Improvement.

Anne-Marie Kee, Executive Director of CAIS said, "I firmly believe that accreditation in Canada is about school improvement, but it is also an opportunity to celebrate what is done well."

RHA has an always-improving teaching philosophy that is "made to measure" to the students' needs in these changing times. Claire Sumerlus, Head of School at RHA said, "it is a challenge that we are poised to meet. We stand upon our achievements, but we also welcome the opportunity to strive for the improvements necessary to place us among Canada's most excellent schools."

A learning experience unmatched by Toronto Jewish Day Schools

One of the advantages of accreditation, according to CAIS, is that "accreditation assures parents and the public that the school is focused on providing a safe and enriching environment while maintaining an efficient and effective operation."

RHA strives to offer an enriching learning experience that is unmatched among Toronto Jewish Day Schools. According to Ms. Sumerlus, "it is our commitment to continuous innovation and a view of our children's world in a global context that makes our approach to education unique."

The philosophies of CAIS schools are to create an environment where learning really happens. As Anne-Marie Kee said, "all CAIS schools are full of passionate learners" and both RHA and Judaism promote this passion for learning. Sumerlus further explains, "we strive to give our students a passion for life-long learning and to develop in them the ability to critically evaluate their world."

RHA teachers and staff understand the importance of creativity, collaboration and innovation in developing students to be successful in the 21st century and under the leadership of Ms. Sumerlus, the teachers and staff are expected to meet these high standards of teaching each and every day.

To learn more about why CAIS accreditation would make RHA the best choice in Jewish education for your child, contact RHA's Director of Admissions, Michele Viner at 416-224-8737 ext. 137, or visit www.rhacademy.ca.

Robbins Hebrew Academy is celebrating 50 years of excellence in Jewish education

RHA's 50th Birthday celebrations will include a Gala Dinner and a Shabbat Dinner in March. "We are looking forward to connecting with our alumni and community to celebrate this milestone," said Sumerlus. For details on the 50th birthday celebrations visit: www.rhacademy.ca/birthday.

For more information on CAIS, visit their website: www.CAIS.ca.

Mediator helps divorcing couples put kids first

Carolyn Blackman
Staff Reporter

Howard Irving is trying to take the sting out of divorce.

A founding member and past president of Family Mediation Canada, the social worker and family mediator is the author of six books, including his newest, *Children Come First: Mediation, Not Litigation When Marriage Ends.*

Originally from Providence, R.I., Irving, who came to Toronto to get his PhD in social work, said he was always interested in marital and family therapy, "but I found that people who couldn't reconcile, went on to a divorce that was handled by lawyers.

"That is not always good, though, because there is a win-lose scenario. That may work in criminal and corporate law, but not in family law, because kids have an ongoing relationship with their parents," said Irving, who has taught mediation at Tel Aviv University and in Hong Kong.

A major difficulty in family law, he said, is that the problems brought by families are frequently not legal problems. "They are human problems in which the law is involved.

"Voluntary settlements, which are worked out on an emotional and intellectual level, are more humane than those forced by litigation. Decisions reached by mutual agreement mean that neither party is the loser."

In the 1980s, Irving said, mediation was not being practised here, but he did some research and discovered that it was being practised in Los Angeles. "I spent six months there, came back to Toronto, and started Family Mediation Canada."

Howard Irving

Mediation, he said, is a process in which an impartial third party helps families identify and clarify issues between them and assists them to reach agreement on some or all of these issues.

"Family mediation does not deal with fault, find blame, give legal advice, or make decisions for others. It is not at all like family counselling. When people come for mediation, they have already decided to separate. [By that time], only about 10 per cent reconcile," he said.

In *Children Come First*, he said, he teaches parents who are going through a divorce, to put their children first. "Mediation can help [parties] maintain shared parenting, which means the parental bond is maintained even though the marital bond has ended."

In a clear and concise manner, Irving teaches parents – he gives a number of examples – how the mediation process works, gives guidelines for creating shared parenting plans, and talks about financial issues.

"Mediation is starting to get very well known. At first, couples came in after being referred by lawyers. Now many are coming in on their own.

"Divorce could be the perfect storm. All the right conditions could come together in order to create family suffering. With mediation, families can reach agreements on most of their issues."

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If I can do it, you can do it — Part 1

Fitness Corner

Felyce Zomparelli

I did it! It took a lot of hard work and determination, but I did it! I avoided my third back surgery! It took a year, but I am back to exercising regularly and doing what I love!

It all started in December 2010: I was working out in my gym when I ripped my right hamstring (back of the leg) during an exercise. I heard a sound, felt the pain and had to stop exercising. I lay down, raised my leg and put ice on it, but by the next day it was worse.

I went to my doctor's office, but my doctor wasn't there. So I saw someone else, who misdiagnosed me and told me it was my sciatic nerve. I left his office slightly confused, but I went to a chiropractor for treatment.

After two weeks of regular treatment, I continued to get worse. I went back to my doctor, who gave me the right diagnosis – a badly torn right hamstring. He recommended a physiotherapy clinic.

I started physiotherapy in mid-January, but my physiotherapist didn't believe my hamstring tear was the problem and insisted on treating me for a back injury rather than a leg injury.

I continued to get worse. During this phase, I kept going back to my doctor, not understanding why I wasn't getting any relief.

He ordered an MRI. I had to wait a month.

By March, I was on heavy painkillers regularly, just to be able to function, and I spent every spare minute in bed, away from my family. I was having flashbacks to 1998, when I spent six weeks on my floor unable to move, waiting for my first back surgery.

I repeatedly asked my physiotherapist to treat my leg, and he refused, telling me it was my back causing the pain in my leg, not the other way around. Then my doctor told me the MRI results showed a re-herniation of L5 disc, right side, and I had to see a surgeon. I told him I wasn't having a third back surgery. He referred me to Dr. Rebecca Henry.

Want to learn more? Read about my road to recovery next month.

Senior overcomes adversity

Carolyn Blackman
Staff Reporter

Gerald Ziedenberg, 72, gets his inspiration from the English prime minister Winston Churchill.

"I never give up," said Ziedenberg, a retired pharmacist, and author of a memoir, *Inspiration Through Adversity*.

Gerald Zieenberg

Born with an arm defect known as Erb's palsy, Ziedenberg, is a husband, father and grandfather, who had a long career with Shoppers Drug Mart, and kept active running marathons and often bicycling more than 100 miles a day.

"Just as I was approaching retirement, though, I [was struck with] osteoarthritis," he said. After six major surgeries on his hip and back, "compounded by my arm defect, [I] had to curtail all physical activities.

"I had to give everything up and transform my life," he added. "It was a sea change. At first I would start to cry when I saw people running."

Always passionate about history, Ziedenberg said he went into pharmacy to make a living. "Like most children of immigrant parents, that was the priority."

Needing to find a new outlet, he enrolled at the University of Toronto and eventually earned bachelor's and master's degrees in history. "I had lived through a lot of the things we discussed in class."

Although his parents were not Holocaust survivors, he said, they both lost their families in the war.

He loved studying, he said. "I went to class with a walker, in a wheelchair and with canes – whatever it took. I was determined not to give up."

He received his bachelor's degree in 2003, he said, and then had surgery. "It took my three sons to get me to my graduation, but I got there. The university provided a lift for me to get onto the stage.

"My oldest son teaches at U of T part time, so he was able to 'hood' me. Parents often hood their children at a graduation, but not usually the opposite. It was certainly a special moment I'll always cherish."

It took him about 1-1/2 years to write his memoir by longhand, he said. The last chapter is a reprint of his master's thesis, titled *The Successful Integration of Holocaust Survivors into Postwar Canada, 1945-1955.*

"I've written another book, *Blockade: The Story of Jewish Immigration to Palestine: 1933-1948*, and am now working on a third book about epic trials in Jewish history."

In Florida for the winter, Ziedenberg teaches a class in modern history at Florida Gulf Coast University. "I give 30 lectures over the winter. I used to spend my time in Florida bicycling. Now I do this

"So many people face problems. They need to occupy themselves and not give up. Just keep going."

Mazel Tov

מזל טוב

On the third night of Chanukah, David Schwartz and Inna Kurman were married. Mazel tov and love, Esther Schwartz and Gregory and Ella Kurman.

Happy 65th wedding anniversary to Morry & Shirley Naster. May we all celebrate many more together. Love Paul, Jay, Veronique, Benjamin, Emma & Jeremy.

Heather, daughter of Gale Borison-Socken and David Socken, is engaged to Gershon, son of Jennifer and Aubrey Hurwitz, grandson of Freda Lutrin, all of Johannesburg.

Mazel tov to Andrew Lichtman and Iris Rabinovitch on their engagement. With love from parents Eddie & Marianna Rabinovitch , Susan & Jeremy Lichtman, and the whole family.

Brother Liam and parents Robyn & Jeff Barszcz, Calgary, welcome Keegan Joshua born 11.11.11! Grandparents, Lisa Ash, Mel Ash, Toronto; Judy and Ed Barszcz, St. Catharines.

Sharlene Milgram and Sheldon Bergson announce the birth of Shane Isaiah Milgram Bergson, Dec. 24. Grandparents: Stephanie and Mark Milgram, Sam and Betty Bergson.

Email your digital photos to cblackman@thecjn.ca or go online to www.CJNews.com and click the "Family Moments"

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What's New

By LILA SARICK

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Deadline reminder: Jan. 16 is the deadline for the issue of Jan. 26. Jan. 23 is the deadline for the issue of Feb. 2. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; e-mail whatsnewcjn@gmail.com, or fax 416-391-0829.

Thursday, Jan. 12

JEWISH HISTORY LECTURES

Martin Lockshin discusses "The Jewish Spanish Diaspora," as part of Congregation Darchei Noam's Jewish history series, 7:30 p.m.

RABBI SHLOMO CARLEBACH

Cantor Marshall Loomer presents the story of **Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach**, who revolutionized worship and prayer through music, at Beth David Synagogue, 7:30 p.m. 416-633-5500.

EXPLORING PSALMS

A class studying some of the best-known Psalms will be taught by **Rebecca Rotenberg Nadler** Thursday mornings, starting today, 208 Coldstream Ave. Call 416-877-2050 or www.mekorot.ca.

Friday, Jan. 13

CREATIVE WRITING

Sylvia Warsh teaches a creative writing class 10:30 a.m. Fridays, starting today at the Betel Centre. 416-225-2112.

Sunday, Jan. 15

YIDDISH CLASSES FOR ALL

Yiddish classes for all levels are offered Sunday mornings starting today at Beth David Synagogue. Yiddish classes for kids in junior kindergarten or older, with art, drama and music taught by **Ruth Gerlock** begin today at Beth David Synagogue. E-mail to: committeeforyiddish@ujafed.org or call **Ester Klimitz**, 416-635-2883, ext. 5189.

JEWISH MEDIATION

Howard Warren discusses "Mediation in Jewish Family Matters," 7 p.m., the Lodzer Synagogue. 416-636-6665.

JEWISH MUSIC JOURNEY

Children in grades one to six are invited to the Morris Winchevsky School's new program, "A Jewish Music Journey Through the Ages," Sunday mornings. Call 416-789-5502 or www.tsjcs.com.

AMERICAN MATCHMAKER

Friends of Yiddish are showing the movie *American Matchmaker* in Yiddish with English subtitles, 2 p.m., Beth Tikvah Synagogue with commentary by **Shlomo Schwartzberg**. RSVP **Sandy**, 416-458-1440, 416-736-8073 or yiddish18@yahoo.ca.

Monday, Jan. 16

BIBLICAL FAMILY RELATIONS

Shayna Kravetz teaches a class exploring biblical family relations, "Moshe, Aharon, Miriam: A Family Story," Monday evenings, starting today. Or Chaim Yeshiva. Call 416-877-2050 or www.mekorot.ca.

BIBLICAL HEROINES

Chabad of Markham offers a 6-week course for women on heroines of the Bible, starting today, 83 Green Lane, Thornhill. Call 905-886-0420, ext. 221, or www.chabadmarkham.org.

Continued on page 25

HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM ALL OF US HERE AT FOUR ELMS

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The Officers and Members of
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are saddened by the passing of

Mr. Harold Vogel ז"ל

Beloved father of Mrs. Bonny Silver and Mrs. Judy Patlick, and devoted grandfather of Jeffery and Daniella Silver, Sherry Silver, Jeremy Silver and Samuel Patlick

May the noble life of Mr. Harold Vogel inspire the Jewish values exemplified by his children and grandchildren, and be a source of blessing for our community and the Jewish People.
May the entire family be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

Richard M. Joel, *President, YU*
Dr. Norman Lamm, *Chancellor, YU*
Dr. Herbert C. Dobrinsky, *V.P. for University Affairs, YU*
Jeremy Magence, *Chairman, CFYU*
Robert Eli Rubinstein, *Chairman, YU Torah M'Tzion Beit Midrash Zichron Dov*
Stuart Haber, *National Director, CFYU*
Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner, *Rosh Beit Midrash*

Continued from page 24

Tuesday, Jan. 17

JEWISH DIABETES MEETING

Pharmacist **Tino Montopoli** discusses "Prescription And Non-Prescription Drugs For People With Diabetes" at the Jewish diabetes chapter meeting, 8 p.m., Pride of Israel Synagogue. Visit www.diabetes.ca or call 416-363-0177, ext. 7403.

BOOK REVIEW

Heather Kassel reviews the book *The Free World* by **David Bezmozgis**, 8 p.m. at Adath Israel Synagogue. Call 416-499-6920 or 416-493-3626.

EXERCISE AND LIFESTYLE

Cindy Mortimer discusses "Therapeutic Exercises and Ways to Have a Healthy Lifestyle," Temple Har Zion. Bring your lunch at noon, program begins at 12:30. 905-889-2252.

MATTER OF SIZE

The film *Matter of Size* will be shown in Hebrew with English subtitles at Beth Tikvah Synagogue, 2 p.m. **Larry Anklewicz** provides a commentary. 416-221-3433.

Wednesday, Jan. 18

POMEGRANATE GUILD

Member artists of the Pomegranate Guild show a textile piece based on the theme "A Day of Creation," Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue, 8 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 19

JEWISH-ITALIAN PROJECT

Michael Chazan, of the Archaeological Centre, University of Toronto, discusses, "The Birth of a Project: The 2011 Excavation at Huqoq, Israel," 7:15 p.m., Carr Hall, Room 404, St. Michael's College, 100 St. Joseph St.

APPROACHING RETIREMENT

Amy D'Aprix discusses "Making the Most of Life's Transitions: Before and After Retirement," 7:30 p.m. at Temple Har Zion. 905-889-2252.

Other News

BEREAVEMENT GROUPS

Support groups for people who have lost a child or a loved one begin in January at Hospice Thornhill. Call **Bonnie Strand**, 905-764-0656, ext. 227.

MELTON MINI SCHOOL

Melton Mini School classes are open for registration. Bereshit II-Midrash and commentary will be taught by **Loretta Tanenbaum** Wednesday mornings, starting Feb. 15. Call 416-789-7400 or visit www.melton-toronto.org.

HARBORD CI REUNION

Anyone who ever attended or taught at Harbord Collegiate Institute is invited to its 120th birthday party, April 26-27, 2012. www.HarbordClub.com.

EARLY-BIRD PRICES

Early-bird prices are now available for Beth Tikvah's spring lunch and learn series. Call 416-221-3433, ext. 352, or helen@bethtikvahtoronto.org.

LOOKING TO RENT?

If you are looking to rent your basement apartment or extra room, you can list it free with UJA's Jewish Information Service of Greater Toronto in the Lipa Green Centre. People looking for a place to live can find help as well. 416-635-5600 or jinfo@ujafed.org.

JF&CS GROUPS

Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 215, or www.jfandcs.com. All programs require pre-registration. All programs are held at the Lipa Green Centre, unless otherwise noted.

The Challenge of Anger for Women: A 6-session group for women, starting Feb. 1, 7:30 p.m.

Living With Teens: A 6-session group for parents, starting Feb. 1, 7:30 p.m.

Life Skills for Today's Woman: A 6-session group for women, starting Feb. 2, 7 p.m.

Effective Parenting: A 4-session group for parents of children 2-11, starting Feb. 7, 7 p.m.

Beyond the Chupah, Becoming a Couple: A 5-session marriage preparation course, starting Feb. 14, 7 p.m., Beth Tzedec Synagogue.

Dating in Midlife: A workshop for men and women over 40 who have been single for more than 2 years. Feb. 15.

You're About to Separate, What to Tell The Kids: a workshop for parents, Feb. 16, 9:30 a.m., Promenade Mall, Suite 313.

High-Conflict Divorce: A workshop for parents, Feb. 22, 6:30 p.m.

FOR SENIORS

Association of Jewish Seniors meets Jan. 19, registration 9:30 a.m., program 10 a.m., Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue. **Susan Jackson** discusses "The New Jewish Toronto: What Your Grandchildren Are In For." RSVP **Tammy**, 416-635-2900, ext. 458.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park, (60+). **Valerie**, 416-395-7881. Casino Rama Jan. 18. Tuesdays, gentle exercise tailored to seniors, 10 a.m.; Wednesdays, duplicate bridge, 12:30 p.m.; Thursdays, line dancing, 10 a.m.; social bridge, 12:30 p.m. Non-members welcome.

LZA Seniors Cultural Club meets Tuesdays, 10 a.m., Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell. 416-630-9444.

New Horizons is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club that offers kosher food, casino trips. Romi and ulti card players welcome. 416-256-1892.

Adath Israel Congregation. Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub. Refreshments $2. Call **Pearl**, 416-635-6317, or **Sheila**, 416-665-3333.

Bernard Betel Centre 416-225-2112. Jan. 13, Zumba class, 9 a.m., Jan. 17, **Mark Freedman** discusses "Substance Abuse," 10 a.m., Jan. 19, "Diabetes Education," 1:30 p.m.

Active Seniors, Miles Nadal JCC, 416-924-6211, ext.155. **Iain Scott** discusses "Great Opera Singers: Placido Domingo at 70," Jan. 12, 1:30 p.m.

Computer beginners course starts Feb. 14 for 8 weeks. Small class with personal attention $70.

Active 55 Plus Speakers Series, Miles Nadal JCC 416-924-6211, ext. 526. **George Torys** discusses "Signs and Symptoms of Alzheimer's Disease and How to Reduce the Risk of Developing the Disease," Jan. 18, 12:30 p.m.

Senior Gentle Fitness Club offers tai chi classes at Edithvale Community Centre, Tuesdays 10 a.m. or Wednesdays 7:15 p.m. Call **Helen** 416-665-9050.

PROSSERMAN JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com.

Daycare and preschool registration for the 2012-13 school year is open. Spaces available for preschool, nursery, junior kindergarten and senior kindergarten. Call **Kailah Rubin**, ext. 4351.

Duplicate bridge, Thursdays, 12-3:30 p.m.

Register now for all winter children's programs. Call **Monique Shapiro**, ext. 4012.

MILES NADAL JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org.

Tickets for the Toronto Jewish Film Society's 2012 season are on sale now. Call **Joelle Malka**, ext. 139.

Shabbat programs for children begin Jan. 13. Call ext. 277 or sarahbn@mnjcc.org.

Kevin Courrier teaches a course on "American Movies and the Politics of Idealism," Mondays starting Jan. 16. Call ext. 606 or e-mail film@mnjcc.org.

Adult Hebrew courses begin the week of Jan. 16. Call ext. 154 or sharonis@mnjcc.org.

Shoresh Food Conference on Jewish tradition and contemporary food issues, Feb. 5. www.shoresh.ca or sabrina@shoresh.ca.

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner teaches a course on "Icons of Spanish Jewry," Thursdays 8 p.m., starting Feb. 9. Call ext. 154.

Textiles, an exhibit by **Sheree Rasmussen**, is at the gallery until Jan. 30.

The Michael Bernstein Chapel, on the 3rd floor, holds services every Thursday at 7:15 a.m. and Sunday at 8 a.m. followed by breakfast. Call **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200.

KINDERTRANSPORT MEMORIES: Frieda Korobkin, one of the children rescued in the Kindertransport just before World War II and author of *Throw Your Feet Over Your Shoulders*, spoke at a NCSY parlour meeting in Thornhill last month. She was introduced by her son, Rabbi Daniel Korobkin, the new rabbi of Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto. From left are Leonard Korobkin, Freida Korobkin, Karen Korobkin, Rabbi Korobkin and hosts Jack and Harriet Feintuch. *[Ari Heitner photo]*

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 29

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Philanthropist founded Camp Wahanowin

Frances Kraft
Staff Reporter

Harold Nashman, founder of Camp Wahanowin and Jewish community philanthropist, died Dec. 31 in Florida. He was 84.

In a eulogy, Rabbi Ahron Hoch of the Village Shul referred to Nashman as his teacher, mentor, friend and "partner in idealism" for the past 30 years. "He was humble, brilliant and multi-talented," the rabbi said.

Referring to Nashman's early support of Aish HaTorah, Rabbi Hoch thanked him for "believing in five 20-something crazy idealists 30 years ago."

A father of five and grandfather of 15, the Toronto-born lawyer, who retired after five years in practice, founded Camp Wahanowin in 1955.

His sons, Alon and Bruce, who is now director of the Orillia camp, spoke in separate eulogies of their father's gift for making speeches.

"Harold always found the words which celebrated the best of what was going on," Alon said. "And everyone in the room felt taller, acknowledged, appreciated and loved. He never made notes."

Harold Nashman

Nashman had a long history of health problems, beginning with a massive heart attack at age 31. It left him with "a sunny attitude wedded to a total appreciation of each day," Alon said.

His medical history included sextuple bypass surgery, kidney failure, cirrhosis, diabetes and cancer, and a broken neck three years ago, from which he recovered. Two weeks before his death, he fell and broke a hip.

But, Alon said, "He seemed to be able to turn every 'oy' into joy."

Before his career as a camp director, Nashman's leadership skills came into play as social convenor of Osgoode Hall Law School, and in his involvement with his fraternity and with Hillel. He also served as a writer for the UC Follies at the University of Toronto.

At Wahanowin, Nashman and his late wife, Yetta, created "a safe and loving environment in which young people could grow," Alon said, recalling his dad's role as a father figure to many.

In the past 30 years, Nashman emerged as a major fundraiser after his son, Bruce, spent a summer at Aish HaTorah in Jerusalem, Alon said.

Nashman was involved in setting up a Toronto branch of the Orthodox Jewish outreach organization and developed a funding model – a free community lecture sponsored by donors – that has since been widely copied, Alon said. "He never considered himself a *macher*, but he gave as if he was one."

In addition to the Village Shul, Nashman supported initiatives in Israel and eventually, the Yetta Nashman Jewish Family Institute, a project of the Village Shul and the Aish HaTorah Learning Centre.

As well, he played a central role in the development of the Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School and co-wrote a song called *The Power of Peace*, which became an anthem for Care International and was recorded by Aretha Franklin and Enrique Iglesias.

Nashman's son, Bruce, recalled his father's knack for coining original words, his sense of fun, and his comfort with people from all walks of life – from Orthodox to secular, and including major figures like Elie Wiesel and Israeli prime ministers.

Nashman was predeceased by his wife, Yetta. He is survived by children, Alon, Bruce, Mark, Laura and Danny; his sister, Rina Fishbein; his partner, Bella Hull, and 15 grandchildren.

Rabbi reaches out to cemetery vandals

Lauren Kramer
Pacific Correspondent

VICTORIA — After five graves were vandalized with swastikas at Victoria's 150-year-old Emanu-El Jewish cemetery on New Year's Eve, Rabbi Harry Brechner felt compelled to respond with a letter directed to the vandal.

"I know that the vast majority of people living in Victoria… find this kind of act repulsive and cowardly," the spiritual leader of the historic Congregation Emanu-El wrote in a letter published in local media outlets, including the *Victoria Times-Colonist*. "Acts of hate have no place in our community."

Rabbi Brechner invited the culprit to "take ownership and responsibility" for his or her actions and "make things right."

Gravestone vandalized

"Come clean the grave sites, and when you are through take a tour with me around the cemetery and meet some of the people buried there who defied Nazism. People who lived, worked towards positive change and loved after losing all they held dear in the Holocaust. Come meet the people who lived their lives after the Holocaust as the antithesis of your swastika."

Rabbi Brechner told *The CJN* that he "never really expected anyone to come forward, but we've had enormous support from the community."

He said he's been contacted by local MPs and MLAs, as well as the mayor, city councillors and just about every faith leader in the area.

"People have stopped me in the streets," he said: "One man brought pickles, chocolates and kosher wine to the synagogue to comfort the community, while another offered us a log cabin in the mountains as a retreat if anyone feels the need to use it."

Six days after the vandalism was discovered, the graves had been cleaned, and minor repairs were slated to be completed this week. Rabbi Brechner said he hoped that a vigil at the cemetery scheduled for Jan. 8 would give community members a sense of closure. "There was a sense that people needed to gather out of respect and solidarity," he said.

"For me, it's so important that the children in the community who are old enough and aware enough will come to the vigil and see that the person who did this is outside the [norm] and not part of the community of Victoria. I want them to be reassured about the security of the Victoria's Jewish community."

Victoria police are treating the incident as a hate crime but were unable to comment by *The CJN*'s deadline.

The last act of antisemitic vandalism in Victoria occurred in May 2010, when vandals painted graffiti in Victoria's Clawthorpe Park and defaced a wall facing the parking lot at the Victoria Jewish Community Centre.

OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Lisa Jessica Cohen	Dec 16/11	2239 Eglinton Ave. E.
Leonard Caplan	Dec 15/11	561 Avenue Road
Sidney Jakin	Dec 17/11	2075 Bayview Ave.
Leon Atteslander	Dec 15/11	22 Maynard Blvd.
Harriet Epstein	Dec 16/11	55 Skymark Drive
Lily Rosenbloom	Dec 17/11	131 Beecroft Rd.
Evelyn Cole	Dec 17/11	1039 Water Street
Molly Frankle	Dec 17/11	306 Finch Ave. E.
Jack L. Tully	Dec 17/11	5444 Yonge St.
Dennis Gillman	Dec 18/11	811 Charles Wilson Parkway
Harold Krieger	Dec 21/11	20 Prince Charles Drive
Maurice Abrams	Dec 22/11	421-45 Dunfield Ave.
Gail Dublin	Dec 23/11	3560 Bathurst Street
Alice Nusbaum	Dec 24/11	67 Elderwood Drive
Gail Dublin	Dec 23/11	3560 Bathurst Street
Alice Nusbaum	Dec 24/11	67 Elderwood Drive
Zelda Goodman	Dec 26/11	4001 Bayview Avenue
Leon Gavendo	Dec 26/11	26 Kings College Road
Ada Silverberg	Dec 25/11	85 Skymark Drive
Judi Lewis	Dec 25/11	147 Murray Street
Dorothy Jundler	Dec 27/11	16 Robbon Place
Edward Yuditsky	Dec 28/11	10 Torresdale Avenue
Ron Smith	Dec 27/11	1761 Victoria Park
Archie Goodman	Dec 30/11	120 Promenade Circle
Seymour Sokoloff	Dec 30/11	183 Torresdale Avenue
Al Pastor	Dec 30/11	1555 Finch Avenue East
Elias Kleiner	Dec 30/11	24 Goodwill Avenue
Liza Zlotinshaya	Jan 2/12	

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Kesten, Yetta	Dec. 16/11	Private
Kartash, Evelyn	Dec. 17/11	4266 Bathurst St.
Hamerman, Izhak	Dec. 20/11	3000 Bathurst St.
Donsky, Marianne	Dec. 20/11	Private
Esser, Irving	Dec. 21/11	182 Yorkview Dr.
Fried, George D.	Dec. 22/11	Private
Hume, Dorothy Sandra	Dec. 23/11	23 Royal Palm Dr.
Vogel, Harold	Dec. 23/11	42 Clifton Ave.
Goldberg, Sonia	Dec. 23/11	Private
Wise, Eva	Dec. 25/11	3560 Bathurst St.
Zoldhelyi, Eva	Dec. 25/11	136 Hove St.
Alperovich, Ida	Dec. 25/11	Private
Ptasznik, Rhoda Gertrude	Dec. 25/11	484 Steeles Ave. W.
Tabachnick, Joyce	Dec. 25/11	1555 Finch Ave. E.
Poyser, Betty	Dec. 26/11	44 Jessica Gardens
Applebaum, Jerry Manny	Dec. 26/11	36 Covington Rd.
Lefkovitz, Stanley Charles	Dec. 27/11	138 Chelmsford Ave.
Pritzker, Rose	Dec. 28/11	Florida
Perlamutrov, Yacov	Dec. 28/11	Private

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TV host's anti-Israel comments cause outrage

Janice Arnold
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) has asked for a meeting with the head of a Quebec television network because of a program host's repeated expressions of "animosity and prejudice with regard to the Jewish community."

On Dec. 23, CIJA Quebec vice-president Luciano Del Negro wrote to Maxime Rémillard, co-president and chief executive officer of Remstar Corporation, which owns V Television, about its concerns over Stéphane Gendron, co-host of the talk show *Face à Face*.

Stéphane Gendron

CIJA made the letter public following remarks made by Gendron on the Dec. 27 program in which he said of Israel: "[A] country like that does not deserve to exist" and, "unfortunately, Israel has not yet collapsed."

CIJA said it has yet to receive a response to the letter from V, a private, over-the-air French-language station.

Gendron made the remarks during a "tribute" to Quebec member of the National Assembly Amir Khadir for his support of the boycott of Boutique Le Marcheur shoe store on St. Denis Street because it sells a line of Israeli-made shoes.

The sole Québec Solidaire MNA took part in one of the pickets outside the store in December 2010 and blocked debate on an otherwise all-party motion in the National Assembly condemning the boycott campaign against the store.

Gendron, who in addition to his hosting duties serves as mayor of the small town of Huntingdon, also accused Israel of imposing apartheid and of "stealing" land from the Palestinians.

Del Negro charged that Gendron has engaged in "constant incitement" against Jews and Israel on air.

As egregious as his comments have been over many months, "Stéphane Gendron has now gone too far in affirming that Israel does not have the right to exist," said Del Negro.

In his letter to Rémillard, he pointed out that Gendron's "incitement" does not fall within the realm of opinion as set out in the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council code.

"Under the pretext of criticizing Israel, your host conveys the oldest antisemitic clichés," Del Negro wrote.

He added that Gendron was dismissed from TQS, as V was known before its present ownership, in 2006 for remarks that its management at the time deemed unacceptable.

The pro-Israel media watchdog HonestReporting Canada was also appalled by Gendron's latest outburst, a video clip of which it posted on YouTube.

Executive director Mike Fegelman is especially disappointed because HonestReporting raised objections about Gendron with V's management when he made anti-Israel comments in November.

In that instance, Gendron accused Israel of avenging the Palestinians' admission to UNESCO by "build[ing] 2,000 homes in areas that do not belong to them, the occupied territories, so they are going to bulldoze people, kill people."

V communications director Diane Patenaude told *The CJN* Jan. 5 that a meeting is scheduled for this week between the station's management and the *Face à Face* production team. Gendron has been invited to the meeting.

"We take this complaint very seriously," she said, adding that she's answering all the communication the station has received about Gendron's latest comments, and there has been a considerable amount.

She said Rémillard has been on vacation, and that's why CIJA's letter to him had not been acknowledged.

Patenaude said she expected to meet with Rémillard this past Monday on CIJA's request for a meeting.

"*Face à Face* is a daily public affairs show that deals with numerous issues, and is intended to provoke debate and discussion," Patenaude said. "It is not a newscast or news magazine, and the co-hosts [Gendron and Caroline Proulx] are not journalists. The views they and their guests express are not necessarily those of the network or its management."

While V does not think it is responsible for everything it broadcasts, Patenaude said management will insist from now on that "when an issue is discussed, both sides are presented."

Patenaude gave a similar response after Gendron's remarks in November. She added at the time that the show's producers were reminded of the need to adhere to Canadian broadcast standards "to avoid repeating a similar occurrence."

This lack of a reprimand from his superiors appears to have "emboldened" Gendron to make further anti-Israel comments, Fegelman said.

"V Television continues to allow itself to be a platform for the dissemination of Gendron's hateful invective."

Neither a retraction nor apology was issued on *Face à Face*.

Fegelman said V is responsible for the information it broadcast, regardless of the type of program.

HonestReporting has now turned to the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council for redress.

"We reiterate our call for a public apology from V Television and for Stéphane Gendron to be immediately terminated as TV host of *Face à Face*," Fegelman said.

The Los Angeles-based Simon Wiesenthal Center has also expressed its outrage at Gendron's remarks.

"His views are shared by the likes of Hamas, the Muslim Brotherhood and Iran's ruling mullatocracy and its president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who has called for the annihilation of the only true democracy in the Middle East," wrote the Wiesenthal Center's associate dean, Rabbi Abraham Cooper, in a Dec. 30 letter to Rémillard.

"It is dangerously naive and irresponsible not to believe that such escalating rhetoric – left unchallenged by V Television – could impact intergroup relations in Quebec."

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COUSINS MEET: Herzliah High School Grade 10 student Scott Baskin, centre, met his distant cousin, former jailed Soviet Jewish refusenik and Israeli cabinet minister Natan Sharansky, right, for the first time during Sharansky's recent Montreal visit. Scott was among hundreds of Jewish high school students who attended an assembly at Federation CJA with Sharansky, now chair of the Jewish Agency. At left is David Azerad, Herzliah's assistant educational director for Jewish studies.

Debate revived over faith-based school funding

Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf
Staff Reporter

An announcement by the province of Saskatchewan that it will extend public funding to private religious schools has reinvigorated calls by the Jewish community in Ontario to have this province follow suit.

The Dec. 21 announcement by Education Minister Donna Harpauer applied to "qualified independent schools" that adhere to "a strict set of criteria to be eligible for funding of 50 per cent of the provincial per-student average."

Ira Walfish

Ira Walfish, chair of Ontario's Multifaith Coalition for Equal Funding of Faith Based Schools, has been pushing for a similar arrangement for Jewish, Muslim, Hindu and other religious schools in Ontario for almost a decade.

He said he and his supporters in the Jewish community are not done pressuring Premier Dalton McGuinty on the issue and are feeling emboldened by Saskatchewan's stance.

"Obviously we still believe strongly that this is the direction Ontario should be taking. Providing parents with choice, be it a public school or a Catholic school or a Jewish, Muslim, Greek Orthodox school etcetera... will ultimately both improve Ontario's school system and remedy a longstanding discriminatory practice, providing funding to one religious group, Catholics, and to exclude all other religions," Walfish said.

In order for religious schools in Saskatchewan to qualify, they must, among other things, participate in the province's student assessment program; employ only certified teachers; teach the provincial curriculum; operate as an incorporated non-profit organization; submit financial statements; have been in operation for at least two consecutive years; facilitate inspection and supervision by ministry officials, and comply with ministry policy and directives.

Saskatchewan's *Education Act* allows for the registration of "independent schools" by private groups or organizations in order to give parents the ability to "educate their children in accordance with their conscientious beliefs and provide them with a legitimate exemption from attendance at a public or separate school," according to the province.

An estimated 2,000 Jews live in Saskatchewan, but there are currently no Jewish day schools in the province.

In 2001, the Tory government under then-premier Mike Harris introduced a tax credit for private school tuition, which the McGuinty government repealed in 2003.

The funding issue was central to the 2007 Ontario election, when then-Conservative leader John Tory made the promise to fund faith-based schools a major part of his campaign. It was seen as a key reason he lost to McGuinty, who was vocal in his opposition to the idea.

The Constitution Act of 1867 enshrined public funding for Catholic schools in Ontario in order to protect its Catholic minority. The Ontario government has said it has no plans to change its position or open up a constitutional debate on the matter.

Gary Wheeler, a spokesperson for Ontario's Ministry of Education, told *The CJN* the subject is closed.

Continued on page 30

SINGLES EVENTS

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Fran Sonshine, ***National Chair of the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem,***

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Yaron Ashkenazi, *Executive Director* and **Staff**

extend heartfelt condolences to beloved wife, Luba Smuschkowitz; brother, Peter Smuschkowitz; sister, Genia Zeligman; children Dora and Harry, Allen and Ellen, Howard and Jennifer, Michael and Shirley, and grandchildren,

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find comfort among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

Christians flourish in Israel, dwindle under Islam

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

While the number of Christians worldwide continues to climb –there are now about 2.2 billion – their communities throughout the Islamic world are besieged by the rising tide of extremism. The consequence has been a steep decline of Christianity in many countries overseas.

An editorial, "Christians and lions," in the Dec. 31 issue of the *Economist* gave a partial summary of this state of affairs: "In Nigeria scores of Christians have died in Islamist bomb attacks, targeting Christmas prayers. In Iran and Pakistan Christians are on death row, for 'apostasy' – quitting Islam – or blasphemy. Dozens of churches in Indonesia have been attacked or shut. Two-thirds of Iraq's pre-war Christian population have fled. In Egypt and Syria, where secular despots gave Christianity a shield of sorts, political upheaval and Muslim zeal threaten ancient Christian groups."

While the plight of Egypt's Christian community in the post-Mubarak period has received a fair amount of media attention under the glare cast on the "Arab Spring," the often dire situation of Christians in the other countries mentioned above, not to mention China, has either been underreported or largely ignored.

Drawing upon a recent PEW Center study, the *Economist* noted that in sub-Saharan Africa, Christians have gone from nine per cent to 63 per cent of the total population. Yet, speaking of an underreported story, in Nigeria over the past decade, hundreds of Christians living mainly in the south have been killed in clashes with Muslim radicals from the north. On Christmas Day, an Islamist sect known as Boka Haram (meaning "western education forbidden," according to a *New York Times* report) claimed responsibility for a series of church bombings, including one that killed 25 in the capital, Abuja. A few days later, with violence unabated, the president of Nigeria declared a state of emergency in a substantial part of the country.

Perhaps this is to be expected from the influential British-based *Economist*, but while focusing mainly on Islamist intolerance, it also found a role for Israelis in the persecution of Christians: "In the Holy Land, local churches are caught between Israeli encroachment on their property and Islamist bids to monopolize Palestinian life. Followers of Jesus may yet become a rarity in his homeland."

Hundreds killed in clashes in Nigeria over past decade

Now, facts may be boring, yet they're often instructive, especially when essential ones are omitted. What's missing above is any mention of a specific example of alleged Israeli encroachment on church property.

In late 1999, Israel was accused of allowing such an infringement when it appeared that the government was prepared to yield to Muslim demands to permit the construction of a mosque next to the famous Christian pilgrimage site, the Basilica of the Annunciation. The Basilica, the largest church in the Middle East, is located in Nazareth, where Muslim Arabs now outnumber Christian Arabs two to one. The Vatican raised strong objections with Israel, which found itself in the middle of a battle between two faiths it has sought to accommodate, if not mollify.

Israel's efforts to reach a compromise by allowing the building of a small mosque while leaving land for a plaza between that structure and the church failed to placate church officials. Negotiations continued until Israel decided in early 2002 to stop the construction of the mosque, an act that pleased the Christians, but led Muslims to accuse Israel of "persecution." A year later, Israel demolished the foundation of the mosque (which had never received a building permit in the first place).

In short, not only was Israel's initial response not an act of "encroachment" on church property, this entire episode illustrates the extent to which Israel has attempted to be sensitive to the religious traditions and demands of both Christians and Muslims, and occasionally finds itself in an untenable situation as a result.

There is one other fact that the *Economist* omitted, and it's crucial. While Christian populations are declining everywhere in the Middle East, there is one exception: Israel. Only in the Jewish State are Christians not only safe, their numbers are actually increasing. But that makes for rather boring news, doesn't it?

Paul Michaels is director of reseach and media relations with the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs.

Equal access strategy

Family Matters
by
John Syrtash
B.A. (Hon.), LL.B.
Counsel
Garfin Zeidenberg LLP
Family Lawyer & Mediator
for 30 years

Question: I'm writing because I was married and divorced outside of Canada (both events were in the United States). Do I still need to go through the same process as people who married in Canada and divorced elsewhere when I remarry? Or can I just apply directly for a marriage license because both events happened outside the country?

Answer: You can apply directly to the Registrar of Ontario for an Ontario marriage license application that you must take to a competent family law lawyer. That lawyer must give you a "legal opinion" in a form prescribed by the Ontario government that certifies that you were domiciled in the jurisdiction that granted you the foreign divorce for at least one year prior to the commencement of the Divorce Proceedings in the foreign court. Otherwise, you could have simply flown to Las Vegas and obtained a weekend divorce. A lawyer will charge you a fee for such an opinion since he or she has to verify your identity, examine your passport and proof of domicile in that foreign jurisdiction for at least one year. He then also has to complete the Ontario legal opinion, which must be completed in a particular format. You then file that opinion with the rest of your marriage application to obtain the Ontario marriage license.

Question: My husband has custody of the baby. He is denying me access if I don't give him money. We have no court documents on access but my lawyer is working on that. Is there any way that I can get custody of my child? I have been accused of assault of my stepdaughter; the CAS is involved. My husband is a former drug addict who only quit last year, and he is abusive towards me. CAS gave me unsupervised access to my daughter. They told my lawyer they have no concerns about me having the baby.

Answer: Cases like this involve a spaghetti of conflicting allegations of abuse, especially when child protection workers are involved. Normally, the Ontario Court of Justice first hears from the Children's Aid Society to see if there is any merit to any of the abuse allegations before the same court or the Superior Court of Justice entertains any custody applications. Allegations of substance abuse by your ex can be tested with DNA hair testing samples that your lawyer can ask the Court to order, if dad is denying it. Of course, you will be subject to the same tests.

Mr. Syrtash is Counsel to Garfin Zeidenberg LLP, Suite 800, 5255 Yonge Street (at Norton) just north of Mel Lastman Square, Civic Centre Subway station, Toronto, ON M5G 1E6. John Syrtash can be reached at (416) 642-5410, Cell (416) 886-0359. Visit www.freemychild.com; www.spousalsupport.com; www.garfinzeidenberg.com.

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CIJA to raise issue with Ont. government

Continued from page 29

In an e-mail, he said the government "recognizes the right of parents to choose alternative forms of education for their children. However, our clear focus and our government's priority continues to be introducing measures that significantly improve the publicly funded system. The government remains committed to providing an excellent education system that is open to children throughout Ontario. We will continue to meet our constitutional obligations with respect to Roman Catholic schools."

Shimon Fogel

Shimon Fogel, CEO of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), said his organization will continue to advocate for faith-based school funding.

"We're interested in provinces demonstrating equity in terms of funding and we do have this as one of the issues on our agenda," Fogel said, adding that "there could be any number of ways to approach it" in Ontario.

He said that although CIJA understands that the McGuinty government isn't willing to revisit the situation "there may be other formulae that can be used, or other considerations that would allow for… the same kind of [funding considerations], but not in direct allocations to Jewish schools."

CIJA intends to approach the Ontario government to discuss the issue this year as part of its "responsibility to our community," Fogel said.

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Abbas wants Fatah to re-evaluate pact with Hamas

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JERUSALEM — Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah movement said on Sunday it would have to re-evaluate its reconciliation pact with the Islamist Hamas group after the rejection of a Fatah visit to the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip last week.

In a statement, Fatah's Central Committee said Hamas' behaviour showed it was not interested in the implementation of the reconciliation agreement signed in Cairo last year, which included the formation of a unity government and the holding of a parliamentary election on May 4.

Tension between the two Palestinian factions contrasts with the positive atmosphere stressed by both sides in December, when Abbas and Hamas chief Khaled Meshal met in Cairo and agreed on steps to end hostility.

Fatah said three of its senior officials were stopped by Hamas security officers at the entrance to the Israeli-blockaded territory on Jan. 6 and were forced to turn back.

The action by Hamas officers was "inadequate and humiliating," Fatah said in a statement. Hamas in turn accused Fatah of reneging on the Egyptian-brokered deal to end four years of bitter rivalry that has split the Palestinian national movement.

It said Abbas was putting peace talks with Israel, taking place in Jordan, ahead of Palestinian unity. Negotiators are searching for a way to revive direct negotiations, which have been suspended for more than a year.

"If Fatah has made a decision to backtrack from reconciliation in favour of returning to negotiation with the Zionist enemy, they should bear full responsibility for the consequences of such a decision before the Palestinian people, and the Egyptian mediator," Hamas said in a statement.

A poster of Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah, right, and Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh seen against the backdrop of Mosque of Omar on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem *[Flash 90 photo]*

While Fatah recognizes Israel and is ready to negotiate a peace deal, Hamas refuses to do so. That has drawn a warning from the Jewish state that any pact between the Palestinian groups would scupper peace efforts.

Hamas forces seized control of Gaza in 2007 after a brief civil war that killed hundreds of Gazans, many of them from the two factions. Political divisions between them have weakened Palestinian aspirations to create an independent state.

The Hamas interior ministry denied it had made a decision to ban visits by Fatah officials and accused Abbas' movement of "exaggerating what happened" as a pretext for getting out of its reconciliation commitments. It noted that senior Fatah official Nabil Shaath had been in Gaza for several days without facing restrictions.

It also accused one of Abbas' envoys, Sakher Bseisso, of "cursing God" when asked by a Hamas officer to wait until he contacted his commanders.

Hamas said Bseisso would have to face a judge on the blasphemy charge if he visited Gaza in future.

We must respond to Iran's racist rhetoric

Shlomo Avineri
Ha'aretz Daily Newpaper Ltd.

In the public discourse about how to deal with the Iranian challenge, a distinction must be made between the nuclear issue and the racist rhetoric of the president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who denies the Holocaust and calls for the destruction of Israel.

The response to the nuclear issue is not simple, but it is at the centre of the international agenda and seems to have picked up momentum recently. The same cannot be said of the second issue, where both the international community and the Jewish public have failed to provide a suitable response. As was to be expected, there have been condemnations from heads of state and other leaders, but that is it.

Comment

Let us assume for a moment that the head of a European country were to say that the Holocaust did not take place and the State of Israel must be destroyed. There is no doubt that the European Union's reaction would be to recall ambassadors, if not to break off diplomatic relations or declare that leader persona non grata in EU member states. As a result of less severe statements by right-wing politician Joerg Haider, Austria was almost banished from the EU. And the president of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko – who is not a danger to anyone except the citizens of his country – has been forbidden to enter any EU countries.

Sanctions of this kind were not imposed on Ahmadinejad, and this constitutes a severe political and moral failure, especially on the part of Europe, which in recent years has taken significant steps to include remembrance of the Holocaust in textbooks and in the collective memory.

The way the nuclear arming of Iran is treated is one thing, but in Ahmadinejad's racist, anti-Israel statements, we are talking about a basic issue where Europe can exert the so-called soft power of which it is so proud. It is not too late. There is no reason why the EU should not declare Ahmadinejad persona non grata in its region. While the Iranian president is not keen to take a trip around the continent, denouncing him as someone who is not wanted there would send an important message to the Iranian people. Sanctions must be imposed only on the Iranian president and not on the state. It is intolerable that such a step has not yet been taken.

There is also a Jewish failure in this matter. In the years when the Soviet Union prohibited the emigration of its Jews, the members of that community succeeded in making the lives of Soviet representatives miserable throughout the world. Through demonstrations outside Soviet embassies, embarrassing questions about freedom of emigration at all news conferences of Soviet leaders in the West, and in dozens of other ways, they turned the Jewish question into a burden on the shoulders of Soviet regime. The wide media coverage of these demonstrations helped the effort.

Continued on page 33

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Israeli students reach youth worldwide with new media

Viva Sarah Press
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Journalism – so surveys and polls warn – is a profession in danger of disappearing. Just don't tell that to the students enrolled at the Asper Institute for New Media Diplomacy at the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) in Herzliya.

With the most journalists per capita in the world based in Israel, the apocalyptic forecast seems to be having the opposite effect here. New media organizations in Israel – especially digital versions – continuously pop up.

NoCamels (http://nocamels.com/) and IDC Asper Web Radio (http://1062fm.co.il/) are two of the latest media ventures to enter the scrum.

They are operated by students and staff from the IDC.

"Students are given tools and guidance from individuals at the top of their field, and their learning curve starts by immediately applying what they learn in the real world," said Michal Divon, director of public relations at NoCamels.

Anouk Lorie, director of the Asper Institute for New Media Diplomacy and editor-in-chief of NoCamels, said the IDC's products are as good, if not better, than professional journalism ventures.

Michal Divon, public relations director of the news website NoCamels, and Anouk Lorie, director of the Asper Institute for New Media Diplomacy

"I think our stories are at the same level, or even higher, than any other publication out there," Lorie said. "I do want us to be seen as a completely professional publication."

Both the recently launched Hebrew-language IDC Asper Web Radio and the one-year-old English-language NoCamels are based at the Asper Institute on the IDC campus. They are non-profit organizations.

"The radio operates with the mission of reaching students, soldiers and youth, connect with them and motivate them to caring, involvement, active participation in the community and responsibility for the environment," the IDC Asper Web Radio website states.

NoCamels is a digital Israeli news website that reports on innovations, health advances, environment and culture. It was launched in 2010 and already reports 30,000 hits a month on its website and some 9,500 fans on its Facebook pages.

Both these projects are exactly what the Asper Foundation of Canada had hoped for in June 2007 when the institute was inaugurated. At the time, Prof. Uriel Reichman, president of IDC Herzliya, said: "The Asper family's resolve to ensure that Israel's true voice is heard around the world is remarkable and is very much in sync with the goals of the IDC."

NoCamels is a mix of print articles and videos. It has a fresh and young design. And while there are tens of other English-language publications – amateur and professional – Lorie said NoCamels sees ISRAEL21c.org, an online news magazine focusing on 21st-century Israel, as its only competition.

"It is good for us to have some competition that does similar things. We thought the market is big enough to support at least two websites writing about innovations," said Lorie, who left a job at CNN in London, England, to make aliyah in September 2010. "I don't deplore that publications are writing about conflict in the Middle East, but I do find it unfortunate that not more is being written about incredible innovation we have here."

Just don't suggest that NoCamels is connected to the Israeli government.

"We're not doing propaganda for Israel," Lorie said firmly. "Any website that writes about Silicon Valley… are they propaganda for California? I think Israel really deserves to have a lot more coverage of its startups."

Divon, who is the daughter of a former Israeli ambassador to Canada, Haim Divon, said, "NoCamels stands out from other Israeli media [because] we focus solely on non-political matters, yet maintain a 'news' standard, both in content and format.

"The niche-based structure we base our stories on has enabled us to cross all cultural divides. This is something we are able to see through our analytics."

Both Divon and Lorie say they were surprised to see who was reading NoCamels following its launch.

Statistics show that 75 per cent of the audience is international, primarily from the United States and Canada. On Facebook, one-third of the fans are Arab. The website attracts traffic from the United States and Canada, as well as Jordan, Turkey, Indonesia, Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates.

As for the name of the site, NoCamels comes from the "cliché idea that people outside of Israel think of Israel as a desert with camels," Lorie said. "We're not against camels, but there's a lot more in Israel than desert and camels."

NoCamels and IDC radio are two of the many ventures of the Asper Institute for New Media Diplomacy. In fact, the cutting-edge projects at the institute, coupled with the school of communication's top-line professors and technology, recently enticed seven heads of journalism schools in Canada to visit the IDC to see whether joint study programs could be launched.

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Olmert indicted

Former Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert has been indicted on bribery charges in one of Israel's largest corruption scandals. The indictment filed Jan. 5 accuses Olmert of accepting hundreds of thousands of dollars in bribes during the construction of the Holyland apartment project in Jerusalem when he was mayor of Jerusalem and then later as Israel's trade minister. Seventeen others also were indicted in the case, including Olmert's former bureau chief Shula Zaken and Olmert's successor as Jerusalem mayor, Uri Lupolianski. Olmert is on trial currently in three other cases: for allegedly paying for family vacations by double billing Jewish organizations through the Rishon Tours travel agency; for allegedly accepting envelopes full of cash from American businessman Morris Talansky; and for allegedly granting personal favours to attorney Uri Messer when he served as trade minister in the Investment Center case. The ex-Israeli leader is charged with fraud, breach of trust, falsifying corporate records and tax evasion. He has pleaded not guilty on all the charges. Olmert is the first former Israeli prime minister to stand trial. He resigned as prime minister in September 2008 after police investigators recommended that he be indicted.

Nearly 700 rockets fell

Some 680 rockets, mortars and long-range missiles were fired at southern Israel in 2011, according to the Israeli military. On Jan. 5, the Israel Defence Forces released the figures compiled by the Home Front Command. Eighty long-range Grad missiles, which also have a more lethal payload, were fired at Israel in 2011 compared to two the previous year. Five rockets fell on or next to buildings. Nearly one-third of the rockets fell during 15 days. In addition to the siren early warning system, the Home Front Command is working to implement warning systems using mobile phones, the Internet and television, the IDF said.

Files from JTA

U.S won't allow Iran to block Hormuz: Panetta

© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

WASHINGTON — Defence Secretary Leon Panetta said Sunday that the United States would act if Iran were to develop a nuclear weapon or close the Strait of Hormuz.

Panetta, speaking on the CBS TV show *Face the Nation*, said that if Iran started developing a weapon, the U.S. would act. "I think they need to know that – that if they take that step – that they're going to get stopped."

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin Dempsey, appearing with the defence secretary, said that he wanted the Iranians to believe that a U.S. military strike could wipe out their nuclear program.

"I absolutely want them to believe that's the case," he said.

Panetta did not rule out launching a pre-emptive strike.

"But the responsible thing to do right now is to keep putting diplomatic and economic pressure on them to force them to do the right thing," he said. "And to make sure that they do not make the decision to proceed with the development of a nuclear weapon."

Dempsey also said that Iran has the military power to block the Strait of Hormuz "for a period of time" if it decides to do so, but that the United States would take action to reopen the waterway. "We can defeat that," he said.

Panetta said closing the strait would draw a U.S. military response. "We made very clear that the United States will not tolerate the blocking of the Strait of Hormuz," he said. "That's another red line for us and... we will respond to them."

Leon Panetta

A number of experts say Iran is unlikely to close the strait, through which Gulf oil flows, because the action could hurt Iran as much as the West.

But an Iranian newspaper, the *Khorasan* daily, on Sunday quoted a senior commander of the powerful Revolutionary Guard force as saying Tehran's leadership has decided to order the closure of the strategic oil route if the country's petroleum exports are blocked.

Iranian politicians have issued similar threats in the past, but this is the strongest statement yet by a top commander in the security establishment.

In a talk at a Brookings Institution forum in December, Panetta said an attack on Iran's nuclear facilities would "at best" delay Iran's nuclear program by one or two years. Among the unintended consequences, he said, would be an increase in international support for Iran and the likelihood of Iranian retaliation against U.S. forces and bases in the Mideast.

Panetta also said Sunday that Iran is laying the groundwork for making nuclear weapons someday, but is not yet building a bomb.

As he has previously, Panetta cautioned against a unilateral strike by Israel against Iran's nuclear facilities, saying the action could trigger Iranian retaliation against U.S. forces in the region.

"We have common cause here" with Israel, he said. "And the better approach is for us to work together."

Panetta's remarks on *Face the Nation*, which was taped Friday and aired Sunday, reflect the long-held view of the Obama administration that Iran is not yet committed to building a nuclear arsenal, only to creating the industrial and scientific capacity to allow one if its leaders to decide to take that final step.

The comments suggest the White House's assessment of Iran's nuclear strategy has not changed in recent months, despite warnings from advocates of military action that time is running out to prevent Tehran from becoming a nuclear-armed state.

Iran says its nuclear program is only for energy and medical research, and refuses to halt uranium enrichment

Iran has opened two dozen of its facilities to international inspectors, but has refused in defiance of the UN Security Council to suspend its uranium enrichment.

In related news, Iran confirmed on Monday the start of uranium enrichment at its underground Fordow nuclear plant, Iran's Arabic language al Alam TV reported.

"All of Iran's nuclear activities, including enrichment of uranium in both Natanz and Fordow nuclear sites, are under supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)," Iran's envoy to the agency, Ali Asghar Soltanieh, told al Alam.

An Iranian official who asked not to be identified told Reuters: "The enrichment in Fordow has started."

One must not remain silent

Continued from page 31

But Jewish communities have not reacted in a similar fashion to the denial of the Holocaust by Ahmadinejad or his threats to destroy Israel. There is no reason why demonstrations should not be held outside Iranian embassies anywhere in the world, why Iranian ambassadors should not be accompanied at every appearance or trip by demonstrators carrying placards reading: "Holocaust deniers out!"

One should not assume that Ahmadinejad will change his tune as a result, but media coverage of such demonstrations would cost Iran a heavy price in terms of its public image.

International Holocaust Day, as determined by the United Nations, will be marked on Jan. 27. It is still not too late from the EU's point of view: it can take the minimal symbolic step of declaring Ahmadinejad an outcast. It is still not too late from the point of view of the Jewish organizations, from the United States to Australia: they can organize protests in front of every Iranian embassy.

There are issues about which one must not remain silent, about which one must protest every day and every hour. One of those is the denial of the Holocaust by the leader of a country and his declared intention to destroy another country.

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The Canadian Jewish News
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to the family of our colleague and friend

Frances Pellatt ז"ל

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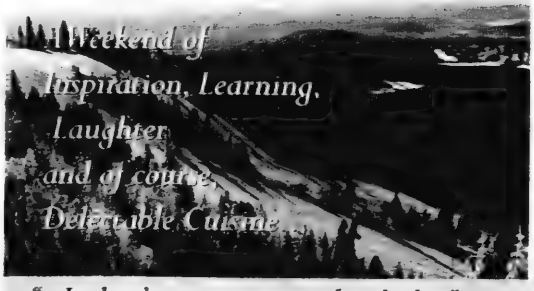

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Israel, Canada get high ratings from OECD

Paul Lungen
Staff Reporter

Israel and Canada got high marks in a report, the Better Life Initiative, recently released on the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) website.

"Israel performs favourably in several measures of well-being and ranks close to the average or higher in several topics in the Better Life Initiative," the OECD said in the document.

"Canada performs exceptionally well in measures of well-being, as shown by the fact that it ranks among the top countries in a large number of topics in the Better Life Index," the OECD stated.

The OECD index tracks well-being based on 11 "essential" parameters in the areas of material living conditions and quality of life. Among them are housing, health, income, jobs, community interaction, education, environment, governance and safety, as well as work-life balance and life satisfaction.

In its summary for Israel, the OECD, an organization of 34 of the world's most advanced industrial states, most of them democracies, reported that the average Israeli life span is 81.1 years, nearly two years above the OECD average. The life expectancy in Canada is 80.7 years.

In measuring income, the OECD found that Israelis' "average household net-adjusted disposable income is estimated at $19,456 a year (all figures US), lower than the OECD average of $22,284. Household wealth, the total value of a household's financial worth, was estimated at $62,684, much higher than the OECD average of $36,808. The Canadian figures were $27,015 in disposable income, but only $59,479 in average household wealth.

Looking at personal security, "the risks of people being physically assaulted or falling victim to other types of crime... in Israel, three per cent of people reported falling victim to assault over the previous 12 months, lower than the OECD average of four per cent."

In Canada, only one per cent of people reported falling victim to assault in a 12-month period.

The OECD found that Israelis live in more crowded conditions than the OECD average. "Overcrowded housing may have a negative impact on physical and mental health, relations with others and the development of children... In Israel, the average home contains 1.1 rooms per person, less than the OECD average of 1.6 rooms per person. In terms of basic facilities, an estimated 4.4 per cent of dwellings in Israel lack private access to indoor flushing toilets, more than the OECD average of 2.8 per cent of dwellings."

Though 81 per cent of Israelis aged 25 to 64 are high school graduates, their reading scores are not particularly high, the OECD reported.
[Miriam Alster/Flash90 photo]

Canadian homes, on average, contain 2.5 rooms per person while only .9 per cent lack private indoor flushing toilets.

On the jobs front, the index found that "in Israel, nearly 59 per cent of the working-age population aged 15 to 64 has a paid job. This figure is lower than the OECD employment average of 65 per cent." However, "the percentage of the labour force that has been unemployed for a year or longer is currently at 1.85 per cent, lower than the OECD average."

In Canada, "nearly 72 per cent of the working-age population aged 15 to 64 has a paid job... The percentage of the labour force that has been unemployed for a year or longer is currently at .97 per cent, lower than the OECD average."

Examining "work-life balance," the OECD rated Israel near the bottom when it took into consideration the employment rate of women with children, hours at work, and time devoted to personal care and leisure.

Israel scored five on the life-work index, placing it 31st among the 34 OECD members, ahead only of Mexico, Turkey and Japan. Canada was 14th with a score of 7.1.

Denmark received the highest score for life-work balance with a mark of 9.1.

The OECD reported that "in Israel, an estimated 55 per cent of mothers are employed after their children begin school: this figure is lower than the OECD average of 66 per cent and suggests that mothers encounter difficulties when balancing family and career."

The only countries where fewer mothers work are Greece (52 per cent), Chile (51 per cent), Italy (49 per cent) and Turkey (24 per cent).

In Canada, "71 per cent of mothers are employed after their children begin school," suggesting "mothers in Canada are able to successfully balance family and career."

The OECD noted that "a good work-family balance reduces parental stress, and thus benefits both parent-child and parent-parent relationships," the OECD stated.

Finding a good work-life balance is also a critical issue for child well-being, as children with two working parents are three times less likely to grow up in poverty than children with just one, the OECD found.

The OECD reports that the average person works 1,739 hours a year and devotes nearly 64 per cent of the day, or 15 hours, to personal care (eating, sleeping, etc.) and leisure (socializing with friends and family, hobbies, games, using the computer, watching television, etc.). Israelis devoted 15.15 hours a day to personal care and leisure, close to the OECD average.

Nearly 23 per cent of Israelis work more than 50 hours a week, the OECD found. Only Mexicans and Turks work more, and in the Netherlands just 0.62 per cent of people work more than 50 hours a week

Productivity in Israel is not particularly high. In recent years, the productivity of the G7 nations has been about 30 per cent higher than in Israel, according to OECD statistics.

Outdoor air pollution is relatively high in Israel. The level of "atmospheric PM10" – tiny air pollutant particles small enough to be inhaled and damage the deepest part of the lung – is 28 micrograms per cubic metre in Israel, higher than levels found in most OECD countries, the organization writes.

"Having a good education is an important requisite to finding a job," the OECD writes. In Israel, 81 per cent of adults aged 25 to 64 graduated high school, higher than the OECD average of 73 per cent. That doesn't necessarily mean they can read well, however. "As to the quality of its educational system, the average student scored 474 out of 600 in reading ability – lower than the OECD average," the report says.

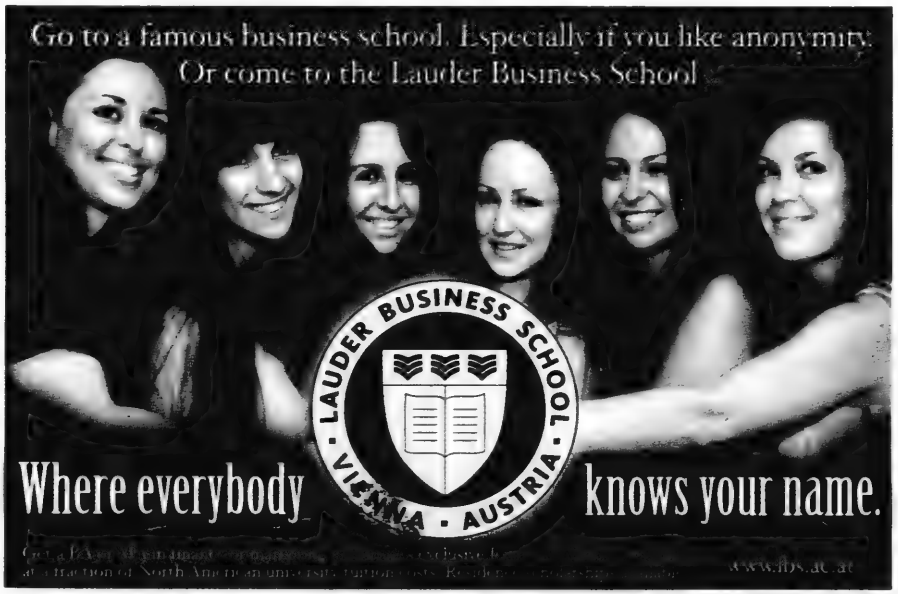
In Canada, 87 per cent of adults aged 25 to 64 have earned the equivalent of a high-school diploma.

The OECD also found that "Canada is a top-performing country in reading literacy, with the average student scoring 524 out of 600. This score is higher than the OECD average of 493, making Canada the third-strongest OECD country in reading skills. Additionally, students performed well in mathematics and science, with more than 11 per cent reaching the two highest levels of proficiency."

Israel performed well in other areas. The OECD found there is a real sense of community in the country: 93 per cent say they know someone they feel they could rely on during a time of need. That figure is close to the OECD average of 91 per cent.

And what may be the most important of the factors considered, 72 per cent of Israelis said they were satisfied with their life, above the OECD average of 59 per cent. Seventy-eight per cent of Canadians were satisfied with their lives.

– With files from Ha'aretz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The Jew who invented the Volkswagen

Joseph Serge
Arts Editor

In 2003, in an assembly plant in Mexico, the last classic Volkswagen Beetle rolled off the production line. It was the last in a long line of more than 21 million that had been built.

The history of the Volkswagen is fairly well-known, or so I thought. The car, designed by Ferdinand Porsche, under the careful guidance of Hitler, is one of the few successful remnants of the Nazi regime – along with the Autobahn, built especially for people to drive the Volkswagen, "the People's Car."

And then along comes this book, *The Extraordinary Life of Josef Ganz* (RVP Publishers) in which author Paul Schilperoord says that in fact the popular car was the product of the imagination of Ganz, a renegade Jewish engineer from Frankfurt.

Ganz sketched his first car as a young engineering student. He believed cars could be made lighter and safer, and from the beginning proposed that a "Volkswagen" could be sold at a price that ordinary people could afford.

At the time, in the 20s, only very rich people drove cars. At best, people drove around in incredibly unsafe motorcycles.

As a penniless student, however, he found it was impossible to build his dream car. So instead he turned to journalism, becoming the editor-in-chief of *Motor-Kritik*, where for five years he attacked the stagnant German car industry for designing cars that were far too expensive, ungainly, heavy, unsafe and outdated.

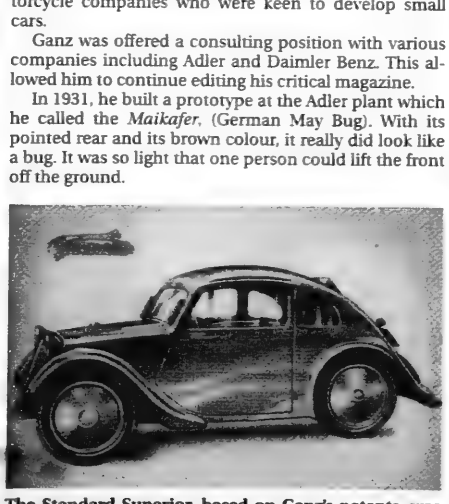
Ganz was rewarded for his efforts with a growing pool of readers, although he also gained criticism from the established industry who would have liked to put him out of business. In 1929, the RDA, the German auto industry, blacklisted his magazine.

The established manufacturers were not too keen to develop his ideas. They had designed and built cars according to their familiar methods for years. Who was this new upstart, a magazine editor, telling them how to do things?

But undaunted, Ganz continued to send his ideas for a small, affordable car with independent suspension, swing axles, backbone chassis and a rear-mounted engine, to various manufacturers, particularly to the motorcycle companies who were keen to develop small cars.

Ganz was offered a consulting position with various companies including Adler and Daimler Benz. This allowed him to continue editing his critical magazine.

In 1931, he built a prototype at the Adler plant which he called the *Maikafer*, (German May Bug). With its pointed rear and its brown colour, it really did look like a bug. It was so light that one person could lift the front off the ground.



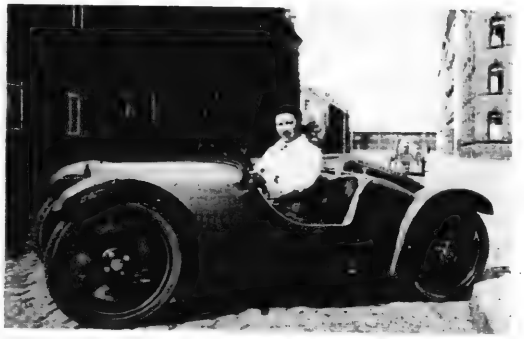
The Standard Superior, based on Ganz's patents, was featured in a 1936 cigarette- card series.

Other companies started to show interest but as the Depression ravaged the German economy, the time was not right for full production of a Volkswagen.

It was around this time that Ganz started to have falling-outs with other engineers. One of them was his former co-editor at *Motor-Kritik*, Paul Ehrhardt, a man with Nazi ties, who would later become his mortal enemy.

An issue of the Nazi magazine *Die Nationale Front* published a rather defamatory article in which Ganz was maligned as a "Jewish engineer" and his magazine described as "poisonous excrescence." Ganz believed that Ehrhardt was behind this article.

Although the May Bug never came to fruition, in 1932 another company, Standard, agreed to develop a car built to Ganz's patents. The end product was named the Standard Superior. It had a front end that looked remarkably like the later VW Bug.



Josef Ganz in the early prototype he called the May Bug.

The car would officially be launched the next year at an exhibition in Berlin in February 1933.

By this time, Hitler had just been appointed chancellor and Ganz was thrilled by Hitler's speech at the exhibition in which he underlined the great importance of an affordable car for all. Hitler was impressed with the Standard Superior and started to sketch his own designs, which borrowed much from Ganz's plans, including the price of under 1,000 Reichsmarks.

Things started to go downhill rapidly for Ganz. He became the prime target of his former colleague Ehrhardt, who was now working with the SD, the state secret police. Ehrhardt – who some linked to the 1933 burning of the Reichstag – was trying to portray the activities of Ganz as a Jewish conspiracy against the Reich. Ehrhardt, an opportunist, stood to benefit if Ganz disappeared, since he could then lay claim to Ganz's Volskwagen design for another company, Tatra, which he was associated with.

Within six months, Ganz had been dismissed as technical consultant to BMW and Daimler-Benz and lost his job at *Motor-Kritik*. After several arrests and patent battles, Ganz grew weary and left Germany. He spent the war years in Switzerland. Stripped off his German citizenship, he could no longer lay claim to his patents.

Hitler, meanwhile, appointed Porsche to head the consortium to develop the Volkswagen, the name now patented by the RDA.

After the war, Ganz left for Australia where his health declined rapidly and he died in 1967. After reading a book about the history of the Volkswagen, in which he was not mentioned, Ganz tried to tell the world how Hitler had stolen his plans to an Australian magazine. "The Volkswagen today principally is little different to the one I proposed in 1928. They haven't even changed the name."

The Volkswagen, meanwhile, took off. By 1955, the millionth bug had already been produced – but few remembered Ganz's involvement in it. The Nazis had done a good job of wiping Ganz's name from the history books of the Volkswagen.

The Extraordinary Life of Josef Ganz does get bogged down in technical specs and patent disputes, the reader comes away knowing far more about independent suspensions and swing axles than he probably cares to know. But Ganz's story is an interesting one for sure, one that deserves to be told.

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Filmmaker hones his skills with TIFF

Laura Fixman
Special to The CJN

Isaac Cravit has had a short film in the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) for each of the last three years.

The 28-year-old filmmaker is currently working on another one for the festival.

Cravit said that for him the best part of living in the city is the presence of the film festival and that the palpable energy of the festival has made being part of it an amazing experience.

In 2009, the festival screened his eight-minute film *Homeland Security*, about a border guard who thinks his wife is cheating on him. It was a learning experience, Cravit said, adding that he probably didn't know how to use his time at the festival wisely that first year.

"I know what to do there now and how I should manage my time. I see as many movies as I can and try to make contacts because that's how movies get made."

Cravit, who graduated from Concordia University in 2006, made his first movie at the end of high school. He always knew that filmmaking was something he wanted to do.

"Anyone who's known me would know that this is what I want to do, and it's very rare that people get to do what they want," he said. "I can't remember a time when I didn't want to be a filmmaker."

The shorts Cravit made for TIFF had only two-day shooting schedules, but he said his 2011 contribution, *Good Boy*, which runs six minutes, took about 1,000 hours to complete. He added that every hour of work he does makes him a better filmmaker.

"I'm better at reacting now, and this is a largely reactionary job," he said. "The more experience you have, the more comfortable you are with reacting, and you can only plan and prepare for so much."

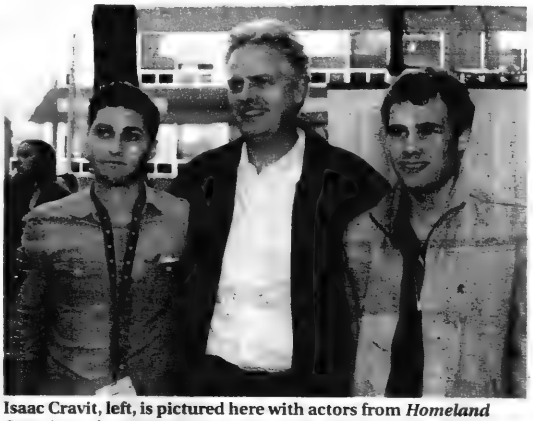
In *Good Boy*, he worked with a dog and a baby, and he joked that there was no way he could control a dog or a baby, so he could only see how they would react to each other.

Cravit plans to start shooting his next film this April, a short about kids in the 18th century who come across an injured animal and the implications that will have for their community. He also plans to shoot a feature film this summer.

"My ultimate goal is to be able to make a living at making films or TV," Cravit said. "Most people don't make a living at this and do it in addition to their full-time jobs."

He said that one of the difficult aspects of being a filmmaker is the necessity of applying for public funding, which he often waits for months to receive. He has received funding from Bell Media's Bravo!Fact (Foundation to Assist Canadian Talent).

Cravit's friends and family remain supportive as he gets his career off the ground. "I think there's an idea of how close Jewish families traditionally are, and my family is that close," he said. "They're my biggest support and they've always encouraged me."



Isaac Cravit, left, is pictured here with actors from *Homeland Security* at the 2009 TIFF, Bob Calwell and Jacob Caldwell.

Local writer sells thriller screenplay to Hollywood

Cara Edell
Special to The CJN

Shane Weisfeld doesn't give up. After writing scripts for 14 years, the Thornhill, Ont., native has finally sold his first feature-length screenplay.

The 37-year-old says he faced "so much rejection along the way," but is now thrilled that his crime thriller *The Freezer* is in pre-production.

It wasn't until 2010 that "things actually started happening" for Weisfeld and his writing partner, Tom Doganoglu. "We signed with a literary manager in L.A., and almost one year to the day *The Freezer* went into the marketplace, we made the deal for it to be produced."

Weisfeld says the producers plan to start shooting the film this winter in Puerto Rico. "Now that we've made our first deal, this is the true beginning of my career. We've been able to break through the Hollywood system."

The Freezer is about "an innocent man thrown into a walk-in freezer where he will freeze to death if he doesn't come up with the $3 million a criminal organization is convinced he stole from them," Weisfeld says.

"However, it's a layered story because as it progresses, you're not sure if this man is innocent or not, and why he's really in that freezer. There's also several characters throughout the story – it's not just him stuck in a freezer trying to get out… there's twists and turns."

He says the idea for the script came after he and Doganoglu spent years writing scripts individually and then realized they should try collaborating. "We put our heads together, knowing we wanted to write a contained thriller, and preferably a one-location contained thriller that had never been done before."

They each wrote scenes in person, over the phone and through e-mail. "I would write one scene, he would write the next, and this went on and on until we had a finished script. This is how we've continued to write," Weisfeld says.

Their manager in Los Angeles, Mike Kuciak, passed on the script to producers and executives, and Weisfeld and Doganoglu were in luck. "It just so happens that Hollywood is always thirsty for contained thrillers, partly because they're economical to shoot and many actors are looking for these types of roles where the entire story is focused on them, sometimes in one location only, like *The Freezer*."

Kuciak helped in communicating with a producer who wanted to make a deal. "We had been speaking with the production company for a while, and just this past November they were ready to go into pre-production," Weisfeld says. "They're based on the Paramount

Continued on page 37

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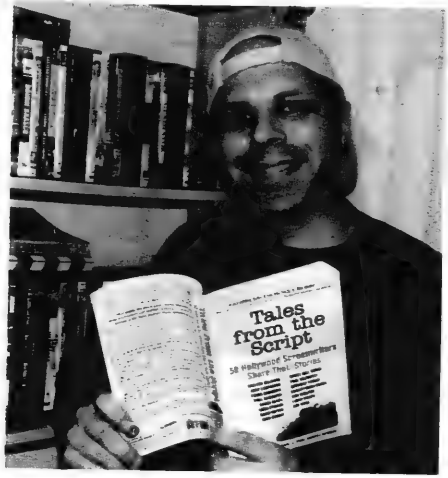
Rejection made writer determined



Shane Weisfeld

Continued from page 36

Pictures lot, but it's being independently financed, which is cool because we'll get sole writing credit and any changes to the script come from us."

Weisfeld says he began writing short scripts in his first year of film school. In 1997, he wrote his first feature-length screenplay and has continued ever since. "I've been a writer my entire life, and the business and creative process of film is something I've been interested in for many years."

He says merging the two passions is how he got into screenwriting. "I knew in my last year of high school I wanted to be in the film industry in an above-the-line [creative] capacity, and going to film school with a concentration in screenwriting cemented my career goal in that field. I've written in different genres, but mostly thrillers. I love all kinds of thrillers – psychological, action, crime, heist, you name it."

Weisfeld has also written a hip-hop comedy, which is loosely based on some of his experiences. "It's something Drake is perfect for, because the main character is actually a black Jewish rapper. I also wrote a prison drama, which I placed second with in a major national screenwriting competition, and that has stood out in my mind over the years."

While he faced "the big, concrete, barbed-wired wall of rejection" many times, Weisfeld says the criticism hasn't negatively affected him. "Because of that I'm still standing and can school some young cats about persistence and perseverance. Sure, many times, it got me down and frustrated, but never to the point where I felt like quitting or questioned my ability."

Weisfeld says the rejection has made him "even more hungry and determined" to succeed. "There's absolutely nothing else I want to do for a living. Nothing will make me more happy, fulfilled and accomplished than carving out a career in screenwriting. It's not just something I want – it's something I need to do, and not as a hobby. It has to be a career. I won't expect anything less."

With *The Freezer*, Weisfeld says he and his writing partner "are on the brink of breaking in. I'm very modest and humble, though. We all have different views of the definition of success. I guess once the film is actually shooting, that's when it might hit me that I've achieved some success."

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JEWISH WORLD MOURNS LOSS OF SINGERS ADRIENNE COOPER AND YAFFI YARKONI

Adrienne Cooper, the performer and teacher of Yiddish vocal music who mesmerized audiences from Carnegie Hall to the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Moscow to Jerusalem, died of cancer in New York on Dec. 25 at the age of 65.

Cooper was instrumental in the revival of klezmer and Yiddish music and was "a pioneer in the effort to keep the embers of that language smouldering for newer generations," the *New York Times* wrote in an obituary.

She sang and recorded works with many bands and performers, including **Alicia Svigals**, the **Klezmatics**, the Toronto-based **Flying Bulgar Klezmer Band** and Toronto-based pianist **Marilyn Lerner**, who was her partner. She had many other Toronto connections and performed here numerous times.

She was a founder of the annual Yiddish-oriented KlezKamp in the Catskills, a programmer for the New York-based Workmen's Circle, and former associate director of the famed YIVO Institute of Yiddish Culture.

Cooper "was widely recognized as one of the world's leading vocalists of Yiddish song," the Workmen's Circle commented in a written statement. "Adrienne attracted followers from around the globe with her renditions of both classical and cutting-edge compositions. With each performance she furthered the audience's appreciation of her treasured Jewish cultural heritage."

Among her numerous awards, Cooper was the recipient of Klez Canada's Lifetime Achievement Award in Yiddish Arts and Culture.

For details about the passing of Israeli singer **Yaffi Karkoni**, please see the last item in this column.

* * *

Media Mondays Film Course: Critic **Kevin Courrier** presents Reflections in the Hall of Mirrors: American Movies and the Politics of Idealism, a series of talks (with film clips) on how American movies of the last 40 years have reflected the political and cultural ideals of their times. Films include *The Manchurian Candidate* and *Rachel Getting Married*. Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, Mondays from Jan. 16 to March 26 (excluding Feb. 20 and March 12), 7 to 9 p.m. All nine lectures for $100; or $12 each at the door; students $6. E-mail film@mnjcc.org or phone 416-924-6211, ext. 606.

***

Holocaust Film and Lecture: The Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre is screening the film *Désobéir* (*Disobedience: The Sousa Mendes Story*) to mark Raoul Wallenberg Day and International Holocaust Remembrance Day. **Sousa Mendes** was a Portuguese consular official who heroically issued some 30,000 visas to refugees, including about 10,000 to Jews, in Nazi-occupied Europe in 1940. Cineplex Odeon Sheppard Centre, Jan. 16, 7 p.m. Suggested donation $5 per person. Register at www.holocaustcentre.com or contact Shai, 416-635-2883.

* * *

Music Program for Students: The secular Jewish Morris Winchevsky School and the Ashkenaz Foundation present "A Jewish Music Journey through the Ages," a music program for students in grades 1 to 6. Facilitators **Aaron Bensoussan**, **Aviva Chernick**, **Mitch Smolkin**, **Eric Stein** and **Avital Zemer** teach about cantorial, Sephardic, Mizrahi, Ladino, klezmer, Yiddish and Israeli music. Began Jan. 8, continues to Feb. 12 at 918 Bathurst St. 416-789-5502, www.tsjcs.com

* * *

Arts in Brief

• The Teatron Toronto Jewish Theatre's production of *A Tiny Piece of Land*, about an American dentist's visit to Israel after the death of his wife, continues at the Toronto Centre for the Arts, 5040 Yonge St., until Jan. 19. Its next production, *Can I Really Date a Guy Who Wears a Yamulke?*, is a comedy by **Amy Holson-Schwartz**; it runs Feb. 29 to March 11. www.teatrontheatre.com, 416-781-5527.

• **Merovitz and Katz in Concert:** Yiddish singer **Allan Merovitz** and guitarist-pianist **Brian Katz** present Hartzedike-Lider, a concert combining well-loved Yiddish songs with original stories of Jewish Canadians. Cossacks, bubbies, zaides, ghosts, rabbis and cowboys dance with Jewish melodies as the *mayseh* (tale) unfolds. Jan. 25, two sets from 9 to 11 p.m. Mezzetta, 681 St. Clair Ave. W. $7. Reservations, 416-658-5687.

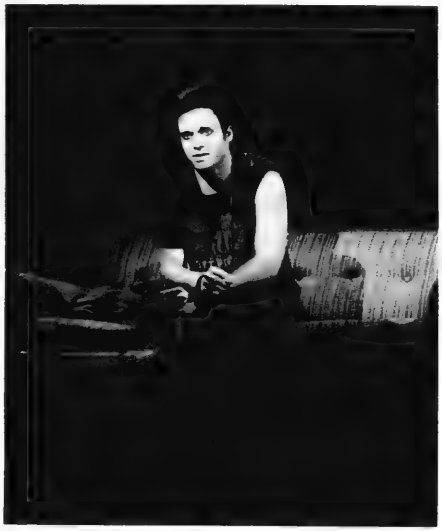
Geoff Kolomayz Tara Nicodemo in a scene from *Tiny Piece of Land* until Jan. 15.

* * *

Passages: Israeli singer **Yaffa Yarkoni,** who entertained Israeli troops for decades, and late in life, was critical of the military for mistreating Palestinians, died on Jan. 1 at the age of 86.

A recipient of the Israel Prize, Yarkoni recorded hundreds of songs during her long career and was regarded as Israel's "war singer." In a statement of condolence to the singer's family, Israeli **Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu** said that her songs "were the sound track of Israel from its pre-state days through the establishment of the state until our time."

Yarkoni once modestly remarked that she was fooling the entire world because "after all, I have no voice." But as lyricist **Avi Koren**, who was her friend for 45 years, told the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* last week: "She may not have had a voice, but she was the voice of the country. My mother listened to Yaffa Yarkoni, my grandson listens to Yaffa Yarkoni, and she accompanied us, the members of my generation, all our lives."



CANADIAN IDIOT: Toronto actor Jake Epstein plays Will in the musical *American Idiot* based on the Grammy Award-winning album by Green Day. Direct from Broadway, the musical features the hit songs *Boulevard of Broken Dreams, 21 Guns, Wake Me Up When September Ends, Holiday* and the title track. It follows the story of three friends forced to choose between their dreams and the safety of suburbia in a post 9/11 world. It continues running at the Toronto Centre for the Arts until Jan. 15. www.dancaptickets.com. *[Doug Hamilton photo]*

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Stars of David shine in multicultural hockey tournament

Paul Lungen
Staff Reporter

The Israeli Stars of David celebrate their tournament victory in traditional style.

Is it too early to start talking about a dynasty? With three championships in four years, aren't they beginning to resemble the Oilers?

Somebody break up the Israeli Stars of David – they're too good!

OK, time to take a breath and climb back down to earth. The Stars of David are champions again, back-to-back winners of the premier division in the Canadian Multicultural Hockey Championship, a tournament that brings together hockey-loving players from the Toronto area.

This is becoming a tournament the Davids dominate, going undefeated in consecutive years and proving just how out of date that old joke is about the wafer-thin book of Jewish sports heroes. When it comes to hockey in Canada, Jewish guys can play. They've proved it time and again and their head coach, manager and overall hockey maven, Alex Voihanski, believes they would have won it in 2009 as well if not for a raft of injuries that left them with only 10 skaters.

This past holiday season, the Stars of David were a perfect 7-0 in round-robin and playoff competition – despite another raft of injuries. They defeated the Irish Shamrocks 3-2 in the final in what was a rematch of last year's championship game.

It was satisfying beating the Shamrocks, who tend to play a chippy brand of hockey, but who have failed to intimidate the Davids the past two championships. The Stars outshot the Shamrocks by a two-to-one margin, but the Shamrocks' goalie, who played in the American Hockey League and for the St. Louis Blues for a couple of games, "was fantastic," Voihanski said.

Voihanski, who runs JCC Chai Sports and is general manager of hockey operations for International Scouting Services, was certainly being diplomatic. The Stars of David have been pushed in recent tournaments, but they have yet to lose a game in two years.

There are a number of reasons for that, he explained: "We have very good players. There is an enormous amount of Jewish talent. There are so many quality Jewish hockey players."

This year's squad showcased a handful of them. Noah Schwartz, for one, plays for the London Nationals in the Greater Ontario Junior Hockey League, where he's team leader in scoring. One game into the tournament, he was called up by the OHL London Knights, where he registered one assist and was plus one in three games.

Stacey Britstone, a veteran of the OHL Plymouth Whalers and Oshawa Generals, who captained last year's gold-medal team, was expected to fill the same role this year. Unfortunately, he broke his leg the day before the tournament began and couldn't play. "He's a former MVP, captain and a guy who does everything we ask," Voihanski said.

Aaron Stein, perhaps the top defenceman on the team, broke his foot blocking a shot and was unavailable in the last two playoff games. Jesse Schwartz was called to play by his prep school after the round robin and also didn't skate in the playoffs. A third Schwartz brother, Brad, rounded out the family contingent, but they were matched by the three Weinberg brothers, Jordan, Adam and Bryan. All three play or have played in junior and college hockey. Bryan plays for York University and "arguably was the best player in the tournament," Voihanski said.

Another brother act featured Jason and Mike Pain. Jason played for a variety of minor pro teams. Mike played for the OHL's Saginaw Spirit and, more recently, York University. He led the Davids in scoring with two goals and six assists.

Then there was Daniel Leavens, a right-winger who scored four goals and two assists. Leavens plays for Newmarket Hurricanes in the Ontario Junior A Hockey League, was a member of Canada East in the World Junior A Challenge and is likely to earn a scholarship to an NCAA school, Voihanski said.

Other notables on the team included Alon Eizenman, who has played professional hockey in France as well as for the Israeli national team; Ran Oz, a 230-pound defenceman who also suited up for Israel and who made sure no one intimidated the Stars, and Sergei Frankel, yet another Israeli national veteran.

The team was backstopped by Kevin Kliman, who played for Brown University in the NCAA and Sal Cutillo, who was named tournament MVP.

Adam Weinberg, who played in his fifth tournament for the Stars, said the team has always featured "a good mix of players." This year they iced two scoring lines and had a smallish defence that was good at moving the puck. The team also had a blend of youth and veterans.

"We're always the best team with our speed. Nobody can keep up with our speed," Weinberg said.

The team played seven games in four days, Voihanski said, so "you try to roll three lines and keep your guys as fresh as possible.

"The key to our game is our cycling." A lot of the other teams don't want to play behind their own net. They get tired chasing the Stars, and when they do get the puck, they're so exhausted they can't do much with it, he said.

There are equally talented teams in the tournament, Voihanski said, but they don't come together as well as the Stars of David. The team, he continued, mirrors the larger Jewish community in being cohesive and tight knit. "The commitment is pretty good. I think that's what puts us over the top," he said.

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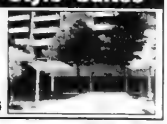

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Magen Davids spray-painted on Gatineau mosque

Compiled by CJN Staff

MONTREAL — The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), B'nai Brith Canada, Muslim groups, political leaders and others have condemned the Jan. 5 vandalism of a Gatineau mosque that included Stars of David spray-painted on the front doors.

"We unequivocally condemn all acts of vandalism against any place of worship," CIJA CEO Shimon Fogel said in a statement issued the same day.

This kind of graffiti hurts everyone, B'nai Brith executive vice-president Frank Dimant said. "This incident doesn't just hurt the 4,000 Muslims living in the Gatineau area, but all Canadians.

"The use of the Star of David in connection with messages of hate only adds to the harmful nature of the recent incident."

Gatineau police were treating the attack as a hate crime.

According to news reports, last week's incident was the fourth in six months and the second last week at the Outaouais Islamic Centre. Police believe the attack was perpetrated by a lone man in his 20s who was caught on camera scrawling anti-Arab slurs on the centre's front doors, on the building's side and on two other entrances.

On Jan. 2, the windows of cars parked in front of the same centre were smashed.

Others condemning last week's attack included Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Immigration Minister Jason Kenney. Harper called it "heinous."

It was also reported on Jan. 9 that another Gatineau mosque – the Mosque of Aylmer – was sent anti-Muslim slurs in the form of e-mail messages it received last week.

Jason Kenney

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HEEBONICS

Artist inspired by her travels around the globe

Cara Stern
Special to The CJN

Some people take days, weeks or months to paint a picture. Jessica Gorlicky can do it in minutes.

The self-described abstract and figurative artist recently finished a 77-day run with the Cirque du Soleil's *Totem* show, where she put on a "live painting" performance each night in a VIP tent before the main show began.

"People were amazed. They were blown away," Gorlicky said in an interview. "They'd never seen the technology I was using, which was the LightBoard, and they couldn't believe how fast I painted."

She had 45 minutes to turn a blank four- by five-foot backlit canvas into a work of art, in front of an audience ranging from 30 to 300 people.

At the end of the evening, she would erase the bright, swirling colours to prepare for the next show's performance.

Gorlicky's Paint My Candy exhibit in October was one of her "greatest achievements."

Gorlicky, 31 and now a full-time artist, began painting regularly as a teenager living in Thornhill, Ont.

"It was my escape," she said. "All of my test papers had doodles everywhere – scribbles, faces and abstract things just floating around. And I would always be just playing with colour and paints."

When she was 18, she took a summer-long renaissance art history course in Italy, where she developed her skill painting landscapes.

After she got back, she began to paint faces, especially of women, which have become the subjects of many of her current works.

"I'm a woman. I have two sisters, and I have beautiful friends," she said, adding that she loves lighting and makeup. "All these things tie into why I love painting a woman's face."

Many of her paintings are brightly coloured, with lots of pinks, purples and oranges, and the occasional heart or butterfly on the canvas.

She spent years travelling the globe, an experience that she said gave her the inspiration for her many paintings.

"I can look at pictures and feel those experiences and remember brilliant moments," she said. "[You] take what you'd like from that moment and jump right into painting and creating."

She said she has sold about 2,000 paintings in her career so far. Many of these come from her live performances, which she puts on up to four times a week, while others are from commissions.

"I paint on my own a few times per week," she said, "and I'm not afraid to say that, because a painting doesn't always take me a week or two, or a month, or a year, like other artists."

Some weeks she doesn't paint at all, while other weeks end with many new works. She said she doesn't necessarily see her speed as a good or a bad thing, but working fast means she's very prolific.

She often produces paintings in groups with similar themes. She might sit in a circle surrounded by canvases that are all part of a group, and then take turns working on different pieces as each one dries.

She said her work is often commissioned by clients who come to her with specific criteria. One client asked her to incorporate his five favourite album covers into one painting.

Others specify the colours, subjects, and any other aspect of the painting they'd like to see in the finished product. She said she works to make sure their ideas are doable, but still meets their expectations.

"I don't think I've ever turned down a commission at this point, even a 20-foot wall of Batman and other superheroes," she said, explaining that this was an unusual request, but she has done it. "Generally it's my style that they want."

It's a challenge to create what someone else wants, she said. "You have to feel the energy and really listen to what the person wants."

In October, Gorlicky held her most successful exhibit to date, called *Paint My Candy*. It showcased 24 works of art plus another 25 on display for sale to an audience of more than 1,000 people.

She calls this show one of her greatest achievements as an artist.

Another career highlight was the eight-minute live painting performances she did before the Olympic torch came through Canadian towns leading up to the 2010 Olympic games in Vancouver.

In addition to expressing herself with paint, Gorlicky has learned to speak four languages – English, Italian, Spanish and French – and is currently learning Russian.

"I like to see how people express themselves in different languages," she said, explaining that she always recommends language learning, especially to young people.

"Language, to me, represents different colours and thoughts and emotions," she said, "so I think the emotional aspect I get from that – I put it into my work."

More news for young Jews on heebonics.ca

For example, she said some of her Indian clients paint their homes with reds and golds, and find cultural meanings in these colours.

Her own Jewish culture is an important part of who she is, she said, and five years ago, she travelled through eastern Europe visiting places her grandparents journeyed through during and after the Holocaust.

Starting in Romania, she followed her grandparents' trail as they were captured and brought to various concentration camps before finally being taken to Auschwitz. They were freed in 1945 and continued their journey through Europe trying to find a new home.

Despite this sad bit of history leading to a sad travel experience, she calls herself a happy artist, with most of her work conveying an upbeat, excited atmosphere.

And apart from her work exemplifying her love of the human body and colour, she said her work is about doing what you love and expressing it in every way.

"[Painting] is what comes naturally to me," she said, "and I'm trying to explore that with every fibre of my being all the time."

To visit Gorlicky's studio to see her work, e-mail jessica@jessgo.com, or call 416-451-0788.

Artist Jessica Gorlicky

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'I love you, Mommy

"You've just missed a call," Meir says.

"Who was it?" I ask apathetically.

"It's a woman. She lives far away."

I see Meir's in the mood for quizzes. "I need more clues," I say.

"She says she loves you, she gave you birth."

"I'm gonna need some more clues."

Meir hands me the phone. "Go on, call her."

I frown. "But I don't like my mother. She's never been good to me. Because of her, I need to be loved by every Tom, Dick and Harry."

Meir pushes the phone closer to me. "Everyone loves you – Harry, too. Now call her."

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Nina Shenhav

Me: Hi mother, heard you called. What do you wanna know?

Mother: Who is this?

Me: Your only child. How many drinks have you had?

Mother: Just one – after another. I'm joking. Can't a mother call her daughter without any hidden reasons?

Me: Of course. But that's not the case here. What do you want?

Mother: Hold on, I need to try and pull the knife out of my heart.

Me: As usual, ever so dramatic.

Mother: Good, now the knife has company.

Me (after Meir looks at me sternly): So, uh, how are you?

Mother: I feel lousy, lonely, isolated and miserable. After all, it's not every day a mother has the privilege of being abandoned by her only child.

Me: Mother, you couldn't remember my name when we lived in the same country, not to mention in the same house.

Mother: Hang on, I need to take my pills. For the heart, you know.

Me: Oh, lord. Do you wanna talk to the kids?

Mother: What kids?

Me: *My* kids, your grandchildren!

Mother: I'll pass, children are so boring. What's new with you, have you found a job yet?

Me: No. You're more than welcome to send me some money, by the way.

Mother: Money can't buy happiness, you know.

Me: No, but it can buy many other beautiful things.

Mother: Sorry, I don't do sympathy. Besides, you never want to talk to me.

Me: Well, enjoy it while it lasts… Many people would trade places with you.

Mother: Ha-ha. You must think I'm a selfish woman who just needs to be the centre of the universe.

Me: Are you expecting an argument? You never listen to anyone. No one else matters, or even exists. I don't want any contact with you anymore!

Mother: Am I crazy, or are you breaking up with me?

Me: They're not unrelated…

Mother: Please, don't hold back. So, I'll call next Friday. Same hour?

Me: As usual.

Mother: Love you, darling.

Me: I love you, Mommy.

To the memory of my beloved mother, Shoshana, who suddenly and unexpectedly died three weeks ago.

Nina.shenhav@gmail.com

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Bake sweet potatoes at 350° 45-60 min, or until fork tender. Cut in half, set aside and cool 5-10 min. Saute shallots in butter over medium heat until translucent. Add spinach, heat 2-3 min. until spinach has cooked down. Set aside. Scrape sweet potato pulp out of peel, leaving a thin layer inside the peel. Mash sweet potato with cream cheese and sour cream. Stir in chickpeas, spinach, and salt and pepper.
Coat scooped out skins with drizzle of oil, bake 5 min. for crispier outside. Remove from oven; fill each skin with sweet potato mixture; top with shredded mozzarella cheese. Bake again 10-15 min. or until cheese is melted and filling is heated through.

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The CJN's French-language reporter in Montreal, Elias Levy, writes about:

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Historian Gérard Israël who talks about Jesus Christ, looking at the historic relationship between Judaism and Christianity.

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Israel's demographic future

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CJN web columnist, Lauren Aginsky deals with the reality of getting old.

Thank you Richman's Bakery, Negev

When I was a kid, I didn't realize that everything started at some point, that all things, sentient or otherwise, were created. I didn't know that one day someone, somewhere, established Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. I figured it was all just there, and I simply happened to pass it by, as thousands had before me.

I thought the same thing about Richman's Bakery and the Negev Book and Gift Store, both on Bathurst Street. When I was little, I just figured that those honourable establishments had always stood there, at their crossroads. I thought that chocolate éclairs had sat next to their sister, the *air-kichlach*, in those cases at Richman's forever and that Hebrew DVDs were simply the younger brothers of eight-track Yiddish tapes, all of which could be purchased at Negev year-round, always.

Urban Writer

Avrum Rosensweig

Then I learned there was indeed a time when a local Jew figured it was a decent time to launch a bakery at York Downs Drive and another Jew decided the Toronto Jewish community needed a solid Judaica store selling *sfarim* and books. I realized that there was a time before Richman's Bakery and Negev Book and Gift Store.

Years later, though, I've learned, with great sadness, that community icons do disappear, that they can run out of wheat and can lose their market for havdalah candles. I know now that landmarks have their day and will be replaced.

Nothing stays the same except memories, and even they crumble and change over time.

I would like to thank Richman's Bakery and all of its owners for years of happiness and dancing paletes. Four generations of my family loved your rolls, pastries and cakes for all occasions. One of my finest memories while at Ner Yisrael Yeshiva was Thursday nights after hockey, when we would drive to Richman's and buy freshly made boston cream pies. In those days, given the chance, I could eat the whole cake by myself, with pleasure.

And I remember so well Mrs. Greenwald, Chavchi's mother, pointing to the freshest rum ball, coaxing me into purchasing it along with the tastiest-smelling cinnamon buns in the entire town. Richman's Bakery was a Toronto Jewish community emblem.

On behalf of the Jewish community, I would like to offer my appreciation to all the owners of Negev, for the annual Jewish calendar, mezuzot, books, tfillin, *sfarim*, wooden and plastic dreidels and the *Forward* newspaper. And I watch my father in my daydream as he fingers through a brand-new Chumash, standing, leaning as he perused the new edition in the way only a bibliophile would know how. Negev was integral to our landscape. Negev was central to our community.

While the backdrop of our community will be lonely without you. Your signs, windows, and nutritional and educational hospitality will forever be in our hearts. I realize now, more so than ever, that when I used to come from Kitchener, Ont., and drive onto Bathurst Street, Richman's was always there, without fail, and Negev stood long and welcoming, without disappointment.

But today, instead, I thank Lailah and Jonah for some fine desserts and the Kaplan brothers for some good stuff to read and for religious garments to wrap ourselves in.

Like the bakery and bookstores of old, you will always be part of our community narrative, archives and joyful memories. A dozen bagels, please, and a velvet tallit bag to go. Yasher koach.

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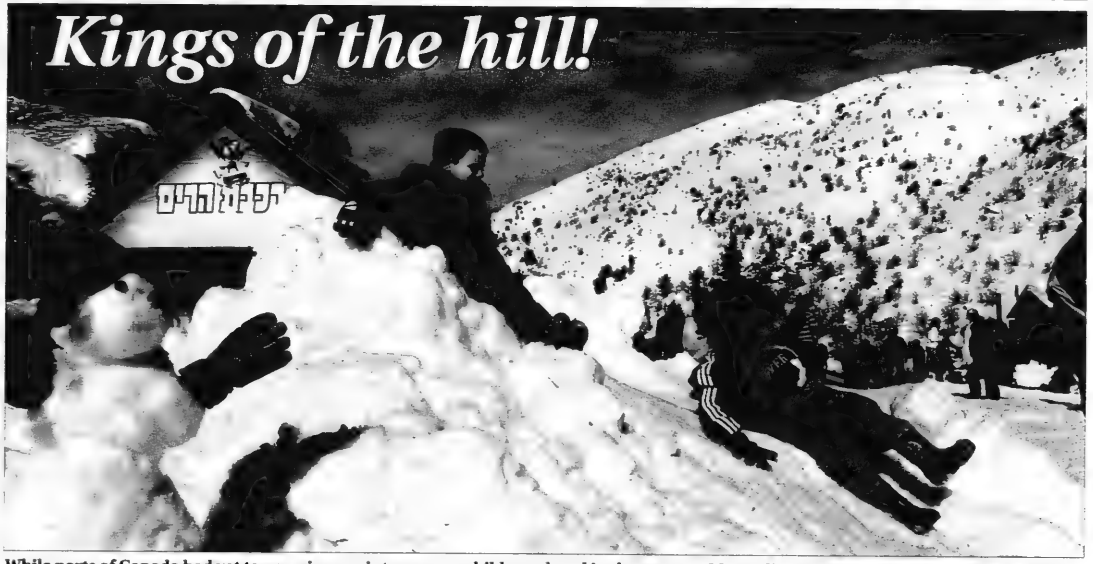

While parts of Canada had yet to experience winter, young children played in the snow on Mount Hermon in northern Israel last weekend. *[Flash90 photo]*

Peace talks resume in Jordan

© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — Israeli and Palestinian envoys met for the third time in Amman overnight Sunday since Jordan began mediating a series of direct Mideast peace talks earlier this month.

The sides agreed to meet again on Jan. 25, the official Palestinian Wafa news agency reported.

Jan. 26 is the date set for the Palestinians to decide if they wish to stop or continue the talks.

The Palestinian side was persuaded to enter into the Jordanian-led talks despite the absence of an Israeli settlement freeze, until then a Palestinian precondition for direct negotiations with the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Benjamin Netanyahu

"It is up to Israel to decide if negotiations will happen or not. It's very easy. They just have to fulfil their international obligations... including a full settlement freeze. The ball is on their side, not ours," Xavier Abu Eid, a senior adviser to chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat, told the dpa news agency Sunday.

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas told senior members of his Fatah party that "if we agree on a common ground, then we go to negotiations, but if the ground is not there, then what are we supposed to negotiate about? So far, there is no agreement on the ground."

Abbas' spokesperson Nabil Abu Rudeineh was quoted in the semi-official daily *al-Ayyam* as saying that "Jan. 26 remains a crossroad. We either make progress in these exploratory meetings or we will be forced to take decisions."

Israel disputes that deadline. It says the timeline for the two parties to submit proposals on borders and security set in September by the quartet of Middle East peace mediators – the United States, the European Union, Russia and the United Nations – actually began with the start of the Amman talks on Jan. 3.

Meanwhile, the U.S. State Department has urged both parties not to get fixated on dates.

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News
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Hackers hit Tel Aviv stock exchange – please see page 27

CANADA

Same-Sex First

WINNIPEG — A Winnipeg synagogue is about to become the first Conservative shul in Canada to host a same-sex wedding ceremony. On Jan. 21, Shaarey Zedek Synagogue will see the "renewal" of marriage vows between two men wedded in a civil service in Vancouver in 2004, the Winnipeg *Jewish Post and News* reported. Canada legalized same-sex marriage in 2005. The service will be under a chupah and conducted by Rabbi Larry Pinsker. It's the culmination of a three-year process of welcoming gays and lesbians into the congregation. The first stage was to allow same-sex couples to buy joint burial plots in 2009. The second was to welcome them as members. While the Conservative movement's committee on Jewish law and standards, in December 2006, approved extending blessings to same-sex unions in commitment ceremonies, same-sex couples in the congregation weren't satisfied with that. They wanted their unions to be sanctified. "The Shaarey Zedek has been talking the talk," one of the men, Arthur Blankstein, 67, told the newspaper. "Now it is time for the congregation to walk the walk."

WORLD

TA 'Best Gay City'

TEL AVIV — Tel Aviv was named best gay city for 2011 in a poll sponsored by American Airlines and Gaycities.com. The city was chosen best city of 2011 in the Best of Gay Cities 2011 poll. Tel Aviv received 43 per cent of the votes, followed by New York with 14 per cent and Toronto with nine per cent. The award shows that "Tel Aviv-Jaffa is a city that respects all people and allows everyone to live according to his/her own principles," Mayor Ron Huldai said. "Ours is a city in which everyone can be proud of who they are." More than 5,000 gay tourists visited Tel Aviv in June for its annual pride parade.

More Than 1,000 Attend Cemetery Vigil

VICTORIA — More than 1,000 people held a vigil in Victoria a week after vandals desecrated headstones in a Jewish cemetery in the British Columbia capital.

Rabbi Harry Brechner

"All of us coming out here and standing together tells us that we will not be silent in the face of hate crime," Rabbi Harry Brechner told the Jan. 8 gathering, which included local city councillors and other officials as well as Jews and non-Jews.

Five graves in Victoria's historic Emanu-El Jewish Cemetery were vandalized Dec. 31 with swastikas and other hateful language, leaving the small Jewish community shaken.

Police are treating the graffiti as a hate crime and are urging residents to come forward with information.

Rabbi Brechner told vigil participants several stories about Holocaust survivors buried in the cemetery.

"The idea of putting hate symbols near their graves is despicable and my hope was that that person can come forward, but you know what? All of us came forward," Rabbi Brechner said, according to the *Victoria Times-Colonist*. "This, all of us, this is hope."

Pastor Explains

CLEVELAND — Comments by the Rev. Keith Hudson, father of pop star Katy Perry, in a sermon at an Ohio church were taken out of context, the church's pastor said. Rev. Paul Endrei of the Church on the Rise in Westlake said Rev. Hudson's remarks were meant to be complimentary, but "went too far." On Jan. 5, Rev. Hudson told churchgoers, "You know how to make the Jew jealous? Have some money, honey. You go to L.A., and they own all the Rolex and diamond places. Walk down a part of L.A. where we live and it is so rich it smells. You ever smell rich? They are all Jews, hallelujah. Amen." Rev. Endrei said Rev. Hudson was praying that business owners be as blessed as the Jews, to the extent it would make Jews jealous. Rev. Endrei also said his church is pro-Jewish and that he recently led a church mission of 42 people to Israel.

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Jake Wagman

10-year-old battles rare cancer

Fundraiser planned for January 28

Sheri Shefa
Staff Reporter

A young boy's battle against a rare cancer has spurred fundraising and awareness campaigns and brought members of Toronto's Jewish community together for a good cause.

On Jan. 28, in honour of 10-year-old Jake Wagman, hundreds of friends, family, well-wishers and Grateful Dead fans will gather at Lee's Palace in downtown Toronto for some live music and to raise money for Ewing's sarcoma research.

Marni Brooks, Jake's mother, explained that her son was diagnosed with Ewing's – a cancerous bone tumour that usually affects children during puberty when bones are growing rapidly – less than a year ago.

"My husband and I were out of town in April 2011, and my mother-in-law was watching the kids and she took them to a movie," Brooks recalled.

"Jake told her he was seeing double during the movie."

When his vision problem didn't correct itself, Jake was taken to see his doctor, who then advised that he go to the Hospital for Sick Children.

"He was diagnosed with a tumour almost immediately because his left eye couldn't rotate externally to the left."

Brooks said that not only is the cancer itself unusual, but her son developed a tumour in an uncommon location, in his skull. It took about two weeks more to discover that the source of the tumour was Ewing's.

Brooks said her 15-year-old niece was inspired by her cousin's ordeal and enlisted the help of two of her friends to create a website in Jake's honour called Jake's Collection.

To date, Jake's Collection has raised more than $12,000 for Ewing's cancer research, and despite the fact that Jake completed his required 14 rounds of chemotherapy and 33 radiation treatments, the fundraising will continue.

Continued on page 15

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Wishful thinking in the land of the pyramids

Many journalists are assessing the results of the Egyptian elections, which saw Islamists winning about two-thirds of the parliamentary seats, and are predicting that pragmatism and moderation will trump religious ideology.

In the Jan. 8 *New York Times*, Thomas Friedman admitted that it would be "recklessly naive" to ignore the Islamists' illiberal, theocratic leanings. Nonetheless, he said, it would be wrong to assume that Islamists "will not be impacted, or moderated, by the responsibilities of power, by the contending new power centres [in Egypt] and by the priority of the public for jobs and clean government, [as this] is to miss the dynamism of Egyptian politics today."

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

Yet having argued that since analysts don't know how this will turn out and therefore should just "shut up and take notes," Friedman then ignored his own advice by strongly implying that pragmatism underscores basic Egyptian values.

Visiting a female-only voting centre in a very poor Cairo neighbourhood, he related that most of the niqab-clad women there, some illiterate, told him that they voted for the Brotherhood and Salafists, but "almost none said they had voted that way for religious reasons." Instead, they voted for Islamists in the hopes of getting good, clean government. He noted that the liberal parties had not campaigned in their area, with the implication that had they done so, these women might have voted for them instead.

What Friedman – whose accompanying translator was a 22-year-old, educated, "secular" male who had protested in Tahrir Square – failed to see is that the desire for order and services is not incompatible with strict religious observance. In fact, survey results show Egyptians to be among the most religiously conservative in the Islamic world. Moreover, it shows that like many western, secular journalists, Friedman arguably cannot just "take notes" uninfluenced by what he might prefer to believe about Egypt's move toward democracy. What, for instance, might he have heard had his translator been a veiled, religious female?

Writing at the same time but expressing a more skeptical point of view was Robert Fulford. In "The Muslim Brotherhood's big moment" (*National Post*, Nov. 7), Fulford argued against what he called "a dangerous epidemic of wishful thinking," which includes the Obama administration's recent decision to reverse longstanding American anti-Islamist policy by reaching out to the Muslim Brotherhood.

"Washington apparently accepts, for the moment, the Brotherhood's claim that it wants an Egyptian government that will respect religious freedoms, free markets and international commitments, including Egypt's treaty with Israel," Fulford wrote.

"Will they change their extremist ways as they achieve some power? That would mean turning against all the fierce preachers and propagandists who spread the Islamist ideology over eight decades. It could happen, but not likely," Fulford cautioned.

Last month, Fulford decried the lack of media attention to the critical subject of the economic malaise – "the stunted economic development" as he called it – that has long bedeviled the Arab world. How, he asked, with the expectations for freedom and democracy unleashed through the Arab Spring, will emerging governments "improve the material lives of the people" through jobs, housing, and affordable food?

The evidence indicates that the situation Fulford describes is getting worse, not better.

In the *Jerusalem Report* magazine (Jan. 16), Bruce Maddy-Weitzmann of Tel Aviv University's Dayan Center provided details on just how grim the Egyptian situation is:

- Foreign currency reserves continue to drop by $ 2 billion a month;
- Inflation, already at about nine per cent, could rise further if the Egyptian pound is devalued;
- Food prices have shot up sharply;
- Revenue from tourism, a crucial sector of the economy, has dropped by 33 per cent, and
- The economy in 2012 is expected to grow by only half of the six per cent needed for stable job creation.

In this desperate economic climate, and with Islamists on the rise, the prospect of unfulfilled hopes and renewed strife remains a looming, if not imminent, threat.

Paul Michaels is director of research and media relations with the Centre for Israel and Jewish Advocacy.

From the editor's desk...

Will Return Next Week

SeeJN

PERES DENOUNCES RACISM

Israel's President Shimon Peres last week visited the Reshit School in Jerusalem and met with its students, among whom are many of Ethiopian descent. In his remarks to the students and staff, Peres denounced racism, telling the students to be proud of their origins.

[Israel Sun photo]

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CIJA debate tackles online hate

Michelle Bitran
Special to The CJN

A controversial section of the Canadian Human Rights Act that covers hate speech on the Internet was up for debate at a town hall in Toronto last week, with a human rights lawyer arguing for its retention and a civil libertarian calling for its repeal.

The Jan. 10 debate on Section 13 of the act, held at the University of Toronto's George Ignatieff Theatre, was intended to be the first in a series of similar events on issues of the day to be organized by the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA).

Section 13 outlaws hate speech spread via the Internet or by phone. Complaints about hate speech that fall under this category can be brought to the Canadian Human Rights Commission and may end up before the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal.

Constitutional scholar Richard Moon recommended the repeal of Section 13 in 2008, and there's currently a private member's bill in Parliament calling for its repeal that's expected to come to a vote in the spring.

Supporters of Section 13 see it as an effective tool in fighting hate speech, but those who seek its repeal consider it a limit on free speech and an unnecessary addition to the law, given the provisions against advocating genocide and the public incitement of hatred that are already a part of the Criminal Code.

Panelists Nathalie Des Rosiers, Edward Prutschi, centre, and Richard Warman *[Michelle Bitran photo]*

Arguing for its retention at the CIJA event was human rights lawyer Richard Warman, who has been a successful complainant in 15 Internet hate cases since 2001, when Section 13 was amended to clearly include online messages.

Arguing for the section's repeal was Nathalie Des Rosiers, general counsel of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association and a former president of the Law Commission of Canada.

Well-known criminal lawyer Edward Prutschi moderated the debate.

"The Internet is not the Wild West in Canada,'" said Warman, adding that people can and should be held accountable for hateful material they post online.

He argued that "it is the hate propaganda that leads to the acting," so fighting hate speech online is part of fighting it off line as well.

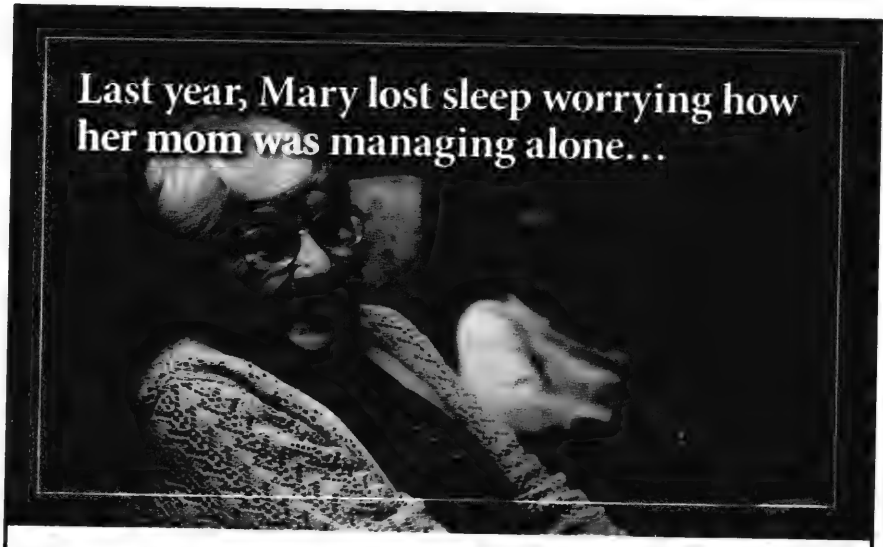
Warman also argued that for the Criminal Code to be an effective tool in combating hate speech on its own, significant additional resources are needed. Largely because those resources aren't in place and because there is "an institutional reluctance to lay these kinds of charges," he said, Section 13 is both necessary and effective.

In contrast, Des Rosiers argued that pursuing hate speech through Section 13 is a misallocation of resources and can chill free speech.

"There will never be enough resources to go after everything that is discriminatory," she said. "Going after acts may be a better investment."

She added that although controlling speech was not the intention of the section, it seems to have had that effect. "It is dangerous in any society to leave the government with the task of deciding which points of view can be expressed and in which way," she said.

Continued on page 6



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Toronto physicians visit Israeli hospital

Carolyn Blackman
Staff Reporter

A group of physicians from Mount Sinai Hospital travelled to Eilat in the fall to partner with physicans at Yoseftal Medical Center.

Founded in 1968, Yoseftal is the southernmost hospital in Israel, and the only hospital covering the southern Negev desert. With 80 beds, it is Israel's smallest general hospital.

The purpose of the trip was to build a relationship between the two hospitals and to share what they have in common, said Maureen Shandling, neurologist and vice-president of medical affairs. She has been to Israel several times, but this was her first visit to the Eilat hospital.

"[Yoseftal] is small, but it provides an amazing breadth of care to a diverse population who speak many different languages.

"It is interesting to see their challenges. They deal with terror victims, accidents, births – whatever needs to be done. They provide the best quality care in a small space with less infrastructure than we have at Mount Sinai."

She said that plans are to continue Mount Sinai's relationship with the hospital, have physicians come to Toronto for additional training and have Mount Sinai residents work at Yoseftal.

"We were so warmly welcomed, and that warmth is reflected in the UJA partnership."

Maureen Shandling

Mount Sinai staff on the trip included Shandling; Tom Stewart, chief clinical officer and chief of medicine; Matt Sermer, head of obstetric medicine and medical director of the Frances Bloomberg Centre for Women's and Infants' Health; David Blackstein, head of orthopedics and medical director of the Centre for Musculoskeletal Disease; Eric Goldszmidt, deputy anesthesiologist-in-chief; and Sev Perlman, emergency staff physician and director of the post-baccalaureate research education program.

The trip was supported through the D.H. Gales Family Foundation, and is part of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's Eilat-Eilot Partnership.

'Response to bad speech is stronger speech'

Continued from page 5

Des Rosiers suggested that a better way to fight hate speech is with condemnation. "The response to bad speech is stronger speech, better speech and more speech, not less," she said.

During a question-and-answer session, the Jewish Defence League's national director, Meir Weinstein, challenged Warman about a section on Warman's website regarding a short film called *Fitna*, which Warman describes as "a 16-minute long video by Dutch far-right, xenophobic politician Geert Wilders that seeks to demonize the Muslim community using classic hate propaganda techniques."

Weinstein also took issue with a link to another website that, among other topics, includes strongly anti-Israel views, including a reference to "Israeli apartheid."

Warman stood by his assessment of *Fitna* as being criminal hate propaganda against Muslims, adding that he fights hate speech directed at any community.

He also noted that his site states that he doesn't necessarily endorse the viewpoints presented on linked websites, and that he personally finds the claim that Israel is an apartheid state to be "bogus."

CIJA chair, David Koschitzky, told *The CJN* that CIJA will be launching a web seminar series in February about controversial issues related to Judaism and Israel. The first topic in the series, titled Unity not Uniformity, will deal with religious pluralism and the role of women in Israel.

"Our feeling is that to be as inclusive as possible, we have to educate people as to how many different points of view there are," Koschitzky said. "In spite of these diverse opinions, we are unified."

To sign up for the free web seminars, e-mail info@cija.ca.

Omission

The caption for the picture of the Negev Gift and Bookstore ("Longtime Fixture Closing, Jan. 12) should have said that the 45-year-old store is co-owned by Morty Kaplan and Arthur Kaplan. *The CJN* regrets the omission.

Siddur from 1471 reveals gender flexibility

Frances Kraft
Staff Reporter

A 15th-century siddur offers an alternative to a traditional prayer for Jewish women, indicating that attempts to introduce egalitarianism in Judaism can be traced back many centuries, the Jewish Theological Seminary said earlier this month.

While observant Jewish men traditionally recite a morning blessing to thank God for "not creating me a woman," the common counterpart for women is a prayer blessing God "for creating me as you wished."

Instead, the 1471 siddur, part of the library collection at JTS, the flagship institution of the Conservative movement, has a morning blessing that says, "Blessed are you, Lord our God, Master of the Universe, for you made me a woman and not a man."

> ***JTS publicized the siddur in the wake of recent incidents in Israel involving haredi men who objected to what they called immodest behaviour by women and girls in public places***

The siddur was written by the scribe Rabbi Abraham Ben Mordechai Farissol, a French-born Italian rabbi, scholar, cantor and physician who lived from 1451 to 1525. JTS publicized the siddur in the wake of recent incidents in Israel involving haredi men who objected to what they called immodest behaviour by women and girls in public places, such as refusing to sit at the back of a public bus frequented by haredim.

Rabbi Martin Lockshin – professor of humanities at York University and spiritual leader of Toronto's Partnership Minyan – told *The CJN*, "There certainly was a history of liturgical flexibility in Judaism in the past. It's a shame – I'm saying this as an Orthodox rabbi – it's a shame that so many people now define Orthodoxy in terms of no possibility of liturgical flexibility."

The likely historical explanation for decreased flexibility, he said, was a feeling that the Reform movement had gone too far in liturgical innovation.

Rabbi Lockshin added that Rabbi Farissol was not seen as a "breakaway" rabbi.

Eric Lawee, professor of humanities at York University with an interest in medieval Jewish history, told *The CJN* in an e-mail that he would be cautious about imbuing Rabbi Farissol's variation with "all sorts of intentions that, absent some corroborating evidence, are hard to verify at this historical distance."

He added that the rabbi copied the text for a patron – a wealthy Jewish man who commissioned it as a gift for his wife – "so one wonders a bit whose views (or what liturgical traditions) this text reflects."

However, it serves as "a good reminder that in a manuscript age in general, both among Jews and gentiles, there was inevitably a much higher degree of fluidity in texts of all sorts." With the introduction of the printing press came "a certain rigidity," he noted.

He added as well that Rabbi Farissol was not a halachic decisor. "Since traditional Jews will see the fraught issue of liturgical change as primarily or not exclusively a halachic one, the fact that a figure with no reputation or legacy as a halachist made a change in a siddur that he copied carries no weight, especially if the change is not reflected elsewhere."

In a news release, JTS professor and librarian David Kraemer said the siddur showed "a tremendous amount of courage.

"Rabbi Farissol was a very well-known and appreciated rabbi, so one can assume that he wouldn't have agreed to make such a change if he didn't think it was appropriate."

Rabbi Julie Schonfeld, executive vice-president of the Conservative movement's Rabbinical Assembly, said in the release there is "no chance that this kind of siddur from 1471 could be compiled and used today in the religious atmosphere we are seeing in much of Israel."

She added that the siddur proves that "degrading attitudes toward women, which we are seeing in certain extreme religious communities in Israel today, are a modern distortion of Judaism… We can turn to Jewish history for examples of the flexibility of rabbis and scholars in striving to meet the religious needs of men and women."

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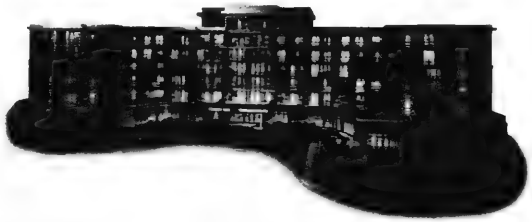

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Let the PA talk straight

For the first time in many months Israelis and Palestinians sat face to face across a table to discuss how to revive the rather stagnant peace process. The third of three planned meetings was held in Amman this past weekend. A fourth meeting will likely be held next week.

To be sure, it is a refreshing development that the two sides actually spoke to each other. But the refreshment may not be sufficiently reviving, as the parties cannot agree whether the Quartet (the European Union, the United Nations, the United States and Russia) deadline for resuming direct talks is Jan. 26, March 26, or even whether there is a deadline at all.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told U.S. President Barack Obama that his government will give the Palestinians a formal statement of its views on final borders in March. Netanyahu also told the president that he believes bona fide negotiations can be concluded within one year.

Chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat, on the other hand, echoing Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas' words, said direct talks between the two sides cannot proceed as long as Israel continues construction in the West Bank and does not recognize the pre-1967 Mideast war frontier as the baseline for the borders of a future Palestinian state.

The two Palestinian preconditions are as transparently pretextual as they are insurmountable. Abbas, Erekat and the entire Palestinian world know that Israel cannot and will not ever accept the preconditions. Setting aside the disingenuousness of the construction demand – raised for the first time as an echo of a regrettable statement by a newly elected Obama – Israel cannot agree in advance of negotiations to starting from the pre-June 1967 borders.

The reasons are many. But the most profound is that doing so means surrendering to the PA – before negotiations – all of the Jewish neighbourhoods of greater Jerusalem, including the Western Wall and the Jewish Quarter of the Old City.

How could Israel do that?

The question of Jerusalem lies at the heart of the Jewish return to history some 63 years ago. The division of Jerusalem was an artificial residue of the armistice in 1949 and the expulsion of the Jews from the Old City was an aberration of Jewish history. Jews had always lived in Jerusalem.

That is not to say that arrangements regarding Jerusalem and the Temple Mount cannot be made as a result of honest, sincere negotiations that take into account historical and present sensibilities of both peoples.

But to ask Israel to surrender – ahead of peace talks – what it retrieved and restored from wanton, derisive, contemptuous destruction, is absurd. To demand that it do so as a condition of even restarting peace talks is nothing more than a ruse on the rest of the world. The Palestinian leaders should talk straight.

25 years ago in *The CJN*

The U.S. Justice Department asked a court in Washington, D.C., to sentence U.S. Navy analyst Jonathan Pollard to a "substantial period of incarceration" and a fine for spying for Israel. Pollard, then 32, was arrested in 1985 and pleaded guilty to espionage charges in a plea deal.

Dry Bones
ON THIS SIDE... IRAN, THE SYRIAN GOVT, VENEZUELA, CUBA NICARAGUA, AND NORTH KOREA
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Obama and Israel (1)

Sheldon Kirshner had to be very selective to conclude that accusations of U.S. President Barack Obama not being pro-Israel are "unadulterated nonsense" ("Conservatives impugn Obama's pro-Israel record," Jan. 5). For example, Kirshner doesn't tell us that Obama has yet to visit Israel as president. He doesn't say that in his much-anticipated Cairo speech, Obama openly stated that Israel was created as a result of the Holocaust, completely ignoring thousands of years of Jewish history in the Holy Land.

Kirshner neglects to mention that Obama was the first U.S. president to insist that settlement construction must stop, a demand even the Palestinians had not yet made. On the question of settlement building, Kirshner disingenuously refers only to the West Bank and the Golan, ignoring the huge fuss the Obama administration makes every time further building is approved in Jewish neighbourhoods in Israel. Everyone knows these will remain in Israel under any peace plan, yet Secretary of State Hillary Clinton loses no opportunity to criticize Israel harshly and to claim they're the only impediments to peace. Arab intransigence, terrorism and incitement are completely ignored.

Then there's the pre-1967 lines, which Kirshner erroneously refers to as "borders." These are armistice lines where fighting stopped in 1948. Every peace plan has envisaged new borders to be mutually agreed upon by Israel and the Palestinians. Obama was the first president to state categorically that the pre-'67 lines are the starting point for any deal, which dramatically erodes Israel's negotiating power. As for Obama's strong pro-Israel stance in recent months, Kirshner fails to note that this came only after a Republican won a New York seat that had been safely Democrat.

In short, if Kirshner had included all the facts, his column would have ended very differently.

Stephen Tannenbaum
Thornhill, Ont.

* * *

Obama and Israel (2)

Sheldon Kirshner is way off base in his one-sided support for U.S. President Barack Obama ("Conservatives impugn Obama's pro-Israel record," Jan. 5). True, Obama never misses an opportunity to say he stands side by side with Israel, but his actions clearly show otherwise.

Let's just focus on two, of many, examples. First, Obama tied peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians to a freeze on building beyond the Green Line – something the Palestinians had never insisted on. Now it's become a Palestinian pre-condition to restarting talks. Second, Obama undermined Israel by saying the starting position should be the pre-1967 borders, with land swaps. Undeniably, the 1949 armistice lines are militarily indefensible, and a retreat to those "borders" will seriously jeopardize Israel's security. This, too, has become a Palestinian pre-condition.

Another four years of Obama in the White House would be nightmarish. I wish the Republicans success in the upcoming election.

Ken Greenberg
Millbrook, Ont.

* * *

LET THEM GO...

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz

Fourth Geneva Convention applies to West Bank

Yehudit Shier Weisberg's letter, "Says writer got the facts wrong" (Jan. 5), warrants a lengthy reply, but let me just respond to a couple of representative points. The argument that Gilo is to the south of Jerusalem and thus in some way not part of east Jerusalem is an almost laughable quibble. Most of the world defines east Jerusalem as that part of the city that existed outside the pre-1967 armistice line, and that is exactly where Gilo is located. More significantly, Weisberg states that the Fourth Geneva Convention does not apply to Judea and Samaria. It is true that Israel argues that the convention does not apply in the occupied territories. But the rest of the world sees it differently. Canada's foreign affairs department explicitly states, "Canada does not recognize permanent Israeli control over territories occupied in 1967 (the Golan Heights, the West Bank, east Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip). The Fourth Geneva Convention applies in the occupied territories and establishes Israel's obligations as an occupying power."

Harry Schachter
Toronto

* * *

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Seeking a level of comfort with fellow writers

Erika Dreifus
JewishIdeasDaily.com

Some days, I can't help thinking back 25 years to my high-school French course, which is where I first encountered the concept of the *juste milieu* – the happy medium – and the difficulty of achieving it. Why is the happy medium so elusive? Why do I more often feel caught betwixt and between or, even among my fellow Jewish-American writers, alone?

When I read something about the new generation of Jewish immigrant writers from the former Soviet Union, I become acutely conscious of my privileges as a native-born American. But when I read interviews with certain American-born Jewish writers my age, I am keenly aware of my closeness to the immigrant experience – to my maternal grandmother, who escaped east European persecution, and my paternal grandparents, who escaped Nazi Germany. I remember that I am merely a second-generation college graduate and that my parents would likely not have been able to attend college were it not for what was then a largely free public university system.

And when I hear other Jewish writers my age talk about how antisemitism is irrelevant to "our generation," I am astonished. When I moved from Brooklyn at the age of nine to a non-Jewish neighborhood in a New Jersey suburb, I discovered country clubs and social dancing lessons – and the fact that they excluded me as a Jew.

But these issues don't get to the heart of the patterns of politics and outlook that separate me most from my ostensible peers. That heart is Israel.

In a 2009 column in the *Forward* titled "How I'm Losing My Love for Israel," author Jay Michaelson reported, "It has become simply exhausting to maintain the ambivalence, the hugging and the wrestling, the endless fence sitting. My love of Israel has turned into a series of equivocations: 'I do not support the expansion of settlements, but the Palestinians bear primary responsibility for the collapse of the peace process in 1999.' 'The Israelis acted overzealously in Gaza, but they must be entitled to defend themselves against rocket attacks.'"

The "complexity and ambiguity," he summed up, "wear one out." Michaelson went on: "I admit that my exhaustion is exacerbated because, in my social circles, supporting Israel is like supporting segregation, apartheid or worse." But, he explained, "I don't think advocates of Israel understand exactly how bad the situation is on college campuses, in Europe and in liberal or leftist social-political circles."

I have more than a passing acquaintance with the contemporary writing scene that forms part of Michaelson's "liberal or leftist social-political circles," and he is right. The situation there is bad.

In defending Israel, you risk alienating friends, editors and critics. As open-minded as these "liberal or leftist" circles claim to be, they are as quick as their analogues at the other end of the spectrum to judge and scorn. There is no place for centrists. Like Jay Michaelson, I find it all exhausting.

But unlike Michaelson, when forced to choose sides, I choose Israel. Unfortunately, for me, choosing Israel often means the opposite of engaging. Because I cannot find a *juste milieu*, I bow out. I exit.

In 2006, I resigned from the National Book Critics Circle, whose leadership had made the organization's blog a mouthpiece for criticizing Israel, promoting works like Jimmy Carter's book on Palestine and the treatise by professors Stephen Walt and John Mearsheimer on the "Israel lobby."

In 2009, I unsubscribed from a popular women's poetry listserv because it had become a reliable source of condemnation for the war in Gaza in the winter of 2008-2009.

In each case, I made my choice after speaking up – and becoming a target of abuse, online and off. Rarely, another writer defended me. Slightly more often, I received appreciative private e-mails.

It wasn't enough. It still isn't.

These days, my objections are even quieter – for example, "unfollowing" writers who devote their tweets and Facebook posts to applauding the various flotillas and condemning Israel for enforcing the Gaza blockade (which even the United Nations deems legal). Though not about to launch any boycott campaigns, I won't support anti-Israel writers by buying or promoting their books. Recently I declined to join the 2,000 writers, many of them Jewish, who signed an "Occupy Writers" manifesto supporting "the Occupy movement around the world." I cannot join a blanket endorsement of a movement that may well grow to include more episodes like "Occupy Boston occupies the Israeli Consulate" (you can find it on YouTube).

What troubles me most is that too many Jewish writers, particularly those with whom I am naturally linked by age and education, not only haven't objected to their friends' routine demonization of Israel – not only have they decided that if they must choose between Israel and their literary friends, Israel must go – but they go out of their way to broadcast their criticisms.

There was a time earlier this year when you could barely spend five minutes on Twitter or Facebook without encountering pieces like Allison Benedikt's "Life After Zionist Summer Camp" or Kiera Feldman's "The Romance of Birthright Israel." In the *Jerusalem Post*, McGill University Prof. Gil Troy described these essays as resembling 17th-century "captivity narratives": after being "force-fed diets of Zionist folk tunes" and dazzled by "hunkalicious Israeli soldiers," the writers "courageously flee their brainwashing into the welcoming bosom of the New York intelligentsia, rejecting Israel while embracing Palestinians, about whom they claim they never were taught."

But I'll bet a year's worth of book sales that most of my literary acquaintances haven't read Gil Troy. They consider the *Jerusalem Post* more "biased" than, say, *The Nation* (which published Feldman's article) or the *New York Review of Books*. To suggest that anything the *Jerusalem Post* or *Commentary* has to say may merit attention is tantamount to recommending Fox News over MSNBC. (On the other hand, it doesn't help when *Commentary*'s chief literary blogger, a smart man, derides the Occupy Writers' petition as a "useful list of useful idiots.")

I know Israel isn't perfect. I will listen to criticisms arising from a sincere concern for Israel's health and security. I absorb critiques like Peter Beinart's "The Failure of the American Jewish Establishment," which raised a ruckus in the *New York Review of Books*. I pause whenever journalist Jeffrey Goldberg warns against misguided Israeli policy – I am convinced that he writes about Israel with all his heart, soul and might.

I wish I could do the same. I believe that with a little training and lot more study, I could do a better job of making a case for Israel, even gaining the ability to acknowledge its flaws publicly. My responses might not remain so visceral. I wouldn't have to resign, unsubscribe and "unfollow" so often.

Since I am too old to be of interest to most programs that provide Israel advocacy training, you can imagine my delight when I saw in my local Jewish newspaper that a version of Write On for Israel, a program that trains high-school students to become advocates for Israel through journalism, would be offered for those of us on the far side of college graduation – and my disappointment when I received a more recent e-mail notifying me that the program has been delayed at least a year.

But I'll keep looking. There has to be a place where I can be an American writer and a Zionist, a place between the diatribes on the National Book Critics Circle blog and the sometimes equally inflammatory responses from the other end of the spectrum. There has to be a *juste milieu*.

Erika Dreifus is the author of Quiet Americans: Stories. *The essay reprinted here is adapted from a talk she delivered at Temple B'nai Jeshurun in Short Hills, N.J., in partnership with the Jewish Book Network.*

A file photo of other North Americans who, like the author, "when forced to choose sides, choose Israel." ***[Israpet photo]***

Reform Biennial was an eye-opener

I recently spent 10 days in North America and returned home after some remarkable experiences.

I'm president of the largest Reform synagogue in Jerusalem and was asked to join a contingent of Israel Movement of Progressive Judaism (IMPJ) professionals and lay-leaders to the Union of Reform Judaism (URJ) Biennial outside Washington D.C., in mid-December.

I decided to travel privately to Toronto en route to the conference, not having visited in more than a decade. Among olim, I'm considered pretty lucky. My parents and sister also live in Israel, and I feel no urgent need to make annual pilgrimages to the place where I grew up. But it really had been too long, and this was an opportunity to see friends and family.

Preparing for the trip, I put aside time to talk to people, especially older friends and family members. It was time well spent. I spent meaningful hours hearing stories I'd never heard from people dear to my heart, people who've gone through much in their lives.

It was also a chance to catch up. I was wonderfully taken care of, with delectable brunches, lunches and munchies. I was amazed at how I comfortable I felt again with persons I see too rarely.

Perhaps most memorably, I spent a magical evening with 15 primary school friends I grew up with. We shared memories and pictures of kids, realizing again how much the years together had shaped us and what a special bond they had created among us.

Flying from Toronto to Washington, I said to myself: "Dayenu." If the trip had ended there and then, it would have sufficed. I had seen almost nothing of Toronto, but I came away delightfully enriched.

Yair Lootsteen
in Jerusalem

The flight was an appropriate lead-in to the second chapter of the trip – completely different, yet also stirring.

Growing up in Toronto, my parents were members of a wonderful Conservative shul, Beth Tikvah Synagogue. I rarely visited Reform temples, except for friends' bar and bat mitzvahs, always feeling they were somewhat foreign, with not enough Yiddishkeit.

In Jerusalem, my own family couldn't find a synagogue that fit our needs. After trying different congregations, we joined Kehillat Kol HaNeshama, our spiritual home and centre of much that goes on in our lives.

My involvement at Kol HaNeshama led to the URJ Biennial invitation, and I was thrilled that I accepted the invitation. It was an eye-opener. Some 6,500 proud Reform Jews representing 900 American congregations with more than 1.5 million members gathered for five days of learning, worship, music, speakers, advocacy, networking and much more.

Most were Americans, but there were folks from other places, too, including a Canadian delegation and smaller ones from the United Kingdom, Germany, Poland, Russia, Ukraine and Israel. This biennial had the largest Israeli presence to date.

At plenary sessions, we heard wonderful keynote speakers, including U.S. President Barack Obama, who noted the URJ's importance to North America's Jewish milieu and how significant it (and particularly its Religious Action Committee) was in advancing civil rights in America during the last several decades.

Music could be heard almost round the clock, while smaller gatherings dealt with assorted issues concerning Reform Judaism: how congregations are dealing with the financial crisis, tikkun olam, Jewish education, youth empowerment, camps, the Internet and Israel-related matters, to name but a few.

The transition between outgoing URJ president Rabbi Eric Yoffie, and his successor, Rabbi Rick Jacobs, was central to the entire event. So were daily prayers. And twice – Friday evening and Shabbat morning – 5,000 people worshipped together, mostly in Hebrew. It was overwhelming, as was Rabbi Yoffie's inspiring farewell sermon describing the movement's achievements and its future challenges.

Concern and support for Israel and the IMPJ and its pluralistic agenda were abundant – more than I'd expected. Rabbi Jacobs invited a small group of Israeli delegates to hear our vision of the future relationship between the North American and Israeli Reform movements. Rabbi Richard Hirsch, the man most instrumental in forging the special relationship between Israel and the URJ, was honoured with a special award, and ARZA (the Association of Reform Zionists of America) staff and volunteers were highly visible championing the IMPJ. It was tremendous. I was proud to be part of it.

Arriving home, I understood how much I'd learned during this trip about the importance of my own Canadian roots and about the positive, albeit demanding, direction of American Reform Judaism.

The sky is not falling in Israel

Judging from media reports, Israel might appear to be in the midst of a radical and violent political and religious polarization. "Hilltop youth" from the settlements are seen allegedly burning mosques, as well as attacking "peace activists" and even IDF officers. Haredi men are shown assaulting secular women in segregated buses and even on sidewalks, and members of Israel's democratically elected Knesset are portrayed as waging war against the courts and civil society.

As in many press reports on Israel, the reality is often sensationalized and exaggerated out of all proportion, both for commercial reasons ("Jews are news") and as part of the campaign to portray the Jewish nation-state as doomed to failure.

In reality, Israeli society is far more unified than American society, with its all-out ideological warfare between conservatives and liberals. Unlike in the United States and many European societies, the conflicts and acts of violence from Beit Shemesh to Mea Shearim are confined to small fringes, and they reflect the ideological and power struggles between the different extremes.

In each case, the fringes on both sides benefit from the confrontation and manipulate the clashes in order to promote their visibility and power. The perpetrators of the attacks on women (and even schoolgirls) and of other forms of violence are known as the *sikarikim* – a small haredi fringe seeking to gain attention through extremism. At most, a few hundred individuals are involved. In contrast, the vast majority of this community, like other Israelis, is clearly repulsed by this violence, and many rabbis have denounced these actions.

But in parallel, Israel also has an intolerant ultra-secular fringe, waging ideological war against what they see as closed and antiquated versions of Judaism, and the haredi community's failure to carry its weight economically or in the army. In politics, as in physics, for every action by one extreme, there is an equal and opposite reaction. The attacks on the women and girls have provided the excuse for the anti-religious to spring into action. On both sides, supporters have been bombarded with warnings of dire threats to treasured values unless the faithful stand strong.

Violent incidents involving a small group of young extremists in the settlements, under the name of "*tag michir*" (price tag) follow a similar pattern. Fundamental questions related to the borders of Israel, the status of settlements beyond the pre-1967 "green line" and whether a lasting peace agreement with the Palestinians is possible remain wide open and intensely debated. Most of the settlement community is repelled by this crude violence, and the *tag machir* group represents the hard-core fringe. But they gain legitimacy by opposing groups from the other ideological extreme, such as Peace Now and Machsom Watch. Both sides use headlines and attention to promote their visibility and influence, and to attract funding.

Gerald Steinberg
in Jerusalem

In contrast, the vast majority of Israelis are alienated by all of these groups, as reflected in voting behaviour and public opinion polls. The general public across the religious-secular and left-right spectrum rejects both the ideologies and the use of violence and intimidation. Israelis have grappled with a number of very complex dilemmas for decades, and most realize that radical "solutions" and miracle cures don't work.

But in both the Israeli and international media, each incident becomes a headline – a certain sign that Israel is cracking at the seams. Many reporters ignore or don't understand the unique complexity that Israelis face. These details fare poorly in the competition for news space. Other journalists have a pre-formed hostile attitude toward Israel, blowing any incidents out of proportion and giving all of the fringes far more credit than they deserve. This gives the extremists the attention and influence they crave.

Israel is a very complex country, with more than its share of rough edges and plenty of room for improvement. But the manipulated images of violence and extremism are far from the reality.

Blood libel tarnishes a small American town

"I'll tell you flat out," Gus said. "It's time you knew. This girl who disappeared, it's the Jews." His lips curled up as if the very word tasted bitter.

"The Jews?"

"They have strange customs for their holidays. Terrible customs. They use blood. Drink it and bake it in their special foods. Blood of a Christian child…"

This chilling exchange appears in Shirley Reva Vernick's *The Blood Lie* (Cinco Puntos Press), a young adult novel that deals with one of the oldest and most despicable antisemitic myths, the blood libel, a vile accusation that has demonized, marginalized and subjected Jews to violence.

Blood libel has reared its ugly head in Europe, particularly medieval Britain, czarist Russia and Nazi Germany.

But the United States?

On Sept. 22, 1928, two days before Yom Kippur, a rumour began floating around Massena, a town of 15,000 in upstate New York near the Canadian border with a Jewish population of about 150, that a four-year-old Christian girl, Barbara Griffiths, had been kidnapped and killed by Jews in a ritual murder.

The next day, a Jewish resident of Massena whose knowledge of Jewish customs and traditions was limited, was questioned by state police. He left them with the impression that there might be truth in the allegation that Jews engage in ritual murder. The police then called on the town's rabbi, and he indignantly told them they should be ashamed of themselves for asking such absurd questions.

Later that day, Barbara was found alive in the woods about a mile from her home. She told rescuers she had lost her way during a walk and had slept in the forest.

The *New York Times*, having picked up the story, turned it into a national event. The American Jewish Committee denounced the incident, prompting apologies from Massena's mayor and police.

"I couldn't believe what I heard when I first learned about the blood libel," said Vernick, 50, who was born and raised in Massena. "I was shocked that something like this had happened in America in the 20th century. It sounded like a page out of eastern Europe in the Middle Ages. I still wonder how anyone, even a bigot, could buy that canard."

Vernick, a professional writer who lives in western Massachusetts today, learned about the Massena blood libel while in college.

"During my sophomore year,

Sheldon Kirshner

in Toronto

I came home for a fall break with an assignment for a sociology class. Students had to identify a local community conflict – past or present – and write a paper on it. I remember thinking, no controversies ever happened in my dinky little town of Massena. So I asked my dad, who grew up in Massena, if he had any ideas. That's when he told me, for the first time, about the blood libel, which happened when he was a high school senior.

"The minute he told me the story, I knew one day I'd write more than a term paper about it. This was a story that not only spoke to me, but grabbed me by the throat and screamed at me. I felt compelled to illuminate this episode in Jewish history, as well as to inspire readers to contemplate the consequences of, and possible responses to, intolerance."

To the best of her knowledge, the Massena blood libel was the first reported one in the western hemisphere, while *The Blood Lie* is the first novel of its kind to be published in the United States.

Massena is a few kilometres from the St. Lawrence River, which forms the international boundary between Canada and the United States. It is named in honour of Andre Massena, a French general who fought under Napoleon.

Shirley Reva Vernick

Originally, most of the people in the town were white Protestants, but eventually it was also populated by French-Canadian and Irish immigrants.

With the construction of an immense aluminum plant in the early 20th century, labourers from across Europe, mainly Roman Catholics and a handful of Jews, trickled into Massena. But according to Vernick, the first Jewish settlers, including her paternal grandfather, Samuel Levine, arrived in the late 1890s.

On the eve of World War I, Massena had enough Jewish men to form a minyan, though there was still no rabbi.

In 1919, the Jewish community bought a church, removed its spire and renamed the building Adath Israel. By then, the synagogue had hired Berel Brennglass – a Lithuanian Jew who had arrived in America in 1915 – as its rabbi, shochet and Hebrew teacher.

Massena, N.Y., in the 1920s

Levine was the proprietor of a clothing store, but Vernick's father, Abraham, was an anesthesiologist. Abraham's wife, Blanche, was a television producer in New York City, but after marrying Abraham, she became a high school English teacher in Massena.

Vernick's family was directly victimized by the blood libel. "A state trooper showed up at my father's house late the night of Griffith's disappearance and made my grandfather open his shop," she said. "The trooper searched the store to see if any Jews had stashed the little girl's corpse there."

Asked what effect the blood libel accusation had on the Jews of Massena, Vernick replied, "Short-range, it terrified Jews, who feared a pogrom. Jewish people were afraid to walk the streets or let their children walk to school. A boycott of Jewish businesses lasted for several weeks.

"Nothing ever appeared in the local newspaper, the *Massena Observer*, about the blood libel – no acknowledgement and certainly no apology – probably due to embarrassment on the part of the antisemites. Still, the Jewish community stayed put in Massena, continuing to serve as generous, hardworking citizens."

Since the blood-libel incident, Massena's population has shrunk to approximately 13,000 today. The town is still predominantly white, but the Jewish population has declined sharply, in common with other small towns in the United States.

Vernick has some fond memories of Massena and visits occasionally. "But as a child, I overheard a neighbour, an adult, saying, 'Hitler wasn't so bad.' That hit at my core. Also, other children told me that the Jews killed Christ."

Strolling in the downtown area one day, she saw swastika graffiti. Five years ago, the Jewish cemetery was vandalized, and two 15 year-old youths were charged.

The youngest of five children, Vernick, now the mother of two daughters, left Massena after graduating from high school to attend college and launch her writing career. "It wouldn't have been feasible or desirable to return to Massena after college because of the dearth of Jews, jobs and social-cultural activities."

Vernick's sister and her family, however, still live in Massena. Her parents are deceased.

She claims that Massena has yet to come to terms with the blood libel. "In the immediate aftermath, it was hushed up. But most people never found out about it. I hope *The Blood Lie* will help start a constructive conversation in town."

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Hockey star describes recovery from substance abuse

Paul Lungen
Staff Reporter

Theo Fleury began his destructive dance with alcohol and drugs at a fairly young age. He was in his mid-teens, away from home and playing hockey when a coach sexually molested him.

"That left me with pain, confusion, guilt and anger, and the only way I could cope with the abuse was drink, drugs and go to the dark side of life," he said.

It took him years to end his dependence on drugs – it prematurely ended a very successful NHL career in which he was an all-star and Stanley Cup winner.

Today, he is an inspirational speaker, addressing audiences with his cautionary tale of substance abuse. He delivered his message last week to an audience of more than 700 at Forest Hill Collegiate, in an event sponsored by JACS (Jewish Addiction Counseling Services) Toronto.

Today, kids are even younger – 12 and 13 – and hipper than he was when he was first enticed by drugs, Fleury told *The CJN*. They exchange information through social media and begin experimenting in late adolescence. As teenagers, they are often going through emotional turmoil and like him, turn to drugs as a crutch to help them get by. They can become hooked if they have an "addictive personality," having inherited a gene that makes them less able to rein in their impulses.

It's something parents have to be concerned about, as it is quite widespread, he said.

So what can parents do?

"It's all about keeping the lines of communication open, always having an open-door policy with your kids and allowing them to tell you what is going on in their lives," said Fleury, who won the Stanley Cup with the Calgary Flames in 1989.

Fleury, who told his story in the bestselling book *Playing With Fire*, advises parents to avoid being judgmental. "The presentation is very important," he said. "Don't yell and scream. They'll tune you out in five seconds. Get to his level, talk, and be calm.

From left, Art Silber, JACS chair, Theo Fleury and Zalman Goldman, managing director.

"You want to deter kids from experimenting, but present it in a way that scares them a little bit. Tell them nothing good comes out of drinking too much alcohol, experimenting with drugs, staying out late or getting involved with the wrong peer group."

Fleury advises getting kids involved in other activities and to stay involved in their lives. It doesn't really matter what the activity is, just be there with them, he suggested.

Despite busy lives, parents have to organize their time "for each child and let them know they are the most important part of your life."

JACS assistant director, Mark Freedman, hopes Fleury's advice will strike a chord among some of the spectators who came to hear his "Don't Quit Before the Miracle" presentation.

"His career ended because of substance abuse problems and the behaviour that goes with it," Freedman said. "Shortly after he was let go by the New York Rangers, he sought recovery.

"He speaks candidly about substance abuse and the road to recovery."

In addition to the public address at Forest Hill Collegiate, Fleury spoke to high school students at Westmount Collegiate. It was part of JACS outreach program, in which JACS representatives visit more than 50 high schools every year to educate young people on substance abuse and addiction, Freedman said.

JACS is affiliated with UJA Federation of Greater Toronto. "It services the community in many different ways, in terms of helping individuals, families, couples deal with substance problems." JACS helps people with other forms of addiction, including gambling, he added.

From January to September 2011, "we reached more than 6,600 people in all JACS activities," up from 5,500 in the same period the year before, Freedman said.

"Often the common thread that brings people together is the position they find themselves in and the realization of what their families are going through – that it's not something they can fix themselves.

"They recognize they need support, and JACS offers confidentiality and anonymity. They can come to groups or for counselling and talk about what is going on in their lives.

"The Jewish community is no different than anyone else in terms of addiction and substance abuse. Removing the shame factor is a big thing. It's not something to be ashamed about, but that's how the healing can begin," he said.

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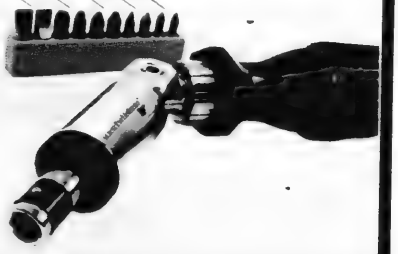

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Richard Lewis Takes to the UJA Stage on February 9th

Comic Legend Performs at Campaign 2012 Celebration

By Daniel Horowitz

Richard Lewis, the featured performer at United Jewish Appeal's upcoming Campaign 2012 closing celebration on February 9th, has accumulated an impressive array of well-deserved kudos for his unique, neurotic and hysterical comedy over the years.

Recognized by Comedy Central as one of the top 50 stand-up comedians of all time and included on GQ Magazine's list of the '20th Century's Most Influential Humorists', the 64-year-old Lewis shows absolutely no sign of slowing down.

And, while he admits that the accolades are "nice", Lewis, one of the stars of HBO's critically-acclaimed *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, is quick to credit those who came before him as being the true comedy greats.

"Those lists are totally subjective, as nice as some of them sound," says Lewis. "The ones that came first and broke ground usually are the greatest. There are many forms of comedy and it is hard to top Sid Caesar in sketch comedy and Carl Reiner and Mel Brooks for their sheer authenticity and laughs, and Shelley Berman and Nichols & May and the astounding Jonathan Winters, Phil Silvers and Jackie Gleason in sitcoms. And then, for me, Lenny Bruce and Richard Pryor set the bar for the type of stand-up I enjoy the most."

While Lewis has had a profound impact on comedy, he's also impacted our vernacular as well.

Yep. You read that correctly.

Lewis claims to be the originator of the phrase "The _____ from hell" as in "the date from hell" or "the roommate from hell". This theory is expounded upon in the *Curb Your Enthusiasm* episode "The Nanny from Hell". In fact, Lewis has petitioned the editors of Bartlett's to be given credit for the coinage, but the editors claim that the phrase was a common idiom prior to Lewis' use of it. However, the Yale Book of Quotations does attribute the phrase to Lewis, so we'll give him that one.

Born in 1947 in Brooklyn, New York, and raised in Englewood, New Jersey, Lewis graduated from Ohio State University in 1969 with a degree in marketing and communications. He wrote ad copy in New Jersey while also writing jokes for comedians.

Lewis is no stranger to Toronto, and, clearly he looks forward to his February visit. Asked what he remembers most from his previous visits to our fair city, Lewis replies, "the gigs and the love affairs. But now, I'm married, so just the gigs and seeing the beautiful city."

Being cast on *Curb Your Enthusiasm* just may have been preordained for Lewis - he first met Larry David, the show's creator and the man behind Seinfeld, when both were about 12 years old, around 1960.

"We had met at a sports camp in upstate New York," recalls Lewis. "We despised one another. I never saw him again until after a year of starting to make a name for myself in New York City nightclubs along with Jay Leno, Billy Crystal, Andy Kaufman, and others. He came on the scene and he was just spectacular. Plus, we became inseparable best friends. We wound up retracing our past and when we both realized we went to the same camp and were once arch rivals, we almost came to blows. Then we laughed at the amazing coincidence and the bond was set for life."

Richard Lewis

Lewis, a self-confessed political junkie who enjoys listening to jazz and classic rock when he's not on stage, has dealt with – and continues to deal with - his share of struggles. As a recovering alcoholic for almost 18 years, Lewis has a special place in his heart for the holiest of Jewish holidays.

"I've grown to really appreciate the importance – not only as a Jew – but as a person, for much of the significance of Yom Kippur for atonement and repentance," he says without a trace of humour. "One crucial part of recovery is taking responsibility for one's actions and on this holiest of days, that surely is part of it."

So, tell me Richard, which is your least favourite Jewish holiday?

"The ones which have the most food with sugar, as it triggers my addiction and has sent me screaming and running from people's homes many times."

So, rather than asking Richard Lewis to come to your home for, say, a Passover seder where sugar is all - too - present, it may be easier to join him on Thursday, February 9th, at Toronto's Events on the Park at 7:30 p.m. Join us as we honour our leadership, volunteers and donors, and celebrate the success of UJA Campaign 2012 while enjoying an evening of comedy.

Tickets are only $30 and can be purchased online at ujaevents.com/registration/lewis or by email at jgonik@ujafed.org or call 416.635.2883 EXT. 5229. Includes dessert reception, Kashruth observed (COR)

Richard Lewis as Prince John in Mel Brooks' 1993 spoof Robin Hood: Men in Tights

Lewis with old friend and co-star of Curb Your Enthusiasm, Larry David

Turkey wants to restore good relations with Israel, consul general says

Sheldon Kirshner
Staff Reporter

Turkey values its relationship with Israel and hopes that current mutual tensions can be resolved amicably, the Turkish consul general in Toronto declared last week.

"Turkey has the will to make peace with everyone," Ali Riza Guney said in an interview. "That is why our foreign minister has set the target of having 'zero problems with neighbours.' So why should Israel be different? We had good ties with [Israel] until the end of 2008."

Guney, who served in Turkey's consulate in Jerusalem from 2005 to 2009, added, "Turkey and Israel had strong, multidimensional and friendly relations which we valued."

The state and people-to-people ties cut across political, economic, military, scientific and cultural lines, he said.

In a reference to the influx of Sephardi Jews into the Ottoman Empire after the Spanish Inquisition, he noted, "The deeply rooted bonds between the Turkish and Jewish people date even further, five centuries before the Israeli state was established."

Turkey, the first Muslim state to recognize Israel, upgraded relations with Israel in a wide range of fields after the 1993 Oslo accords.

In 2000, Israel and Turkey signed a free trade agreement, and in 2005, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan visited Israel. Two years later, Israeli President Shimon Peres addressed Turkey's parliament. Turkey served as a mediator in Israel's four rounds of talks with Syria in 2008.

After Israel's invasion of the Gaza Strip in early 2009, Erdogan harshly criticized Israel.

Bilateral relations further deteriorated in May 2010 when Israeli naval commandos boarded the Mavi Marmara – a Turkish ship in an international flotilla trying to break Israel's siege of Gaza – and killed eight Turkish nationals and one ethnic Turkish American citizen.

Ali Riza Guney

Calling the raid an act of aggression, Turkey demanded an official apology, compensation and the lifting of Israel's naval blockade of Gaza, which has been ruled by Hamas since 2007.

In the aftermath of these events, Turkey recalled its ambassador in Tel Aviv, while Turkish and Israeli diplomats tried in vain to defuse the situation. According to Guney, agreements were reached, but Israel did not implement them.

Tension was already high before Israel's raid. In a diplomatic incident in Jerusalem in January 2010, Israel's deputy foreign minister publicly rebuked Turkey's ambassador to Israel, resulting in an Israeli apology to Turkey.

Last September, after the United Nations released a report saying that Israel's blockade of Gaza is justified but that Israel used "excessive" force aboard the Mavi Marmara, Turkey expelled Israel's envoy in Ankara.

Recalling Israel's raid on the Gaza-bound flotilla, Guney said, "This attack on civilians left an indelible mark in the hearts and minds of the Turkish people. The fact that the attack came from a friendly country increased the indignation further."

Asked why Turkey had not prevented the Mavi Marmara from leaving port, he said, "The Turkish government tried to dissuade the Turkish participants not to take part in the convoy, but it did not work."

Guney, who assumed his current position in Toronto last month after heading the Middle East department in the foreign ministry, said Turkey has proven its willingness to improve relations with Israel.

"We continued manifesting a constructive approach by holding talks with the Israeli authorities to overcome the problem and by demanding simply an apology and compensation," he said.

Israel apologized to Egypt last summer after accidentally killing five Egyptian troops following a terrorist attack in the Negev desert. "I think it is fair enough to expect from Israel the same maturity to be displayed for Turkey."

Guney, whose previous postings included Saudi Arabia and Germany, said Turkey attaches "great importance" to its relations with Israel. "Especially in the midst of historic events unfolding around us in the Middle East and North Africa, we need to be in tandem more than ever."

Noting that his nation has traditionally had an "unwavering and friendly" position on Israel, he said Turkey has never questioned Israel's right to exist and lent Israel legitimacy by being the first Muslim state to recognize it. "I sincerely believe that once Israel takes the necessary steps and stops its intransigent approach, the normalization of our relations will be the natural outcome."

Guney emphasized that Turkey wishes to be Israel's friend. "Our relations and friendship had stood the test of time. They had always emerged strong and enduring. And we do not wish this to change. Turkey and Israel live in a tough neighbourhood. It is not very wise to stay apart while there are tectonic changes in the Middle East."

Referring to the diplomatic stalemate between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, Guney said, "If Israel pursues peaceful policies in the region, then the pace of improvement in our relations will be unprecedented."

Claiming that the Israeli government's policies toward the Palestinians have isolated Israel, Guney said that Israeli settlements in the territories and the siege of Gaza are incompatible with achieving a two-state solution to the Arab-Israeli dispute.

Israel has "legitimate security concerns," he said. "But to address those concerns, it is imperative to push the peace process forward. Israel needs to see that it will only be possible to ensure real security by building a real peace.

> *'The only way to reach a viable and lasting peace is through a two-state solution. Israel needs to live and prosper within secure borders, and this target can only be reached by the formation of a Palestinian state next to Israel'*

"The only way to reach a viable and lasting peace is through a two-state solution. Israel needs to live and prosper within secure borders, and this target can only be reached by the formation of a Palestinian state next to Israel."

Suggesting that Turkey's bilateral ties with Israel can be upgraded in the future, Guney said, "We have to act with utmost care not to stain the collective memory of past generations in both countries. If Israeli politicians have the same understanding and vision, I believe it should not be a matter for them to apologize and compensate."

He said Erdogan is antagonistic to neither Israel nor Jews. "Is it fair to label someone 'hostile to Israel' simply because he does not agree with the policies pursued toward the Palestinians?"

Elaborating on this point, Guney said, "Prime Minister Erdogan has stressed that antisemitism is a crime against humanity." And, he went on to say that Erdogan was the first Turkish prime minister who paid a visit to (Turkey's) chief rabbi.

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'A universal cause of helping children is a good one'

Continued from page 3

"Because it's so rare, not a lot of funding is available for research for it," Brooks said, adding that she's grateful for the support.

"There is a long way to go to find a cure. Every little bit helps."

Mars Hotel drummer Jordan Lampert is confident he and his band will be able to add a few thousand dollars to the cause later this month.

Mars Hotel, a Grateful Dead tribute band, will join Rory Levy of the Gratefully Deadicated Sound System, a DJ who will mix high-quality concert recordings in a seamless set with the band.

"When Rory suggested we play a gig that benefits Jake, that spurred us on to make this happen," said Lampert, who is a longtime friend of Brooks' brother, Ryan.

As a father of two himself, Lampert said it didn't take much convincing to get involved in this initiative.

"Especially when you have kids, you'd never wish for any kid to have to go through a health issue like this," he said.

"If there is anything any of us can do to help kids that are going through this or kids who may have to go through it in the future... I just think it's a cause that everyone can rally around. A universal cause of helping children is a good one."

Lampert said he hopes to attract about 400 people to the show, which would garner about $4,000 for the cause.

Visit jakescollection.tumblr.com for more information about Jake's Collection or the upcoming show.

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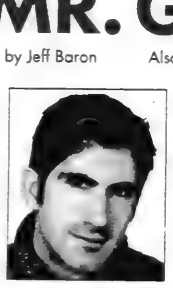
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May we all be 'Hartmanized'

Rabbi Shalom Spira

Gil Troy's excellent column in *The CJN* last July focused on the theology of Rabbi David Hartman. Troy cogently observed that "this rabbi of reason and reach has now posed a serious challenge to his Orthodox colleagues. It is incumbent upon them to read, respond – and maybe even reformulate, if not reform."

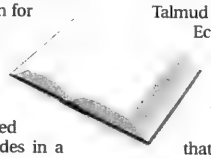
Accordingly, I would like to fulfil Troy's request by responding to Rabbi Hartman.

As a note of introduction, I acknowledge that I am deeply indebted to Rabbi Hartman, because I was privileged to be raised in the Congregation Tifereth Beth David Jerusalem community that he founded. Although I was born only after he ascended to Eretz Yisrael, the influence of Rabbi Hartman has permeated TBDJ and hence has spiritually enriched my life.

Rabbi Hartman's theology focuses on the duty to care and be sensitive to the needs of other human beings. I submit that Rabbi Hartman has praiseworthily encapsulated the doctrine of Orthodox Judaism. After all, Rabbi Akiva declares unequivocally in the Sifra (the halachic midrash to Leviticus) that "You shall love your fellow as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18) is a major principle of the Torah. We would all be wise to follow Rabbi Hartman's leadership and incorporate his righteous emphasis upon sensitivity to others in our quotidian lives.

Simultaneously, the same Torah that commands us to love others also gives us a panoply of other sacrosanct mitzvot, all of which are eternal, as Maimonides writes in *Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah*. These mitzvot include the interdiction against a kohen marrying a convert, the disqualification of a bill of divorce when the husband is coerced, and the obligation for

Rabbinic Reflections



separation between deceased Jews and deceased Noahides in a cemetery.

Still, on the matter of protecting the Jewish wife, the oral Torah allows for a prenuptial agreement that empowers the bride before the marriage begins, protecting her from becoming an agunah in the future. Inspired by Rabbi Hartman and Troy, an essay on how to draft the appropriate agreement has been published at www.wepapers.com/Papers/213069/Prenuptial_Agreement.

As an overarching principle, Rabbi Hartman cites the Talmud in Yoma 69b, which declares that the Creator wants people to address Him in a truthful manner. Rabbi Hartman is absolutely correct. That passage of the Talmud relates to prayer, establishing that one may not lie to the Holy One, Blessed Be He, when praying to Him. And, to that effect, the Torah is pure truth (Psalms 119:142), thereby inspiring us to uphold the mitzvot of the Torah, all of which are eternal. As the Talmud elucidates in Yoma 22b, Ecclesiastes 7:16 teaches us to champion the mitzvot, even when they transcend human understanding.

In conclusion, I believe that world Jewry is privileged to benefit from Rabbi Hartman's noble teachings, when applied as elaborated by the present article. May we be "Hartmanized" accordingly, thereby allowing us to serve as a source of blessing to all humanity, as per Genesis 12:3.

Rabbi Spira is spiritual leader of Congregation Kol Yehouda in Cote St. Luc, Que.

Jewish numbers

From the 1880s to the 1920s, some two million east European Jews immigrated to America.

Most of the world's 13 million Jews live in North America and Israel. Jewish leaders in both countries continue to assert the centrality of Israel for a vital Jewish future. They maintain that without the Diaspora's influence, Israel will become parochial, and without Eretz Yisrael, the Diaspora will inevitably assimilate.

According to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, between 160,000 and 180,000 German Jews perished in the Holocaust. After World War II, a small Jewish community gradually emerged. However, beginning in the 1990s, a significant number of Russian Jews immigrated to the newly united Germany, and by 2004, the Jewish population had reached 118,000.

Approximately 20,000 Jews live in Poland, but only a fraction are members of Jewish communal institutions. But recent efforts to revive Jewish life is achieving surprising success.

The 600,000 Jews in South Florida (the Miami metropolitan area) are about 10 per cent of the area's population, and make up the third-largest percentage of Jews in any major U.S. metropolitan area. They represent about 10 per cent of Jews in the United States.

There are approximately 1.5 million Reform Jews who belong to more than 900 Reform congregations in the United States and Canada.

The Reform movement began ordaining women in 1972. There are now several hundred female rabbis, as well as female cantors, synagogue presidents and other religious leaders.

Bookmarks

Bernard Baskin

This now holds true also for Conservative and Reconstructionist forms of Judaism.

The *Cambridge Encyclopaedia of Judaism and Culture* estimates that the number of haredi Jews is 300,000 in North America, 500,000 in Israel and another 75,000 in Canada, Europe and Latin America.

More than a million Conservative Jews live in the United States, and another 100,000 in Canada, Europe, Latin America and Israel. In 1975, more American Jews were affiliated with Conservative synagogues than with those of any other denomination. By the 1990s, however, membership was in decline.

In the 1970s, about 25 per cent of North American Jews were married to non-Jews. By the 1990s, that figure had doubled to 52 per cent. In recent years, many intermarried Jews continued to identify with the community and are eager to raise their children as Jews. This presents problems in Jewish law when the non-Jewish parent is the mother.

In 1983, the Reform movement adopted the principle that the children of one Jewish parent, male or female, are presumed to be Jewish if they become involved in public and formal acts of identification with the Jewish faith and Jewish People (mitzvot).

The Gerontology Research Group believes there's an 'invisible barrier' at age 115. There are only 12 undisputed cases of people ever reaching 115. Right now, according to GRG, 55 women and six men are over age 110 worldwide. The oldest age ever reached was 122, in 1997, by a French woman. No matter how little you eat, how much you exercise and how healthy you live, you apparently can't live longer than 125 years. In 5,000 years of recorded history, there's been no change in the maximum life span.

U.S. presidential candidates and Israel

My View

Lawrence Hart

To the outside observer, the run-up to the presidential nomination in the United States seems to go on forever, often exuding more bluster than substance. But inasmuch as all of the manoeuvring and one-upmanship might make for good theatre, the gravity of the issues facing America, and indeed the free world, cannot be underestimated and demands that whoever the Republicans select to take on President Barack Obama has the erudition and conviction to sculpt an alternative to current policies that clearly are not working.

It's well recognized that domestic concerns invariably determine who wins elections and, during the current cycle, understandably even more so than in previous years, it's the economy that will be uppermost in the minds of voters. Nonetheless, given so much political turbulence overseas, foreign policy begins to emerge as a secondary tipping point in the quest for the White House.

And within the context of foreign policy, the salient question for the Jewish community during the current primaries tends to focus mostly on "how good one or another of the Republican candidates would be for Israel." Fortunately, with the exception of Texas congressman Ron Paul, there appears to be little to be worried about, with all of the remaining contenders strongly declaring their support for the Jewish state in ways that appeal to their constituencies.

Frontrunner Mitt Romney has stated that "the bonds between Israel and the United States are unshakable." He has pledged that if he's elected president, his first foreign trip will be to Israel. In contrast, Paul has stuck with his reportedly anti-Israel sentiments, contending, for example, that previous American alignment with Israel contributed to the 9/11 attacks. He is adamant that all U.S. aid to Israel should cease forthwith.

Ranking candidates on the strengths of their commitments to Israel, *Jerusalem Post* columnist Dovid Efune places former U.S. senator Rick Santorum at the top of the list. Santorum has described Obama's Middle East policy as "immoral" and has expressed his fervent belief in Israel's rights to the West Bank, even going so far as to controversially insist that "all the people who live in the West Bank are Israelis; they're not Palestinians."

Efune characterizes another of his more favoured candidates, Newt Gingrich, as having views that "translate into nuanced and comprehensive pro-Israel policy." As with many of the other candidates, Gingrich embraces Jerusalem as "the undivided capital of the Jewish state".

Texas Governor Rick Perry has promised that, among his first acts as president, he would move the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Former Utah governor Jon Huntsman also endorses such a move. He has described the U.S.-Israeli relationship as "a special bond rooted in history and solidified over more than five decades of partnership."

The real race for the Republican nomination is just getting started and although Romney is the odds-on favorite, it's too early to predict who will come away with the prize. But in terms of "who is good for Israel," each one, aside from Paul, passes muster. The bigger question is who has the ability to unseat Obama.

Israeli ecotourism

Jewish & Digital

Mark Mietkiewicz

If you are a veteran visitor to Israel but would like a break from Jerusalem's crowds and Tel Aviv's nightlife, you're in luck. Consider an ecotour. Although Israel may not spring to mind as a natural choice for environment-friendly vacations, the compact country has developed an impressive array of activities for tourists who want to see nature up close and aren't afraid to break a sweat.

The International Ecotourism Society defines ecotourism as "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people." **[http://bit.ly/ecoisr1]**

However, support for ecotourism isn't universal. Critics say flying around the world just to see a country's natural splendour does more harm than good and that genuine supporters of the environment should understand that they could end up being part of the problem. **[http://bit.ly/ecoisr2]**

Start at not-for-profit Ecotourism Israel, which gives a good overview of the country's natural sites and other destinations, including organic farms and ecological guesthouses. Who knew you could rent a cabin in the Golan to learn about bee life and honey making; go horseback riding along the Galilee, pausing to see the lights of Tiberias and Lake Kinneret; stay at a Negev bed and breakfast where you can learn about desert winemaking or practise your archery skills while hiking through the natural desert terrain of Mitzpe Ramon? **[http://bit.ly/ecoisr3]**

Many tour guides offer ecotours for which they do all the planning. But if you are more of a do-it-yourself traveller, the Israeli Ministry of Tourism website offers four-, seven- and 10-day ecotourism itineraries that you can customize to your needs. The longest tour starts in the Golan at the organic farm in the talmudic village of Katsrin and delivers you 10 days later in the Negev at the World Heritage Site of Avdat, "a city built by the Nabateans as a stop along the Incense Route they created from Petra to Gaza." **[http://bit.ly/ecoisr4]**

Actually, respect for the environment is nothing new in the land of the Torah. Neot Kedumim is a nature reserve dedicated to restoring the flora and fauna of biblical Israel. Located halfway between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, the reserve's eco-tour focuses on ancient, and current, practices, including the Sabbath and the sabbatical of the land, the laws of gleaning and tithes, and the biblical requirement to protect fruit trees. **[http://bit.ly/ecoisr5]**

If you prefer to do your ecotouring in an urban environment, consider volunteering at Jerusalem's Abraham Hostel "and experience the holy city through an ecological lens." Goals of the hostel include "recycling and waste-management initiatives, organic gardening and compost, interaction with the communities that directly surround it, including Meah Shearim and east Jerusalem." **[http://bit.ly/ecoisr6]**

And who knew that planting trees would ever become trendy? Let's not forget that the venerable Jewish National Fund planted its first grove of olive trees more than a century ago, a practice since adopted by thousands of tourists (and even more via donations to the fund's famous blue boxes). If you visit Israel on an ecotour, you can marvel at those forests and get some dirt under your fingernails. **[http://bit.ly/ecoisr7]**

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How to stick to new year's goals

Happy New Year everyone!

When you read this, it will be a few weeks into January 2012, which is often the time that we all begin to teeter-totter on our New Year's resolutions.

I actually prefer to call resolutions "goals," because resolutions for some reason just don't end up working for people. I also

Life Coach Corner

Judy Siblin-Librach

believe that one or two goals are often all you need to get a jump-start on the new year.

A great question to ask yourself is: "What do I want in 2012?" Keep it simple, and whether it's more healthy eating and fitness, weight loss, getting started on that novel, taking some singing or dancing lessons, starting a new business, learning to play the violin or just some personal fulfilment, begin by writing it down to make it happen.

If it's writing a book, commit to the outline and a few chapters by a certain date. A good friend, Nancy, just told me that she is doing a five-kilometre run in February to prepare for a longer 10-kilometre run on Mother's Day. That is a fantastic way to approach a bigger project – just break it up into tiny parts.

So what are the things that trip people up the most when it comes to resolutions? Well, to start with, we make too many of them. Choose just one or two really good ones. And if you want to lose weight, make it specific. Write down, "I want to lose 20 pounds" and then give it a realistic date. Partnering with someone can be very powerful, whether it's a friend, partner or life coach. Write down exactly how you want to achieve your goal. So if it's weight loss, you may want to join a gym or hire a personal trainer until you achieve your goal weight. Keep a journal or diary and tick off each accomplishment as you achieve it.

What also gets in the way for people, in addition to being too vague about their goals, is letting your inner critic stand in your way, with comments like this: "Who are you kidding?" So just silence that inner gremlin and keep on going!

I can't emphasize enough how much it helps to have a friend or loved one work with you on your goal. Two friends losing weight together or doing a fitness program can be even more successful. Choose someone close to you, whether it's a friend or a professional, to help you finally accomplish what you wish for, whether it's a dream to write and star in a movie or to organize your closets and cupboards and make your physical environment more pleasing and enjoyable.

Make sure to do something toward your goal every day, even if it's just the tiniest action. So, this sometimes could be as simple as visualizing your goal, making a phone call or doing some research around your goal, or even just clipping a magazine photo that reminds you of what you are wishing for. Please e-mail me with your goals for the new year. I'd love to hear from you.

I want to wish you all a Happy, Healthy, Loving and Fulfilling New Year! And finally, as comedian Joey Adams says: "May all your troubles last as long as your New Year's resolutions."

Judyelle@ican.net

שישאר בינינו

גידי קורן וחברים

ארי איינגר: תיאטרון קהילתי- תרגיל בקול ותנועה.

אני מביא קטעים מסיפורו הנפלא של ארי איינגר שזכה בפרס יוקרתי בטורונטו. בשל קוצר המדור נאלצתי לבחור מתוכו קטעים נבחרים:

השנה היא 2008, ואני שוכן בתיאטרון הקהילתי שלנו "הפמגש" בטורונטו, והערב יעסוק הפמגש בנושאי קול ותנועה. נתבקשנו להביא שיר "שעושה לנו את זה" ומיד נזכרתי בשירו של דוד דאור "תשמור על העולם ילד". בזמן שחיפשתי את מילות השיר באינטרנט, לחלוטין הציפה את עיניי, זה פשוט מדהים מה השיר הזה עושה לי ובכל פעם מחדש.

התקופה הייתה מלחמת ההתשה בלבנון, בני גיא מפקד טנק במוצב "הבופור" שבלבנון ואני שוכן בתיאטרון הקהילתי ברעננה. אין צורך לספר לכם על הדאגה לפשוש, זה כינוי החיבה לבני גיא. עשיתי ימים כלילות צמוד למסך הקטן, כל צילצול טלפון היה מחסיר פעימת לב ובמקום עבודתי ידעו שבין השעות 07:00 ל- 08:00 בבוקר אין מתקשרים אלי בטלפון שיש בו קו חוץ, מאחר והוא שמור לפשוש.

למזלי הרב פשוש היה נפלא, הוא הבין את הדאגה שקורעת אותי, ומדי בוקר לאחר שובו מהמארב ניסה להתקשר מחדש של מפקד המוצב, על מנת להרגיע. שבת, הפשוש הגיע לחופשת סוף שבוע ובחדשות יום השישי דווח כי מוצב "הבופור" הופגז במצעות מרגמה ויש מספר פצועים, ביניהם מפקד הטנק, בן, זה שהחליף את הפשוש כשיצא לחופשה.

אם זה לא נס משמיים אז אינני יודע נס מה הוא. היכן הייתי, אה כן, תרגיל בתיאטרון הקהילתי ברעננה. "תביאו משהו שנוגע לכם בנשמה, משהו שיזיז לכם את הכל מבפנים, שיר שגורם לכם להרגיש את הדברים הכי נכונים בחיים" אמרה עירית הבימאית. לא ברור לי למה ומדוע, אך שירו של דוד דאור "תשמור על העולם ילד" עלה בראשי והרגשתי מיד צביטה בבטן, כאילו מישהו או משהו תופס לי את הקיבה ומועך אותה:

"תשמור על העולם ילד
יש דברים שאסור לראות,
תשמור על העולם ילד
אם תראה תפסיק לחיות,
גיבור של העולם ילד
עם חיוך של מלאכים,
תשמור על העולם ילד
כי אנחנו כבר לא יכולים."

הזדהיתי כל כך עם מילות השיר, שהינה מי ששומרים עלינו, כי אנחנו כבר לא יכולים, אלו בעצם הילדים שלנו, כל הפשוטים למיניהם. עם רגשות אין מנהלים ויכוח ואין היגיון. רגש זה משהו שעולה ומציף אותך ואו טו טו מטביע אותך ולך אין הרבה מה לעשות, מלחמה נגדו נידונה לכישלון, אז נותר רק "לזרום איתו". 13 שנים עברו מאז, תיאטרון קהילתי אחר, בעיר אחרת, רק השפה היא אותה שפה. "תביאו משהו שנוגע לכם בנשמה, משהו שיזיז לכם את הכל מבפנים, שיר שגורם לכם להרגיש את הדברים הכי נכונים בחיים", אמרה יעל שהנחתה את הערב בטורונטו. ואתם יודעים בדיוק במה בחרתי.

יפה ירקוני

הזמרת וכלת פרס ישראל, יפה ירקוני, הלכה לעולמה, והעתונים-רדיו-טלביזיה התמלאו בתילים תילים של תשבוחות וסולמלטיבים על איכותה, השפעת שיריה והמורשת שלה. היה לי עצוב וכמעט שהיקאתי. זיהיתי בין גלי דמעות התנין גם את אלה שהשמיצו אותה ולעגו לה כל חייה. בשנות השבעים יצא לי לעשות עם יפה הקליט ילדים, ופגשתי אשה מקסימה אך שבורת לב ונעלבת על ששכחו אותה כולם. למעשה כבר בשנים שאחרי 67 היא לא הייתה קיימת מבחינה אמנותית- רק החיילים אהבו אותה והעריכו את נאמנותה. בידיעות אחרונות כתבה אריאנה מלמד שהיא "החייתה את שירי הילדים של נעמי שמר"- איזה הבלים- היא התחנזה לנעמי שתכתוב לה שיר ילדים, ולו אחד, ושמר מעולם לא ענתה לה.

חשבתי לי: ארץ אוכלת יושביה. כדי שיגידו עליך שם דברים יפים- אתה צריך למות. ובקבר, מה לעשות, אתה כבר לא תשמע אותם. ועד שתמות- עדה של כלבים יוציאו לך את הנשמה, ילענו לך אם יוכלו, ויקברו אותך חי.

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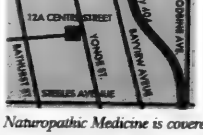

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ENVIRONMENTAL EATING: Students at Associated Hebrew Schools' Posluns Education Centre on Neptune Drive are making lunchtime more environmentally friendly with "boomerang" lunches, in which all containers and cutlery are reusable. Students will also soon be able to give up disposable cutlery in favour of stainless steel knives, forks and spoons that they can return at the end of lunch. Pictured from left, are Kayla Miller, Gabriella Treitel, Rachel Ospalak and Amy Gotkin.

FOOTPRINTS IN SNOW: Even though there was no snow outside, junior kindergarten students at Bialik Hebrew Day School have been working on decorating their classrooms with a snow theme. From left, Alexa B. (with boot in front of her face), Sephora S.-L. (behind), Ava K., and Rubin G. use rubber boots to make snow footprints.

Mazel Tov

מזל טוב

Happy 90th birthday to Cy Epton from Ann, your children, and grandkids. We all love you very much.

Great-grandmother Fanny Pollishuke with Louis, Lauren and Daniel.

Mazel tov Julia & Ben Golinsky on your diamond (60th) anniversary on Jan. 13! Love & kisses from your children and grandchildren.

Mazel tov to Stephanie Yumansky and Michael Studniberg on their recent engagement. With love from all your family

Jessica & Stuart Silverman welcome Eli Jacob, born Oct. 31, 2011. Mazel tov to proud grandparents Marilyn & Bob Gruneir, Esther & Len Silverman.

Mazel tov to Ginger & Manny Katz 65 incredible years! With love, Howard, Ric, Lorrie, Joanne, Jeff, Velvel, Stacey, Jason, Michael and Family, Ilona, Gethyn and Kiki

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Deadline reminder: Jan. 23 is the deadline for the issue of Feb. 2. Jan. 30 is the deadline for the issue of Feb. 9. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; e-mail whatsnewcjn@gmail.com, or fax 416-391-0829.

Thursday, Jan. 19

JEWISH-ITALIAN PROJECT

Michael Chazan, of the Archaeological Centre, University of Toronto, discusses "The Birth of a Project: The 2011 Excavation at Huqoq, Israel," 7:15 p.m., Carr Hall, Room 404, St. Michael's College, 100 St. Joseph St.

APPROACHING RETIREMENT

Amy D'Aprix discusses "Making the Most of Life's Transitions: Before and After Retirement," 7:30 p.m. at Temple Har Zion. 905-889-2252.

CAREGIVER CLASS IN RUSSIAN

A seminar for family caregivers in Russian on topics such as dementia and home safety will be held 6:30 p.m. at the Day Centre for Seniors, Steeles Avenue and Dufferin Street. RSVP **Natalie**, 416-635-2900, ext. 498.

Saturday, Jan. 21

BALLROOM DANCING

Ballroom dance lessons will be offered at Beth Radom Synagogue, tonight, Feb. 11 and March 10, 8 p.m. No experience necessary. $12 per person. 416-636-3451.

EXODUS DECODED

The film *Exodus Decoded* will be shown and followed with a discussion with director **Simcha Jacobovici** and **Rabbi Daniel Korobkin** on "Exploring the Theological Limits to Scientific Explanations of Biblical Miracles," 8 p.m. at Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto. $15 in advance, $18 at the door. www.bayt.ca.

Sunday, Jan. 22

JEWISH HISTORY

Kalman Weiser speaks about "Haskalah, Reform and Conservative Judaism, Modern and Ultra-Orthodoxy," 7:30 p.m. at Congregation Darchei Noam as part of its series on Jewish history.

Monday, Jan. 23

MEDICAL HALACHAH

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner discusses "Taking Call on Shabbat," as part of a series on practical medical Halachah, 8 p.m., Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue. 416-781-1777 or info@torontotorah.com.

MITZVAH KNITTERS

The Mitzvah Knitters meet at 1:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. at Shaar Shalom Synagogue to create blankets and shawls for people in need. Call 905-889-4975.

Tuesday, Jan. 24

SAFETY IN THE HOME

A presentation on safety in the home for seniors will be given at 7 p.m. at Day Centre for Seniors, Steeles Avenue and Dufferin Street. Limited caregiver respite and transportation available. RSVP **Vered**, 905-738-1128, ext. 221.

GOD ON TRIAL

Chabad of Markham will show the film

Continued on page 21

CASINO NIGHT
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or email: events@beitrayim.org
* Poker tournament participant fee is in addition to the cost of admission. Participants will receive $40 in poker chips

Continued from page 20

God on Trial, 8 p.m., 83 Green Lane, Thornhill. RSVP 905-886-0420, ext. 221.

COME KNIT

National Council of Jewish Women invites women to come and knit, 7-10 p.m., Council House, 4700 Bathurst St. 416-633-5100.

Wednesday, Jan. 25

JEWISH GENEALOGY

Allen Halberstadt presents a workshop to the Jewish Genealogical Society on "Finding Your Ancestors in the Jewish Online Worldwide Burial Registry," 8 p.m., Temple Sinai. Laptops invited, Wi-Fi available. Registration required at program@jgstoronto.ca.

Other News

MELTON MINI SCHOOL

Melton Mini School classes are open for registration. Bereshit II-Midrash and commentary will be taught by **Loretta Tanenbaum** Wednesday mornings, starting Feb. 15. Call 416-789-7400 or visit www.melton-toronto.org.

HARBORD CI REUNION

Anyone who ever attended or taught at Harbord Collegiate Institute is invited to its 120th birthday party, April 26-27, 2012. www.HarbordClub.com.

ORGAN DONATION

National Council of Jewish Women present a program on "Organ Donation: It's a Mitzvah," Feb. 2, noon, 4700 Bathurst St. Speakers include **Joanne Schenker** of Trillium Gift of Life Network and liver recipient **Frank Bialystok**. RSVP 416-633-5100.

CHOIR LOOKING FOR MEN

North York's Yorkminstrels Show Choir is looking for tenors, baritones and basses. Call **Sandi Horwitz**, 416-229-9313, or www.yorkmistrels.com.

FOOD CONFERENCE

Shoresh Food Conference on Jewish tradition and contemporary food issues, Feb. 5, Miles Nadal JCC. www.shoresh.ca or 416-805-8382.

CASINO NIGHT

Beit Rayim Synagogue holds its casino night fundraising evening Jan. 28, 7:30 p.m. at Pride of Israel Synagogue. For tickets, call 905-889-0276 or events@beitrayim.org.

JUDAIC STUDIES

Hana Werner teaches a Torah seminar Sundays, 10:30 a.m. at Adath Israel Synagogue, starting Jan. 29. 416-635-5340.

Werner discusses Jewish leaders who have made a difference, Mondays starting Jan. 30 at Beth David Synagogue, 7 p.m. To register, call 416-633-5500, ext. 32.

LOOKING TO RENT?

If you are looking to rent your basement apartment or extra room, you can list it free with UJA's Jewish Information Service of Greater Toronto in the Lipa Green Centre. People looking for a place to live can find help as well. 416-635-5600 or jinfo@ujafed.org.

JF&CS GROUPS

Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 215, or www.jfandcs.com. All programs require preregistration. All programs are held at the Lipa Green Centre, unless otherwise noted.

The Challenge of Anger for Women: A 6-session group for women, starting Feb. 1, 7:30 p.m.

Living With Teens: A 6-session group for parents, starting Feb. 1, 7:30 p.m.

Life Skills for Today's Woman: A 6-session group for women, starting Feb. 2, 7 p.m.

Effective Parenting: A 4-session group for parents of children ages 2-11, starting Feb. 7, 7 p.m.

Beyond the Chupah, Becoming a Couple: A 5-session marriage preparation course, starting Feb. 14, 7 p.m., Beth Tzedec Congregation.

Dating in Midlife: A workshop for men and women over 40 who have been single for more than 2 years. Feb. 15.

You're About to Separate, What to Tell The Kids: A workshop for parents, Feb. 16, 9:30 a.m., Promenade Mall, Suite 313.

High-Conflict Divorce: A workshop for parents, Feb. 22, 6:30 p.m.

FOR SENIORS

Association of Jewish Seniors meets Jan. 19, registration 9:30 a.m., program 10 a.m., Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue. **Susan Jackson** discusses "The New Jewish Toronto: What Your Grandchildren Are In For." RSVP **Tammy**, 416-635-2900, ext. 458.

National Council of Jewish Women, Aviva branch, is looking for women over 70 for their group, which meets mid-day every other Tuesday. Call 416-633-5100.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park, (60+). **Valerie**, 416-395-7881. Hairdresser/barber, Feb. 2, 9 a.m. Casino Rama, Feb. 15. Tuesdays, gentle exercise, 10 a.m.; Wednesdays, duplicate bridge, 12:30 p.m.; Thursdays, line dancing, 10 a.m.; social bridge, 12:30 p.m. Non-members welcome.

LZA Seniors Cultural Club meets Tuesdays, 10 a.m., Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell. 416-630-9444.

New Horizons is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club that offers kosher food, casino trips. Romi and ulti card players welcome. 416-256-1892.

Adath Israel Congregation. Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub. Refreshments $2. Call **Pearl**, 416-635-6317, or **Sheila**, 416-665-3333.

Bernard Betel Centre 416-225-2112. Jan. 19, "Diabetes Education," 1:30 p.m.; Jan. 24, **Lorne Miller** discusses "Waiting for the Snow to Fall: A Guide to the Retirement Years," 10 a.m.; Jan. 25, interactive animal show, 1:30 p.m.; Jan. 26, **Jeff Brown** discusses "What To Do in a Medical Emergency," 1:30 p.m.

Active Seniors, Miles Nadal JCC, 416-924-6211, ext.155. **Iain Scott** discusses "Great Opera Singers," Jan. 19, 1:30 p.m.; ROM curator **Corey Keeble** presents "Jewish Textile Arts from Roman Times to Present," Jan. 26, 1:30 p.m.

Senior Gentle Fitness Club offers tai chi classes at Edithvale Community Centre, Tuesdays, 10 a.m., or Wednesdays, 7:15 p.m. Call **Helen**, 416-665-9050.

PROSSERMAN JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com.

Daycare and preschool registration for the 2012-13 school year is open. Spaces available for preschool, nursery, junior and senior kindergarten. Call **Kailah Rubin**, ext. 4351.

A program about ovarian cancer and Jewish women will be held Jan. 26 at 7 p.m. Call **Karen**, ext. 4255.

The senior program is looking for a volunteer to oversee students working on their painting projects, Mondays, 2-3 p.m. Call **Janet**, ext. 4259.

Spaces are still available in preschool Shabbat, music and sports programs. Call ext. 0.

Cyrel Troster reviews the film *Three Mothers*, Jan. 23, 12:45 p.m.

MILES NADAL JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org.

Tickets for the Toronto Jewish Film Society's 2012 season are on sale now. Call **Joelle Malka**, ext. 139.

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner teaches a course on "Icons of Spanish Jewry," Thursdays 8 p.m., starting Feb. 9. Call ext. 154.

Textiles, an exhibit by **Sheree Rasmussen**, is at the gallery until Jan. 30.

The Michael Bernstein Chapel, on the 3rd floor, holds services every Thursday at 7:15 a.m. and Sunday at 8 a.m. followed by breakfast. Call **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200.

LEARNING TO READ: Jacob Winton, left, shows his brother, David, his Hebrew work at the Montessori Jewish Day School. Jacob used moveable alphabet letters to write a list of animals in Hebrew.

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 18

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Fundraisers will send kids to camp

Frances Kraft
Staff Reporter

Two upcoming events will raise money to send Toronto-area kids area to camp.

On Jan. 29, a Singing for S'Mores concert will be held at 7 p.m. at Temple Sinai Congregation to help send children to URJ Camp George, as well as to benefit the American Conference of Cantors (ACC), an affiliate of the Union for Reform Judaism. The ACC initiative is one of a number of partnerships between the organization and North American camps to raise money for camp tuition and for the ACC's social justice initiatives.

On March 1, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto will hold a ping-pong tournament called SMASH to help send Jewish kids from low-income families to Jewish summer camp. The tournament will feature celebrity participants Aaron Douglas, Kiowa Gordon and Ivan Sergei, all actors; former NHLer Gary Leeman; talk-show host John Salley and recording artist Shawn Desman.

Campers enjoy a song session at Camp George in 2010.

Money raised at Singing for S'mores will go to Camp George's scholarship fund. A complete summer – seven weeks – at the Parry Sound camp runs just under $7,000 per camper.

There is no admission being charged for the concert. Instead, organizers are requesting that audience members "pay what you may." The first such event, held in May 2009, raised just over $4,000, enough to send a child to the camp for one half-summer session.

The program will feature cantors, cantorial soloists, the Leo Baeck Glee Club and two community choirs: Lachan, the Jewish Chamber Choir, and the Toronto Jewish Chorus.

Of the more than 500 campers at Camp George, one in five receives "some sort of assistance," camp director Jeff Rose told *The CJN*. He said the number of requests for subsidies has increased over the past few years. Funding is available through the camp's scholarship fund, as well as through federation's Top Bunk program, an incentive program for first-time campers at a Jewish camp.

Cantor Katie Oringel of Temple Sinai Congregation, an organizer of the concert, said that her experience with Jewish music at summer camp led her to the cantorate.

Becoming a faculty member at Camp George is "something I always dreamed of doing, and it brings me a lot of joy."

She noted that in addition to liturgical and Israeli music, the concert will feature Broadway tunes and pieces that refer to a theme of "What I learned from camp," including ideas like long-lasting friendships.

Cantor David Rosen, cantor of Beth Radom Congregation, who is also helping organize the event, added that this will be "one of the first times that all the Reform congregations are coming together to do something." As well, he noted, his own congregation, which is part of the project, is Conservative.

The proceeds of SMASH, the federation event, will go to UJA's camping subsidy program administered by Jewish Family & Child and JIAS Toronto. The program administers over $500,000 a year to help more than 1,000 children attend Jewish day and overnight camps who otherwise wouldn't be able to participate, said Steven Shulman, UJA's campaign director and counsel.

"There continues to be great need," he added.

SMASH organizers expect to have 40 teams of three people, each of which has been asked to raise a minimum of $3,000 from sponsors. As of last week, about 20 teams had signed up.

"In terms of building Jewish identity, summer camp is a particularly effective way to do it. You have a very positive association with [campers'] Jewish identity resulting from the camp experience," Shulman said.

Ping-pong, in addition to being "hot" at the moment, is an activity that many kids have played at summer camp, Shulman said.

The UJA event, chaired by Julie Albert and Jay Silber, will take place at Koolhaus on Queen's Quay E. in Toronto. The 7 p.m. tournament will be preceded by a cocktail reception. An information night is being held Jan. 31 at SPIN Toronto. For more information, contact Shimmy Wenner at federation, 416-631-5699, or go to ujasmash.com

OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Al Pastor	Dec 30/11	1555 Finch Avenue East
Elias Kleiner	Dec 30/11	24 Goodwill Avenue
Stuart Richman	Dec 30/11	345 Lakeshore Road W.
Yeslizaveta Zlotinskaya	Jan 2/12	3560 Bathurst Street
Sam Bloom	Jan 2/12	8 Spindlewood Drive
Harold Nashman	Dec 31/11	65 Skymark Drive
Gary Wasserman	Jan 4/12	85 Skymark Drive
Morris Axelrod	Jan 4/12	15 Barberry Place
Esther Malka Minz	Jan 7/12	4000 Yonge Street
Saul Cohen	Jan 7/12	265 Ridley Blvd.
Rose Chikofsky	Jan 7/12	265 Ridley Blvd.
Isadore Slabodkin	Jan 7/12	43 Ambrose Road
Sylvia Marks	Jan 7/12	650 Briarhill Avenue
Sadie Shapiro	Jan 8/12	205 Cummer Avenue

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Smuschowitz, David	Dec. 27/11	21 Steele Valley Rd
Silver, Melvin	Dec. 19/11	
Mauskopf, Shlomo	Dec. 30/11	92 Maple Sugar Lane
Hudy, May Joyce	Dec. 30/11	3303 Don Mills Rd
Kerr, Josef	Dec. 31/11	331 Brighton Ave
Argov, Ruth	Dec. 31/11	Private
Linton, Dr. Harold	Dec. 31/11	85 Skymark Dr
Mansoor, Albert	Dec. 31/11	341 Finch Ave. W
Vinokurov, Mikhail	Jan. 1/12	6040 Bathurst St
Roitenberg, Edward	Dec. 31/11	
Chaiken, Hyman	Jan. 4/12	39 Transwell Ave
Rusinek, Faiga	Jan. 5/12	7460 Bathurst St
Bien, Abraham	Jan. 4/12	333 Clark Ave. W
Backler Moss, Mary	Jan. 4/12	Private
Popescu, Silvia	Dec. 31/11	4455 Bathurst St

HEBREW BASIC BURIAL

Ethel Nochomovitz	Jan 2/12	5430 Yonge Street
Norman Binns	Jan 6/12	70 Ruddington Drive

In Loving Memory
ZOE ALEXANDRA NEUMANN SPRINGER ז"ל
January 10, 1985 to January 22, 2005

"FOREVER YOUNG"

It is with profound sadness that we mark the 7th anniversary of the loss of our beautiful and courageous Zoe. There are no words that can convey the depths of our longing for her.

This year we would have celebrated Zoe's 27th birthday. Instead we are left remembering her joyous short life with profound sadness and sorrow. Not a day goes by that Zoe is not in our thoughts and dreams and hearts – forever our shining star. Zoe remains deeply missed by her parents Judy and Steve, her sister Lindsay and husband Ari, her Grandma Rhoda and all of her special family and friends.

Zoe, we love and miss you more than words ....
Mom & Dad, Lindsay & Ari

The family of the late
Sheina Gillman ז"ל
wish to express their gratitude for the support they received during this difficult time.
Sara Pliamm, Luiba Grossman, David Gillman

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Watch this space each week for monument dealers & shiva caterers

B.C. paper publishes antisemitic editorial

Troubles of the world blamed on Zionism

Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf
Staff Reporter
Lauren Kramer
Pacific Correspondent

A leading Indo-Canadian newspaper last week published an antisemitic column that called Zionism a cancer.

In rambling screed published Jan. 7 in the Vancouver-based *South Asian Link*, Sawraj Singh, an Ellensburg, Wash.-based surgeon and chair of both the Washington State Network for Human Rights and of the Central Washington Coalition for Social Justice, wrote that the troubles of the world are directly attributable to the triple "cancers" of racism, capitalism and Zionism.

David Koschitzky

The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) blasted the article, calling it "replete with conspiracy theories" and "numerous offensive statements concerning Jews and Israel."

"We deplore this hateful column and call on *The Link* to immediately remove it from online, publish a retraction, and issue an apology," CIJA chair David Koschitzky said in a statement last week. "It does the Indo-Canadian community, which has been and remains such a valuable contributor to Canada, no credit for one of its key community newspapers to be spreading such disturbing lies."

Among other things, Singh's article calls the United States "the mother of the cancers of racism, capitalism, and Zionism."

"The Jews were and still are able to monopolize most of the academic and intellectually demanding positions. It is very interesting to compare the percentage of Jews amongst doctors, attorneys, university professors, and scientists in America to any European country, and even to Canada," Singh wrote.

"The truth is that the Jews are represented in far greater numbers in these professions than their population in America (the same is becoming true of the Indians now). The result of this situation is that America has taken an anti-Islamic, anti-Palestinian and anti-Arab stand, as compared to Europe or Canada."

His column also claims that the United States is responsible for cancers afflicting various Latin American leaders, including Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, as well as that American doctors are performing illegal medical experiments on America's Latino and black prison populations and that AIDS was first introduced as a pathogen by white European doctors into the population of the Belgian Congo.

Singh did not respond to messages left by *The CJN* before deadline.

Reached by phone in Vancouver last week, Paul Dhillon, editor-in-chief of *The Link*, defended printing the column.

"We don't support his opinion but he's a regular contributor to the paper," Dhillon said, adding that Singh has been a contributor for more than five years.

The Link has a readership of between 30,000 to 40,000 people and is available online and as a weekly paper, Dhillon said.

He said accusations that the article is antisemitic are unfounded.

"This column is not directed at Jews. Read it in context. He's giving it in terms of America's history, pointing out that Indians are in the same category. The point he's making is that the West's anti-Arab stance is brought on by the Jewish lobby," he said. "If it's a fact that there's a lot of Jews in intelligentsia and academia, it's a fact. He's saying the Indians are getting there now, too. He's not saying it's a bad thing. If Jews are worthy, they come up at the top."

When pressed about the column calling Zionism a "cancer," Dhillon said he didn't agree with the opinion, but admitted his columnist may have crossed a line.

"Sometimes an opinion writer gets carried away," he said.

Asked what his paper's stance is on the existence of Israel, Dhillon replied: "I believe it has a right to exist. That's the origins of the Jews. It's definitely a legitimate state. Our paper doesn't take any line to the contrary like that."

When asked about Singh's comment that Jews "monopolize" academia in order to foment anti-Arab sentiment, Dhillon said he also didn't agree with that statement or that Jews control the world or have infiltrated the ranks of academia for any nefarious reason.

"I don't agree with that, but I don't think [Singh is] implying Jews control the world, just that they possess great intelligence," he said.

Jewish organizations were still calling for the article's removal last week from *The Link*'s website, where it was still available as of *The CJN*'s deadline.

"Among many distasteful corruptions of history, this article uses historic antisemitic accusations – including the depiction of the Jewish people as power-hungry, and even a disease – to attack the world's only Jewish state and its supporters," Koschitzky said. "This is an alarming example of the convergence of anti-Zionism and antisemitism, starkly displayed as a leading editorial in a Canadian newspaper."

Avi Benlolo, CEO of the Toronto-based Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies, called it a blatant example of "pure antisemitic hatred" and one of the worst he's ever seen.

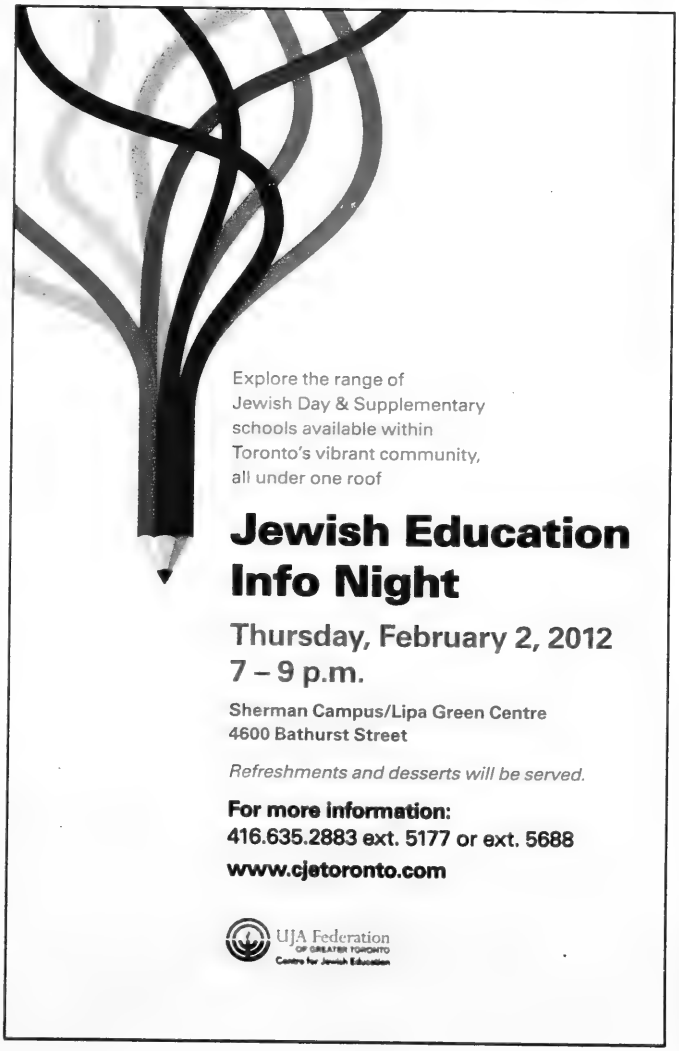
"I question the judgment and bias of the editors who posted it," he said. "This article should be immediately pulled from the website. Hate is not a Canadian value."

Corrections

The article "Chabad Ontario launches overnight camp" (Jan. 12) included incorrect information. The girls' session at Camp Gan Israel will be in July, and the boys' session will be in August. *The CJN* regrets the error.

* * *

The Jan. 12 story "Debate revived over faith-based school funding" included an incorrect photo. Pictured is Toronto endocrinologist Dr. Paul Walfish, not Ontario Multifaith Coalition for Equal Funding of Faith Based Schools chair Ira Walfish. *The CJN* regrets the error.



Antisemitic incident reported in high school

Myron Love
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Five Grade 12 students at Murdoch MacKay Collegiate in east Winnipeg have been suspended indefinitely after one of them posted a racist and antisemitic photo on his Facebook page.

The photo reportedly shows the students posing behind a dirty SUV with swastikas and antisemitic and racist statements scrawled in the dust on the back window. The school is in the background.

It's the second time in two months that an antisemitic incident has taken place at a Winnipeg high school. In the earlier case, two high school students in southwest Winnipeg are facing assault and hate charges as a result of threatening a Jewish girl at the school with a lighter and singeing her hair.

While there is no specific victim in the second case – and media interviews with other Murdoch MacKay students who know the teens in the photo said the offenders aren't racist and the photo was just a prank – the school's administration and the local superintendent are taking the incident seriously.

"All the students involved are being dealt with," said Dennis Pottage, superintendent of the River East Transcona School Division, which counts Murdoch MacKay Collegiate among its schools.

The students' suspensions are of an indefinite length, depending on the results of interviews with them. "Students showing remorse and contrition will be back at school sooner than those who don't," Pottage said last week. "If it turns out to be one specific student's idea, he will be out longer."

Pottage expressed embarrassment that such an incident occurred in his district. "Something like this shouldn't be occurring in River East Transcona division," he said. "The students may not have understood the severity of their actions, but what they did is completely inappropriate. The key thing is that we want them to learn from this."

Shelley Faintuch, the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg's community affairs director, has offered to help the school and school division in developing anti-racist education programs. "I am hoping that this is more a case of misguided students using inappropriate symbolism and terminology rather than students with real antisemitic and racist views."

There are few, if any, Jewish residents in the area around Murdoch MacKay or among its student body.

Exclusive to cjnews.com

Liberal MP Irwin Cotler discusses 26-year-old Egyptian blogger Maikel Nabil, one of the first political prisoners of the post-Mubarak era, who continues to languish in an Egyptian military hospital for exercising his fundamental rights to freedom of expression and association both under Egyptian law and international law.

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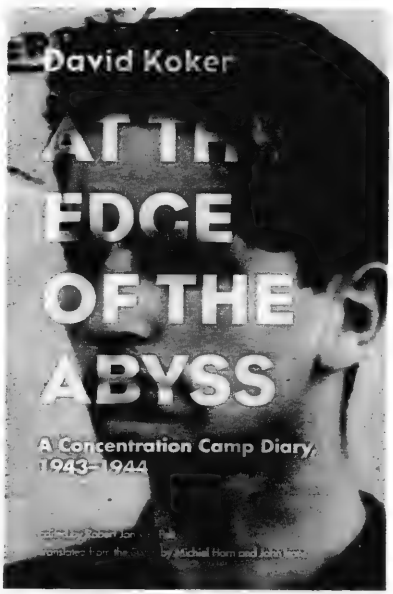

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Photo contest winner lands free trip to Israel

Photo submitted by OCAD university student Ronnie Friedman came in first place

1,900 people respond to challenge

Sheri Shefa
Staff Reporter

At the crack of dawn during a sunrise hike in Eilat, a young man perches himself on a jagged mountain face, overlooking the Red Sea and the blue sky.

His girlfriend, 19-year-old Ronnie Friedman, notices him indulging in a peaceful moment.

With an eye and a passion for photography, she calls out to him, "Pose! Pose for me!"

Little did she know that the photo she took would translate into a free, round-trip ticket to Israel.

Last September, Taglit-Birthright Israel held a photography contest open to all North American Birthright alumni.

Jacob Dallal, Birthright's associate director of communications and marketing who is based in New York, challenged Birthrighters to submit images that capture the essence of Israel and the Birthright experience.

Dallal said about 1,900 people responded.

"We got photos of landscapes and people and everything under the sun."

After narrowing thousands of submissions down to 100, he commissioned a professional photographer who used a better-trained eye to select the best 18.

From there, the top 18 photos were put to a Facebook vote. The winner was chosen based on who could garner the most Facebook "likes."

It was a tight race between the first- and second-place photos, but by the end of the contest, Friedman, a second-year advertising student at OCAD University, edged out her competition by less than 60 votes.

"Photography has been a part of my life since I can remember," Friedman said.

"I own three cameras, and I always have a camera on me at all times. It's mainly a hobby, but I try to make it more than that. That's why I'm in advertising," she said, adding that she'd love to be able to incorporate photography into her career.

Friedman, who travelled to Israel on Birthright in May with her boyfriend, Robbie Frank, said winning this contest – and a round-trip ticket to Israel with El Al – was a very validating experience for her.

"I'm definitely looking for more contests to enter," she said.

Dallal said he hopes to organize a photo exhibit of the best images from the contest at the Knesset in Jerusalem next spring.

"These aren't professional photographers, but sometimes when you see Israel through the eyes of those who are experiencing it, it actually makes for some very beautiful material," Dallal said.

Check out the top 18 photos at http://tinyurl.com/7c4ujyr or visit the Heebonics blog at www.heebonics.ca, where they've been posted.

The Netivot HaTorah Family
wishes to extend our heartfelt
condolences on the passing of

Mr. Harold Vogel ז"ל

Beloved father of Mrs. Bonny Silver
and Mrs. Judy Patlick, cherished
brother to Adele Faust, devoted
grandfather of Jeffery and Daniella
Silver, Sherry Silver, Jeremy Silver
and Samuel Patlick

His legacy lives on and will be remembered always.

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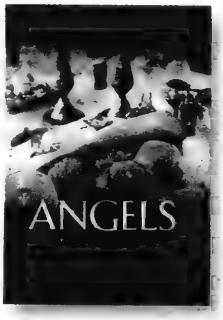
All about Shabbat at home

Sybil Kaplan
Special to The CJN

Yvette Miller is an Orthodox woman in Chicago who became observant over the years and made Shabbat observance a serious and significant part of her life. She is married with four children, ages two to nine, teaches Sunday school and contributes to Jewish websites.

Her book, *Angels at the Table* is really a basic primer for the person who has no knowledge about Shabbat and how to observe it, or for someone who wants a reference work to any aspect of the 25 hours of Shabbat observance.



The 15 chapters of useful advice provide step by step instructions and include an overview of Shabbat, the rules and laws, Shabbat evening, Shabbat dinner table blessings, Shabbat dinner and after, Shabbat early morning, Shabbat morning services, Shabbat lunch, Shabbat afternoon, Saturday evening, Torah questions for the Shabbat table, songs for Shabbat, activities on Shabbat and 69 traditional recipes.

While the recipes are really good, the style in which they are presented leaves something to be desired. Recipes go from one page to another, and instructions are not numbered and are sometimes simplistic (e.g., zest the lemon – grate the lemon's shiny yellow surface). She neglects to tell readers to preheat the oven, and sometimes when the recipe is cooked on the stovetop burner, she forgets to mention what kind of pan to use.

The book concludes with the blessings after a meal and an appendix.

She includes the tiniest details. For example, in the "Shabbat early morning" chapter, she discusses awakening prayers, the mindset, breakfast, dressing (including kippah and tzitzit), women's hats, modesty, makeup and hair on Shabbat, and the unchanging aspects of Jewish dress and behaviour.

Her style is chatty and personal without being preachy, and that's one aspect of the book that makes it enjoyable, even if you know the rules, laws and customs. There is history, there are anecdotes, and the reader really comes to know Miller.

This would be a great gift for someone embarking on conversion or considering becoming observant, someone whose knowledge of Shabbat is rudimentary, or a newly married couple or a family with young children exploring how they want to relate to Shabbat observance.

Here are some Shabbat recipes from the book.

EASIEST ROAST CHICKEN

1 whole raw chicken
2 tbsp. olive oil
large dash salt
large dash pepper
large dash garlic powder
1-2 sliced onions
4-5 sliced garlic cloves (optional)
1/4 cup fresh herbs – sage, rosemary, tarragon (optional)

Optional rub:
1 lemon zest and juice
2 tbsp. virgin olive oil
2 tbsp. paprika
1 tsp. cumin
large dash salt
large dash pepper

Preheat oven to 400. Place chicken in a roasting pan, feet side down. Sprinkle with oil, then salt, pepper and garlic powder. Scatter onion slices around the chicken, and place a few onion slices in cavity and under skin. (As an option, place garlic and/or herbs under skin too.)

Lightly cover chicken with foil, leaving an opening between the foil and pan. Place in oven and bake at 400 for 1-2 hours until skin is crisp and golden brown and juices run clear when you prick the chicken above the thigh.

To make rub, grate the shiny skin of the lemon and combine with juice, oil, paprika, cumin, salt and pepper. Spread on chicken skin before roasting. Serves 6.

SARA'S AMAZING NO-MIX NOODLE KUGEL

6 3/4 cups water
4 tbsp. oil
4 tbsp. brown sugar
1/2 cup white sugar
1/2 cup applesauce
1 tsp. salt
dash of pepper
3 eggs
24 oz. fine egg noodles

Preheat oven to 350. Combine water, oil, brown sugar, white sugar, applesauce, salt and pepper in a pan and bring to a boil.

Add eggs and noodles, mix and turn off heat. Allow to stand for 10 minutes. Do not drain water.

Pour mixture into a greased deep 9- by 13-in. baking dish. Bake at 350 for 1 hour. Makes 16 servings.

SWEET CARROT SALAD

5 peeled and grated carrots
1/4 cup raisins
1/4 cup orange juice

Combine carrots, raisins and orange juice in a bowl. Mix well. Makes 4-6 servings.

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Iran confirms receipt of U.S. blockade warning

Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

Iran confirmed on Sunday that it received a message from the United States regarding the Strait of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf, but it did not reveal the contents of the message, news agencies reported Sunday.

Iranian generals have warned that they could close the Strait of Hormuz, a vital international oil route in the Persian Gulf – thus blocking a considerable share of global oil exports – if oil sanctions were imposed.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Ramin Mehmanparast was quoted as saying Tehran had not yet decided if it would reply to the letter, the contents of which he did not detail.

"America's message over the Strait of Hormuz reached us through three channels. It was given to our UN representative, the Swiss ambassador conveyed it to the Foreign Ministry, and also Iraqi President Jalal Talabani gave the message to Iran," Mehmanparast said, according to Iran's ISNA news agency.

"If we deem it is necessary to give a response to America's message, then we will reply to it. The issue is being reviewed by Iran and it will be done in an appropriate way."

Tehran and Washington have had no direct diplomatic relations since 1979 and the Swiss Embassy represents U.S. interests in Iran.

Tehran said on Saturday it had sent a letter to Washington with evidence that U.S. intelligence services were involved in the assassination of Iranian nuclear scientist Mostafa Ahmadi-Roshan last week.

Washington has said it would not tolerate any closure of the strait, the export route for one-third of all seaborne traded oil. U.S. Defence Secretary Leon Panetta has said such a move would require a response.

Tensions between the two countries have increased in recent weeks. U.S. President Barack Obama signed a bill on New Year's Eve that, if fully implemented, would make it impossible for most countries to pay for Iranian oil.

In addition to threats of closing Hormuz, Iran has started enriching uranium at an underground bunker and sentencing an Iranian-American citizen to death on spying charges.

Negotiations between the West and Iran over Tehran's nuclear program stalled a year ago.

Meanwhile, a number of media outlets are reporting this week that Iran has agreed to reopen discussions with the International Atomic Energy Agency later this month about its nuclear program, which it maintains is purely civilian in nature.

In related news, a *Sunday Times* report said Monday that Mossad agents were behind last week's assassination of Roshan.

According to the report, the assassination was similar to that seen in "espionage films" – planned over a period of many months, and including extensive surveillance and intelligence gathering. The *Sunday Times* quoted an unnamed Israeli source who claimed the killing was a precursor to a military strike that would make rebuilding nuclear facilities more difficult for Iran, should they be bombed.

Mossad agents reportedly behind assassination of nuclear scientist

The report further claimed that small groups of Israeli Mossad agents had carefully observed key areas in Tehran deemed relevant to Roshan's assassination.

"There is zero tolerance for mistakes. By nature, every failure not only risks the neck of the agents but also risks turning into an international scandal," the Israeli source said.

According to the *Sunday Times*, Roshan, 32, was monitored from a makeshift control room in a safe house nearby as he was preparing to leave for work. Israeli agents were also watching the entrance to Iranian intelligence headquarters in the city centre, when they noticed a number of cars and people running, followed by police rushing into the nearby streets. Another agent monitoring radio traffic between the Tehran police and security forces confirmed unusual activity, the paper said.

The report states that as Roshan's bodyguard was driving him to Natanz uranium enrichment site, where he served as director, a masked person on a motorbike weaved through traffic and planted a bomb on the car shaped to deliver its full force at the passenger.

The *Sunday Times* report stated that hundreds of regime supporters swore revenge at Roshan's funeral on Friday. "Two targets were always in Mustafa's mind," Reza Najafi, a friend, said. "To fight Israel and to become a *shaheed* [martyr]. He achieved both his targets."

The United States ruled out any connection to the assassination. "We were not involved in any way with regard to the assassination that took place there," Panetta said, although he did hint that he had "some idea" of who was.

The report also said the British Foreign Office stated that it had "no involvement whatsoever" in the attack.

With files from JTA

Haredim protest arrest of leaders

Oz Rosenberg
Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

Hundreds of haredi protesters tried to block roads around Jerusalem's Kikar Hashabbat (Sabbath Square) in the Mea She'arim neighbourhood Sunday, after six prominent members of the community were arrested earlier in the day on suspicion of financial-related crimes. Three demonstrators have been arrested so far.

Eda Haredit organization leader Rabbi Yitzhak Tuvia Weiss, said the arrest of the six is as if he himself was arrested. His followers understood his statement as a call to use all possible means to protest the arrests.

Approximately 200 protesters gathered in the area, and a large number of police were called to the scene to prevent serious clashes. A protest against the arrests was also held in Beit Shemesh outside Jerusalem.

Israel Police and the tax authorities claim the arrests were made after a long investigation, during which evidence was gathered tying the suspects to felonies including theft of donations, tax evasion, money laundering and more.

Haredim protest in Beit Shemesh outside of Jerusalem Sunday, after the arrest earlier in the day of six members of their community suspected of carrying out tax and other financial offences.
[Flash 90 photo]

Hackers hit Israeli sites

JTA

JERUSALEM — Computer hackers disabled the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange and El Al websites.

The attacks on Monday morning came after hackers over the last two weeks have released online the credit card details of thousands of Israelis and a day after Hamas called on hackers to attack Israeli sites.

The Tel Aviv Stock Exchange's website recovered some operations by mid-Monday morning. Trading wasn't affected. The bourse's website and trading system are not connected. El Al's website was working by the afternoon.

A group of pro-Palestinian hackers calling themselves "Nightmare" had threatened Sunday to bring down the two websites, according to Ynet.

Also Monday, a Jewish pro-Israel hacker going by the moniker Hannibal published Facebook account information allowing access to the accounts of 20,000 Arab Facebook users. He also claims to have information to allow access to 10 million Iranian and Saudi bank accounts.

"The penetration into Israeli websites opens a new front for electronic resistance and war against the Israeli occupation," Hamas spokesperson Sami Abu Zuhri said Sunday.

Koschitzkys honoured at Leket Israel benefit

Viva Sarah Press
CJN Israel Bureau

TEL AVIV — Torontonians Henry and Julia Koschitzky were honoured earlier this month at the second annual gala dinner held by Leket Israel – The National Food Bank.

The benefit dinner raised funds for Leket's Gleaning the Land project, which sends thousands of volunteers into fields to gather produce and distribute it to those in need.

"The messages of this dinner were very specific – the power of volunteerism, the masses of people we need to succeed in the Gleaning Project and the power of the individual," Joseph Gitler, the founder of Leket Israel, told *The CJN*."

It was a Saturday night affair that drew nearly 700 people to the outskirts of Kfar Saba. Besides the Koschitzkys, A-list attendees included chairman of Iscar Metalworking, Eitan Wertheimer; Jewish Agency head Natan Sharansky; MK Zeev Bielski; consul general of Israel in Toronto, Amir Gissin.

Henry and Julia Koschitzky

"It is so painful to imagine in this day and age when Israel is an economic success that there is more poverty today than there was when Israel was a poor country," Gitler said.

"Leket didn't start because of poverty in the classic communities in Israel [Russian immigrants, Ethiopian immigrants, Bedouin, haredi]. It started because of the working poor – that's infuriating – working parents trying to take care of their families and cannot."

The new poor are the growing middle class, Gidi Kroch, CEO of Leket Israel, told guests at the event. "A family where two people are working but do not earn enough to put food on the table," he said.

Gitler, a New Yorker who made aliyah in 2000, started Leket Israel nine years ago. He assumed it wouldn't last for more than three months. He couldn't stand the amount of food being wasted and decided to deliver excess food from caterers to social service organizations in Raanana, Herzliya and Kfar Saba to the needy.

Within six months, Leket Israel purchased its first refrigerated delivery truck and opened a warehouse.

Toronto philanthropists Henry and Julia Koschitzky were among the first to help Leket Israel get off the ground.

"The Koschitzkys have been involved in Leket since the beginning. They were generous enough to help us buy our first vehicle through UJA Federation of Greater Toronto," Gitler told *The CJN*.

"They financially support us, which is very important, but they also counsel us in the organization. We want someone with their experience and you can't buy help like that. The Koschitzkys were very fitting honorees [of the gala dinner]."

Today, Leket Israel is a large operation. Thousands of volunteers and staff collect excess food slated for disposal, from event halls, corporate cafeterias, farmers, bakeries, etc., and redirect it to needy people at soup kitchens, daycare and seniors centres, homeless shelters and other organizations that serve those in need.

In 2011, Leket Israel rescued 9,000 tons of fresh fruit and vegetables. That equates to 700,000 hot meals, 90,000 loaves of bread and 13 million pounds of produce and perishable goods. Leket Israel provided food for 60,000 Israelis last year.

The organization runs nine projects, among them Gleaning the Land, Nighttime Meal Rescue and Sandwiches for Children. The Gleaning project was inspired by a Bible verse that states: When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be left for the alien, the orphan, and the widow, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all your undertakings. (Deuteronomy 24:19)

Israeli statistics show that a quarter of Israel's 7.7 million citizens – 1.9 million people – are living in poverty. Among them are some 850,000 children.

Unfortunately, said Gitler, there are thousands of organizations in Israel today providing food for the needy. However, Leket's approach is unique because it focuses on food rescue.

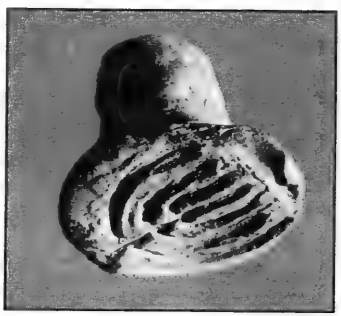
"I have mixed emotions about Leket's success," Gitler said. "All this wonderful food that we've been able to redistribute shows that Israel is a successful country and that there is this food. On the other hand, that there is so much demand disturbs all of us. I dream that there will be no one to give the food to."

1,500-year-old kosher bread stamp found near Acre

© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — A 1,500-year-old seal with the image of the seven-branched Temple menorah has been discovered near the city of Acre.

The ceramic stamp, which dates from the Byzantine period in the sixth century CE, was found during ongoing Israel Antiquities Authority excavations at Horbat Uza, east of Acre, which are being undertaken before the construction of the Acre-Carmiel railroad track.



It is thought the stamp was used to mark baked goods, and is known as a "bread stamp."

"A number of stamps bearing an image of a menorah are known from different collections. The Temple menorah, being a Jewish symbol par excellence, indicates the stamps belonged to Jews, unlike Christian bread stamps with the cross pattern, which were much more common in the Byzantine period," said Gilad Jaffe and Danny Syon, the directors of the excavation, on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority.

According to the excavation directors, this was the first time that a stamp of this kind has been found in a controlled archeological excavation, meaning that it is possible to determine where it comes from and when it was made.

"The stamp is important because it proves that a Jewish community existed in the settlement of Uza in the Christian-Byzantine period. The presence of a Jewish settlement so close to Acre – a region that was definitely Christian at this time - constitutes an innovation in archeological research," Syon said.

"Due to the geographical proximity of Horbat Uza to Acre, we can speculate that the settlement supplied kosher baked goods to the Jews of Acre in the Byzantine period," Jaffe and Syon added.

Horbat Uza is a small rural settlement where other archeological finds, a Shabbat lamp and jars with menorah patterns painted on them, have alluded to it having been a Jewish settlement.

The stamp bears the image of a seven-branched menorah, and the handle of the stamp is engraved with Greek letters. According to Leah Di Segni, of the Institute of Archaeology of Hebrew University of Jerusalem, this is probably the name Launtius, which was commonly used by Jews of the period and has appeared on other Jewish bread stamps.

"This is probably the name of the baker from Horbat Uza," Jaffe and Syon said.

Israelis safe after cruise ship grounded

© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

Israel's Foreign Ministry revealed Friday night that seven Israelis were on board an Italian cruise ship that ran aground and keeled over near the coast of Tuscany Sunday.

According to the ministry, the three couples and one young girl were unharmed by the accident. The ministry was unaware of any other Israeli nationals on board.

Reports indicated that six people had died and 16 were still unaccounted for Monday morning. Around 70 people were injured, at least two seriously.

Authorities opened a criminal investigation for possible manslaughter charges against the ship's commander, Francesco Schettino, who was detained by police, Italian news agencies reported.

The vessel's operator, Costa Crociere, a unit of Carnival Corporation & Plc, the world's largest cruise operator, said it had been sailing on its regular course when it struck a submerged rock. In a television interview, the ship's commander said the rock was not marked on any maritime charts of the area.

However, it remained unclear how the 290-metre-long ship had been able to run aground in calm waters so close to the shore.

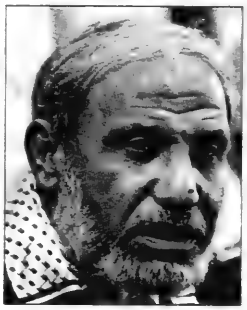
"We'll be able to say at the end of the investigation. It would be premature to speculate on this," said coastguard spokesman Filippo Marini.

Growing Islamism will boost Hamas: official

© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUALEM — The coming rise of Islamism in the Arab world will strengthen support for the Palestinian Islamist movement Hamas, which will not give up its armed confrontation with Israel, senior Hamas official Mahmoud Al-Zahar said on Jan. 9.

If Western-backed Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas bets on peace talks with Israel rather than reconciling his Fatah movement with Hamas, he will lose out, Zahar said in an interview with Reuters in his Gaza office.



Mahmoud Al-Zahar

Fatah and Hamas have been bitter enemies since 2007 when the Islamists expelled Fatah and seized control of the Gaza Strip, which has been under Israeli blockade ever since. "The changing factors around us are in our favour… they are not in favour either of Fatah's project or those with whom it co-operates, including the Israeli enemy," he said, watched by his bodyguards.

"It all depends on Fatah's policy now," Zahar said. "If Fatah wants the [unity] agreement to be accomplished, we will be ready. If they do not want, then we are sitting here and the future is ours."

Zahar said Hamas was not prepared to relinquish the fight against Israel under any circumstances. He denied that Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal, based in Damascus, had endorsed Abbas's concept of non-violent "popular resistance" against Israel.

"Popular resistance includes both the Fatah agenda, which speaks of protests only, and the Hamas position, which advocates gathering all means of military armament for the sake of self-defence," Zahar said.

He foresaw a rising tide of Islamism in the Arab world that would strengthen the Palestinian cause.

"What is coming in Egypt, in Tunisia, in Libya and currently in Sudan is supportive of the Palestinian cause, not as in the past a strategic supporter of the Israeli occupation," he said.

"What is coming is a thousand times better than in the past. Therefore we have to invest in these achievements by the Arab street for the sake of achieving the fundamental goals of the Palestinian people, the liberation of land and the return of [refugees]," Zahar added.

Since its 1979 peace treaty, Egypt, along with Jordan, has been Israel's most reliable Arab partner in the Middle East. But the overthrow last February of Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak in the uprising inspired by popular revolution in Tunisia has created uncertainty over Egypt's future attitude toward Israel.

Zahar is a leading Hamas figure, seen by Fatah as a hardliner, who lost two sons in the fight against Israel. He is a senior negotiator in the reconciliation process with Fatah, which has been faltering almost since it was signed.

Zahar said Egypt, now ending a lengthy election process that will lead to a new constitution, is clearly destined to be ruled by "a sweeping Islamist party and a nationalist party" that will back the Palestinian cause.

The reconciliation agreement with Fatah, signed last May and sealed personally by Abbas and Meshaal last month in Cairo, may suffer if Abbas pursues peace talks with Israel, he warned.

Senior officials of the two sides have held talks in Amman, Jordan, recently after more than a year in suspension.

"Our doubts are really great, especially after these meetings in Amman," Zahar said. Hamas opposes acceptance of Israel and is ostracized by the West as a terrorist group that refuses to renounce violence. Israel has warned that striking a unity pact with Hamas would eliminate Abbas and Fatah as a potential partner for peace.

"Imagine that the Israeli enemy attacked us today or tomorrow… If we were attacked, we would respond by all possible means," Zahar said.

If Israel launched a military offensive into Gaza, Zahar said he bet Arab reaction would be stronger than in 2009 when 1,400 Palestinians were killed in Israel's three-week onslaught to stop rocket firing from Gaza into its territories. Thirteen Israelis were killed in that conflict.

"[Israel] could use the foggy political situation as the Arab nation still organizes itself ... to launch a new aggression against Gaza Strip," he said.

"They cannot accept that Gaza remains a painful and dangerous thorn in the future of the Israeli entity."

In related news, an adviser to Hamas' prime minister said the leader will visit Iran, Qatar and other Muslim countries at the end of the month.

Yusef Rizka says the militant group's Ismail Haniyeh will embark on his second international trip outside the Gaza Strip. He returned this week from a tour of Egypt, Sudan, Turkey and Tunisia.

It was the first time Haniyeh had left Gaza since Hamas seized control of the territory from the rival Fatah movement in 2007.

Hamas said the visits indicate the movement's increased international recognition and the growing influence of Islamic groups in the region.

The internationally recognized Palestinian Authority, which is dominated by Fatah, has been concerned by the warm welcome Haniyeh has received. It says his visits should be co-ordinated through Palestinian embassies.

Apple buys Israeli firm

Apple bought its first Israel-based company, Anobit Ltd., a flash storage solutions provider, for about $390 million. Apple had announced in December that it would open a development centre in Israel focusing on semiconductors, reportedly the first outside of its California headquarters.

Obama, Netanyahu speak

U.S. President Barack Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu discussed Iran and Middle East peace in a phone conversation last week. "They reviewed the recent meetings between Israeli and Palestinian negotiators in Amman and the president reaffirmed his commitment to the goal of a comprehensive and lasting peace in the region," the White House said in a statement. "The two leaders also discussed recent Iran-related developments, including the international community's efforts to hold Iran accountable for its failures to meet its international obligations. The president reiterated his unshakable commitment to Israel's security, and the president and the prime minister promised to stay in touch in the coming weeks on these and other issues of mutual concern," the statement said.

Domingo honoured

Spanish tenor Placido Domingo has been named a recipient of Israel's 2012 Wolf Prize. The award, valued at $100,000, was announced Jan. 11 in Jerusalem by Minister of Education and Wolf Foundation Council chair Gideon Sa'ar. It will be presented in May by President Shimon Peres in a special Knesset session. Domingo, 70, will share the Wolf Prize for the arts with English conductor Simon Rattle of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. It's the first time the prestigious prize has been awarded to a vocalist.

–files from JTA

Claims Conference ועידת התביעות
The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany

PAYMENTS AVAILABLE TO ADDITIONAL HOLOCAUST VICTIMS FOLLOWING NEGOTIATIONS

Following negotiations with the German government, the Claims Conference has obtained changes to eligibility for the Article 2 Fund and the Hardship Fund, enabling certain additional Holocaust survivors to receive payments. All changes are effective January 1, 2012.

Article 2 Fund

Jewish Holocaust survivors may be eligible for a payment from the Article 2 Fund who do not already receive a pension from a German source (Article 2 Fund, CEEF, German Federal Indemnification Law – BEG – Bundesentschaedigungsgesetz, PRVG, Austrian OFG – Opferfürsorgegesetz, Israeli Ministry of Finance under the Nazi Persecution Disabled Persons law 5717-1957) and:

(i) were incarcerated in a ghetto as defined by the German Government for at least 12 months; or
(ii) lived in hiding for at least 12 months, under inhumane conditions without access to the outside world in Nazi-occupied territory and Nazi satellite states (Nazi instigation); or
(iii) lived under false identity for at least 12 months in Nazi-occupied territory and Nazi satellite states (Nazi instigation).

Holocaust survivors who are age 75 or over and who were incarcerated in a ghetto as defined by the German Government for at least three months (but for less than 12 months) **and who do not already receive a pension from a German source** (as listed above), may be eligible for a pension of €240 per month.

To be eligible, applicants must also meet the other criteria of the Article 2 Fund. Full details are at www.claimscon.org. Payments for approved Article 2 applications under these new criteria will be retroactive to the date that applications are received at the Claims Conference office, but no earlier than January 1, 2012.

Hardship Fund

Applicants may be eligible for a one-time payment of €2,556 from the Hardship Fund if they fled between June 22, 1941 and January 27, 1944 from areas of the Soviet Union that were up to 100 kilometers from the most easterly advance of the German army (Wehrmacht) but were not later occupied by the Nazis. Those eligible will include Jews who fled from Moscow and Stalingrad. Eligible victims will also include those who fled from Leningrad after June 22, 1941 but before the siege of that city commenced in September 1941.

To be eligible for the one-time payment from the Hardship Fund, applicants may not have received any previous compensation from a German source or receive a pension (as listed above under Article 2).

Hardship Fund payments may be made to eligible applicants who were citizens of certain Western European countries at the time of Nazi persecution and also at the time of that country's Global Agreement with Germany. "Western Persecutees" who think they may be eligible and have not already applied to the Hardship Fund should file an application. Western Persecutees are only eligible to receive a payment from the Hardship Fund if they have **not** received a previous payment from a German source, including from a Global Agreement.

Full details are at www.claimscon.org.

For information contact:

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Online coupon company hooks up with Internet radio

Pam Chiotti
Special to The CJN

How many mayors do you know of who have a radio station named after them? None, you say?

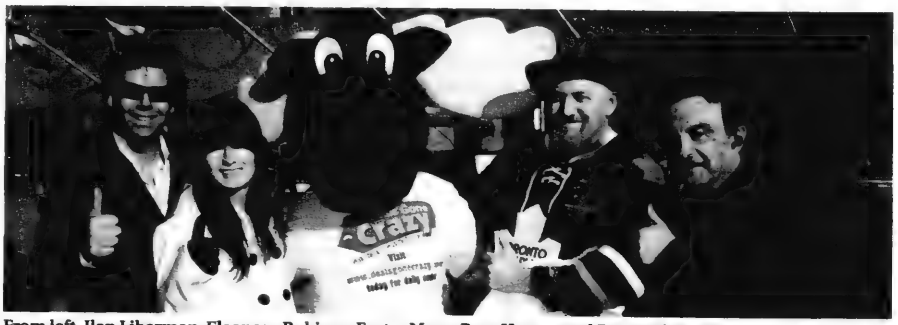
Ever hear of Mississauga, Ont., Mayor Hazel McCallion? She, along with a few thousand others, is all ears when it comes to Haze FM, the Internet radio station named in her honour.

It's a station that not only draws listeners from Mississauga – it also has listeners from around the globe. Yet, Haze FM is just one of thousands of Internet radio stations in North America that are tearing listeners away from conventional AM and FM radio and turning them into Internet radio junkies who are thrilled with radio that's mostly commercial free – for now anyway.

This dearth of commercials is exactly what interested a fledgling Jewish online coupon company, Deals Gone Crazy. Toronto residents Eleonora Rubinov and Ilan Liberman are the founders of www.dealsgonecrazy.com, a company that e-mails information about daily bargains to its subscribers. The company launched its site in November and first followed the traditional marketing route, using online pop-ups, e-mail blasts, hand-delivered flyers and word-of-mouth to spread the word. They even had a booth at Dr. Flea's flea market in Toronto, where they kibitzed with customers. Business trickled in, but it wasn't enough to stay afloat. The pair conceded that if ever they were going to grow, they'd need to ramp up their marketing campaign.

Aware of heavy competition, they looked at avenues that would set their company apart. "We're a startup" said Rubinov, "and the concept of advertising on Internet radio is also just beginning to make its mark – the same as us. We felt empathetic toward the medium. We know we can't grow on our own. Everyone has to help each other out and that's what we did."

They began a radio ad campaign on four Internet radio stations: www.d-moos.com (a station that broadcasts out of the McGibbon Hotel in Georgetown, Ont.), www.rtds.ca (Radio That Doesn't Suck, based in Toronto), www.swisssh.ca (based in Orillia, Ont.) and www.thehazefm.ca. The campaign comprises 30- and 60-second commercials, with some newscast and program sponsorship sprinkled in.



From left, Ilan Liberman, Eleonora Rubinov, Foster Moos, Russ Horton and Don Andrews at a recent gathering in support of Internet radio at Toronto's Nathan Phillips Square *[Pam Chiotti photo]*

According to Statistics Canada, more than 80 per cent of the population used the Internet in 2010, and nearly 37 per cent of Canadians over 16 years of age listened to radio online. That works out to about 10 million people. Many listen to conventional radio that also streams online, but thousands of other listeners, are tuning in to stations that broadcast only on the Internet, where an eclectic mix of music, news and talk runs 24/7. While advertising on Internet radio is still in its infancy, infants grow up.

"We have 15,000-plus hours tuned each month," says Rob Reid, owner of Swisssh Radio. His listeners tune in from all over Europe and from as far away as Brazil, Vietnam, Australia and the United States. His station is also a favourite with Orillia residents.

"Commercial-free radio is what drew us to Internet radio," said Rubinov. "We thought that if someone heard a dozen or so songs in a row and then one commercial, our company would really stand out. And since we're an online company, we want to support Internet radio."

Clearly, as time progresses, more and more advertisers will be looking to "air" their radio commercials online, where cost is minimal and airplay is maximized. Rates for Internet radio are pennies on the dollar compared to terrestrial radio and print ads. And since Deals Gone Crazy is in the deals business, they knew where to look for a bargain.

With a mind to attract Jewish businesses in Toronto, and their feeling that the need was there, the Deals Gone Crazy executives approached merchants in Toronto's Jewish community.

"We keep kosher here at home," said Rubinov, "and I'd like to find some kosher establishments so I can go to more restaurants."

Right now, mostly hairdressers, spas, limousine and fitness-training services are Deals Gone Crazy's dominant advertisers, but with the company's new focus on restaurants, more food deals – kosher and non-kosher – are expected to appear in 2012. Thus, the new slogan: "Deals Gone Crazy: Get What You Dish For."

"Get What You Dish For" refers to a new approach that differentiates Deals Gone Crazy from other online coupon companies. "If somebody wants a particular deal, and we're hoping it's a restaurant, we try to secure it. If we do, that customer gets a free voucher," Liberman said.

But, most importantly, he continued, is their promise to keep customers coming back to the merchant once they've used their first voucher.

"Our marketing campaign is all about customer retention. It works… We put merchants first," said Liberman. "That's one of our trademarks."

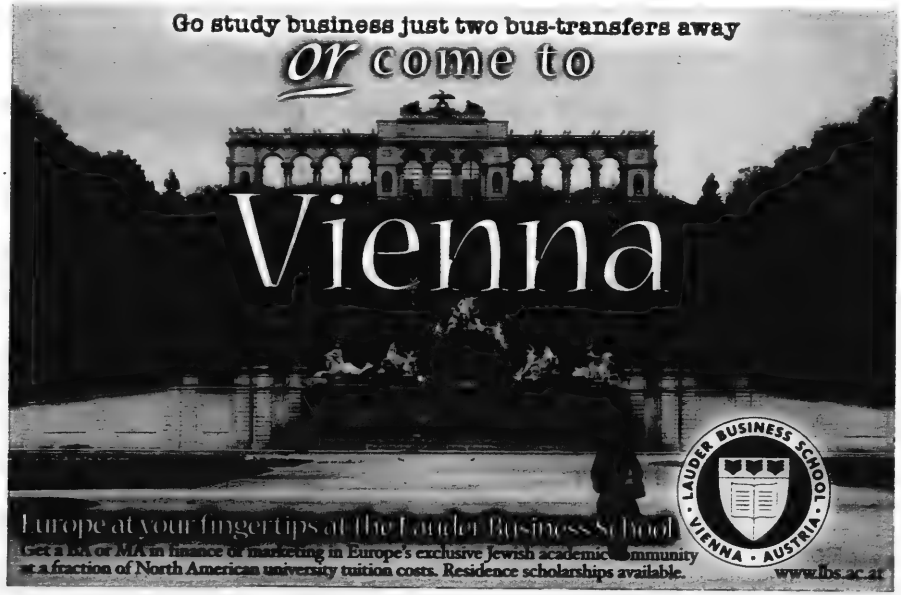
The decision to invest in Internet radio is paying off. Liberman said the deals are coming in, and customers are appreciating saving money. "We've had at least 2,000 hits since we started advertising on Internet radio in November, and we've had people check out our site from as far away as Greece and Rome. People like the deals and are coming up with great suggestions." The customer base blossomed from a mere handful of subscribers to more than 700 hits after just four days of advertising on Internet radio.

Russ Horton, the man behind D-Moos Radio, said he's ecstatic about having Deals Gone Crazy on board. "They're the first company to throw their full support behind Internet radio," he said.

Liberman has become a big fan of Internet radio. "I've been hearing music I know and like, and I'm also hearing a lot of music and really creative programming that I haven't heard before. I'm excited to be part of this."

He admitted he was skeptical at first, wondering who exactly listens to Internet radio. But as he heard from Don Andrews, who has a late-night show on www.swisssh.ca, Internet radio listeners are fiercely loyal. Andrews, an Internet radio pioneer who is well-known from his days on conventional Toronto radio, said there are likely thousands of Internet stations across North America.

"I told a story on the air about a Vancouver woman who couldn't afford a plane ticket to Toronto to see her parents. One of my listeners phoned up. He works for an airline, and arranged for her to get a free flight. It's a nice thing to happen over the holidays. That's what Internet radio listeners are like," he said,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EYE ON ARTS

By BILL GLADSTONE

ISRAELI GUITARIST ORI DAKARI AND HIS QUARTET MAKE THEIR TORONTO DEBUT

Ori Dakari's *Entrances*

Israeli guitarist **Ori Dakari**'s debut CD *Entrances* has demonstrated that he has a compelling sound all his own. His compositions are rooted in contemporary jazz sounds, as well as in Israeli, Yemenite, east European and North African music. Dakari's quartet has performed in Israel, the United States, Russia, Serbia and Thailand.

Presented by the Canada-Israel Cultural Foundation and Ashkenaz Festival, the Ori Dakari Quartet makes its Canadian debut at Toronto's Trane Studio, 964 Bathurst St. (south of Dupont). Thursday, Jan. 26, 8 p.m. $20. 416-979-9901, www.ashkenazfestival.com

* * *

The Laramie Project: Encore Entertainment presents *The Laramie Project*, a stage drama about the reaction to the shocking 1998 murder of gay student **Matthew Shepard** in Laramie, Wyoming. The script draws on news reports, interviews with some 200 town residents and the interviewers' journal entries. The director is **Mario D'Alimonte**, and the cast includes **Aaron Sidenberg, Lucy Eveleigh, Avra Fainer, Luke Slade, Derrick Evans, Monique Renaud, Graham Fleming** and **Alissa De Grazia**.

"This play is so thought-provoking that we are inviting the audience to join the cast and director after each performance to discuss the play," said Encore's artistic producer, **Merle Garbe**. "We highly recommend this show for high school and post-secondary students as well as for adults."

Toronto Centre for the Arts, Jan. 26 to Feb. 5. $26.50, $28, $29.50. 1-855-985-2787, www.encoreshows.com

* * *

Israeli Classic Film: The Toronto Jewish Film Society launches its 34th season with the classic 1973 Israeli film *The House on Chelouche Street (Ha-Bayit Berechov Chelouche)*, directed by **Moshe Mizrahi**. Introduced by critic **Shlomo Schwartzberg**, and starring **Gila Almagor** and **Michal Bat Adam**, the film explores the Jewish resistance against British rule, Arab violence against Jews, and conservative sexual mores that often trap women in the community.

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, Al Green Theatre. Sunday, Jan. 22, 4 and 7:30 p.m. $15 general admission; $10 (ages 18 to 35, 7:30 p.m. only). Restricted to 18+. Includes free reception between screenings. Join the Toronto Jewish Film Society for eight films in 2012, $100, ($60, ages 18 to 35). 416-924-6211, ext. 139; joellem@mnjcc.org

* * *

Arts in Brief

• Author-critic **Kevin Courrier** talks on "Reflections in the Hall of Mirrors: American Movies and the Politics of Idealism," the latest in the Miles Nadal JCC's Media Mondays film lectures with clips. The focus is on the Johnson era, and films include *Bonnie and Clyde, Dr. Strangelove, Cool Hand Luke* and *The Wild Bunch*. Jan. 23, 7 to 9 p.m. $12 drop-in at the door; students $6. Registration, 416-924-6211, ext. 0.

• Active Seniors presents ROM curator **Corey Keeble** offering a beautifully illustrated presentation on "Masterpieces of Judaica: Jewish Textile Arts from Roman Times to Present." The discussion includes tapestry, embroidery, sumptuous 16th- to 18th-century fabrics. See and learn about textile art that has contributed through the ages to *hiddur mitzvah*, the beautification of the mitzvah. Miles Nadal JCC, Thursday, Jan. 26, 1:30 p.m. Refreshments. 416-924-6211, ext. 155.

• Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company presents **Theodore Bikel** and **Aidan deSalaiz** in *Visiting Mr. Green*. Jane Mallett Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre, Jan. 28 to Feb. 18. $39.50 to $69.50. 416-366-7723, www.stlc.com

Adrienne Cooper

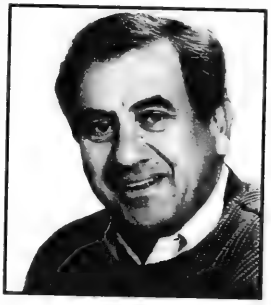
• Toronto's monthly Yiddish Vinkl remembers and pays tribute to the late Yiddish singer and Yiddishist **Adrienne Cooper** with a special presentation of her music and personal stories. Free Times Café, 320 College St. Thursday, Feb. 2, 12 noon. $16 includes buffet lunch.

* * *

At the Galleries

• In his *Museum of the Represented City*, Toronto artist **Flavio Trevisan** creates an ephemeral "museum of the present" that reflects on the current state of Toronto and conveys a fragmented yet revealing cartography of its "built" history. Presented by the Koffler Gallery Off-Site at 80 Spadina Ave., Suite 501, the exhibit opens with a free reception on Jan. 19, 6 to 9 p.m., artist talk at 7 p.m. Continues to April 8.

• Israeli artist-filmmaker **Yael Bartana**, a rising star in the international art scene, made the award-winning film trilogy *...and Europe will be stunned*, which is being shown in the Art Gallery of Ontario's Lind Gallery from Jan. 25 to April 1. The films focus on the Jewish Renaissance movement in Poland and the reaction to the return of the "long-unseen neighbour." Bartana will attend a public meet-the-artist program on Jan. 26, 7 to 8:30 p.m., in the AGO's Jackman Hall.



Larry Solway

* * *

Passages: Always opinionated and often passionate in discussion, Toronto radio personality **Larry Solway** was good at speaking his mind; his show, *Speak Your Mind*, ran on CHUM Radio in the late 1960s.

Solway, who died last week at the age of 83, also dabbled in movie acting, appeared on a CBC quiz show, wrote a couple of books and ran as an NDP candidate in St. Paul's riding in a provincial election in 1999. He leaves Shirley, his wife of 62 years, as well as children Joe and Beth.

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Film classic portrays pre-state Israel

Sheldon Kirshner
Staff Reporter

Moshe Mizrahi's *The House on Chelouche Street*, released in 1973, is an Israeli classic nearly four decades on.

An Academy Award nominee for best foreign film, it's scheduled to be screened by the Toronto Jewish Film Society on Jan. 22 at the Al Green Theatre (750 Spadina Ave.) at 4 p.m. and again at 7 p.m.

The film, slightly less than two hours in length, unfolds in Hebrew, Ladino and Arabic. It's set in 1947 in pre-state Israel and is essentially an exercise in nostalgia.

The protagonists are Sephardi Jewish immigrants from Alexandria, Egypt. No reason is given why they left. Accustomed to a pampered lifestyle with servants at their beck and call, they now eke out a meagre existence in a poorer neighbourhood of Tel Aviv.

Clara (Gila Almagor), a widow with four children to support, works as a maid to make ends meet. She has seen better days, as her mother, aunt, uncle and sister-in-law can attest.

Sami (Ofer Shalhin), Clara's 15-year-old dutiful son, is the only spark of joy that lights up her otherwise drab life. She has faith in his ability to make something of himself and do her proud.

Nissim (Joseph Shiloach), a randy bachelor who roars around town on a motorcycle, ardently pursues Clara. But she rebuffs his overbearing overtures. "I'm through with love," she says with a note of resignation in her tired voice.

A friend introducers Clara to a suitable suitor, but she is torn by doubts, even as Sami practically begs her to reconsider.

Dropping out of school, Sami finds a job in a workshop, but a strike by disaffected employees upends his dream of easing his mother's financial problems.

Being a typical teenager, Sami tries to relieve his lust with a female acquaintance, but she is not a willing partner.

By chance, he meets Sonia (Michal Bat-Adam), an attractive woman 10 years older than himself. By turns platonic and tender, their relationship is ultimately problematic. Their love-making scenes are beautifully rendered.

Sami's decision to join the Irgun, a right-wing Jewish militia, disappoints Clara, who doesn't quite understand that the country is heading toward war.

The film brims with background tension. Rifle-charging British soldiers raid the homes of suspected Jewish rebels. Bombs explode in the distance. Young Jewish men enlist in the Haganah as the approaching armed struggle over Palestine simmers.

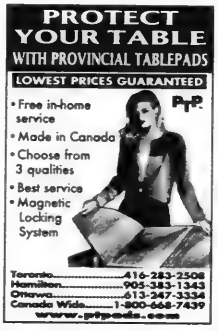
Almagor, a star of the Israeli cinema, delivers a subtle yet powerful performance as a woman under duress.

Shalhin's portrayal as a teen who's mature beyond his years is quite convincing.

Portraying a kibbutznik who has left her husband for a new life in the city, Bat-Adam exudes both demureness and smouldering sexuality.

The House on Chelouche Street takes a viewer back to an era when life in Israel seemed simpler, yet more complex, and when the Jewish state was still an embryonic idea rather than a vital reality.

Gila Almagor, centre, delivers a subtle yet powerful performance in *The House on Chelouche Street*.



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Book illuminates only Frank Lloyd Wright synagogue in the U.S.

Sheldon Kirshner
Staff Reporter

The only synagogue designed by the distinguished American architect Frank Lloyd Wright is in Elkins Park, a suburb north of Philadelphia.

Finished in 1959, Beth Sholom, a Conservative shul designated as a National Historic Landmark in 2007, was one of Wright's last projects.

Considered among his most important works, Beth Sholom is an architectural masterpiece in which the interplay of light, form and space creates an inspiring place of worship.

Today, a model of the synagogue is displayed at the Nahum Goldmann Museum of the Jewish Diaspora on the campus of Tel Aviv University.

The story of its conception and realization is expertly told by Joseph Siry in *Beth Sholom Synagogue: Frank Lloyd Wright and Modern Religious Architecture*, a lavishly illustrated coffee-table book published by the University of Chicago Press.

Siry, a professor of art history and American studies at Wesleyan University, says that the shul was essentially a joint venture between Wright and its rabbi, Mortimer Cohen.

Rabbi Cohen, having seen and admired a major retrospective of Wright's buildings, approached the famous architect at the end of 1953. They worked so closely together that Wright once referred to Rabbi Cohen as the synagogue's co-designer.

Though they shared the same vision, Wright deferred to Rabbi Cohen on matters of Jewish worship and belief. As Wright's private adviser and guide, the rabbi skillfully steered him through the thickets of Judaism.

To no one's surprise, Wright was a star pupil. Praising the architect's "profound mystical sense of religion," the rabbi said of him, "I found in Mr. Wright a genuinely spiritual person who responded in his unique way to the great teachings of my religion."

To Wright, Beth Sholom was not only a monument to Judaism, but a statement about "the modern potential of architecture," observes Siry.

He adds, "Even today, more than half a century after its dedication, Beth Sholom is a structure without close parallels anywhere. Wright created a work of architecture whose individuality corresponded to the ideal of distinct character that he sought to bestow on his other institutional projects."

Symbolizing American Jews' postwar confidence in the United States as an open and tolerant society, Beth Sholom is a splendid pyramid-like building cast in steel and glass.

Siry, in exemplary fashion, explains and extolls Wright's crowning achievement in this illuminating volume.

Enjoy the charms of Yorkshire

Melody Wren
Special to The CJN

How you imagine England to look from movies and novels – the archetypal England – is what you can expect to see in Yorkshire. Narrow winding roads soaring over steep hills, swooping down again through deep dales, moors sprinkled with sheep, flint walls that curve through grassy knolls for miles, and tiny villages brimming with character – it's all Yorkshire.

Yorkshire is a historic county of Northern England, the largest county in the United Kingdom. Within its borders are areas that are widely considered to be among the greenest in England, due to the vast stretches of open countryside in the Yorkshire Dales and North York Moors, and to the open aspect of some of the major cities

Small village names are fascinating jumbles of never-seen-together letters, as they are a combination of Saxon and Viking names such as "Ugglesbarnby." "By" at the end of the village indicates Viking heritage, and "Kirk" indicates a local church such as "Kirkbymoorside."

Driving through the Yorkshire Moors and Dales is the best way to experience them, with essential stops along the way in the tiniest of villages and larger market towns such as Helmsley. South of the moors is the city of York with its Minster and Tudor architecture in the Shambles. The Shambles is an old street with overhanging timber-framed buildings, some dating back as far as the 14th century.

There are many places that are worth visiting in Yorkshire. Following are a few suggestions.

Fountains Abbey: This is a must-see for anyone going to Yorkshire. The M62 motorway, with the highest elevation in England, took us through the Pennine mountains en route to the abbey. Stunning views into valleys where picture-postcard villages sit invite you to detour and detour we did.

Fountains Abbey – an extraordinary apparition in North Yorkshire – is a masterpiece of 12th century building ingenuity. The dramatic remains of the abbey are the largest monastic ruins in the country. Following the dissolution of the monasteries in 1539 by Henry VIII, the abbey buildings and more than 500 acres of land were sold by the Crown. The land passed through several generations of the Gresham family and finally to Stephen Proctor. He built Fountains Hall and turned the abbey grounds into a beautiful estate that includes a remarkable Georgian water garden.

Set in the naturally beautiful Skell valley, the abbey is flanked by two vast expanses of grass lawns with awe-inspiring cliff faces to either side. The river Skell runs through the valley and under the abbey. This truly is a beautiful place to visit.

Helmsley: The small market town of Helmsley in Ryedale is about half an hour's drive north from York, on the edge of the North York Moors National Park. It is a very pretty town and a magnet for visitors wanting a relaxing country break or to use it as a base for walking or other outdoor activities. You can spend a day wandering through the quaint streets, popping into shops and cafés, and exploring historic buildings. The town offers an eclectic mix of individual boutiques, antique shops and galleries, as well as tearooms, pubs, hotels, butchers and bakers. Helmsley is also a good base for setting off on more energetic pursuits.

White Chalk Horse: A most unusual landmark you can't fail to miss in this part of Yorkshire is a chalk outline of a horse, cut into the side of the hill, just beside the village of Kilburn. The famous White Horse is massive, measuring more than 300 feet long by nearly 300 feet high, and can be seen from miles away. It was the work of John Hodgson, a local schoolmaster who with the help of his pupils completed it in 1857.

Whitby: It's known as a working man's seaside resort town. Even though Whitby is extremely touristy, with many souvenir shops, it's worth a visit. I recommend a morning visit, as it's normally a bit quieter. Ignore the tourist buses and walk to view the harbour and cliff views, then head inland a bit to see village life. For three pounds, take a 30-minute tour on an antique lifeboat, which cruises through the bay. From the boat you see a lovely view of Whitby.

Robin Hood's Bay is a unique, hilly seaside village.

Robin Hood's Bay: A 10-minute drive along the coast takes you to this delightfully unique, hilly seaside village. Considered by many to be the prettiest fishing village on the Yorkshire coast, Robin Hood's Bay clings precariously to steep cliffs, its tiny cottages with their distinctive red tile roofs crowding around the ravine of King's Beck for protection against the fierce winds that blow in from the North Sea. A steep walk down to the sea takes you along a street lined with charming tearooms, cafés and art-gallery shops displaying tasteful, locally made art, and jewelry shops.

Fountains Abbey is a must-see for anyone in Yorkshire. *[Melody Wren photos]*

Boggle Hole: A bit farther along the coast from Robin Hood's Bay, park your car and walk down to a craggy beach, a youth hostel and Boggle Hole, made famous in A.S. Byatt's book, *Possession*. A "boggle" is the local name for a hobgoblin, the mischievous "little people" that were thought to live in caves along the coast, as well as the more remote corners of the moors. Boggle Hole was where smugglers used to land with their contraband. A cliff-top path offers superb views of Robin Hood's Bay, which sweeps in a graceful curve. At low tide, bands of soft shale and hard limestone are revealed to enormous effect in the shape of curving ridges. The haunt of geologists and fossil hunters, this rocky shore is a fascinating place to explore, but keep a careful eye on the rising tide.

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New releases by Nathan Englander, Cynthia Holz

Bill Gladstone
Special to The CJN

You remember Nathan Englander. He's the former yeshiva bocher turned short-story writer who dazzled the critics about a dozen years ago with *For the Relief of Unbearable Urges*, a debut collection of stories that inspired raves and comparisons to Babel, Malamud and Singer. Not even his subsequent novel, *The Ministry of Special Cases*, could elicit such high praise.

Besides his shining, irony-laden prose, what set Englander apart was his deep knowledge of Jewish religious law, lore and literature; he grew up immersed in the haredi world of Crown Heights, Brooklyn, which he masqueraded as "Royal Hills" in his stories.

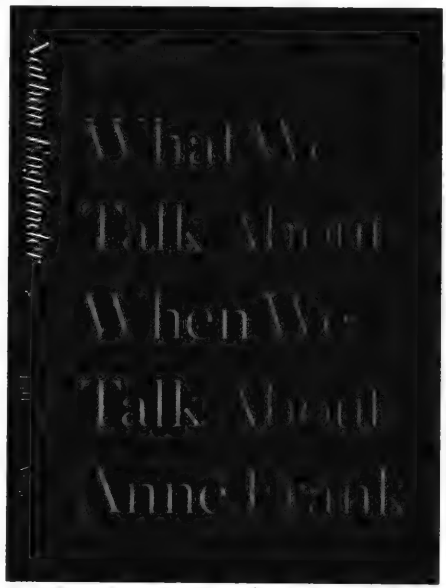
One story dealt with a Stalinist purge of Yiddishists, another with a Nazi-infested Chelm, several with the ultra-frum world of Royal Hills. Unforgettable characters included the rabbi-cum-charlatan in *The Gilgul of Park Avenue* and the equally impish rabbi of the title story who writes a rabbinical dispensation allowing a sex-starved husband to visit a prostitute.

As signalled by the publication of the title piece in the *New Yorker* last month, Englander has a new collection of stories, *What We Talk About When We Talk About Anne Frank* (Alfred A. Knopf). The title is an allusion to a famous story by Raymond Carver, *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love*.

The title story, like Carver's, involves two couples socializing over drinks: the American narrator and his wife, Deb, and Deb's old friend, Lauren, and her husband, Mark — who, having become "ultra-Orthodox" and moved to Jerusalem, now call themselves Yerucham and Shoshana.

The foursome grow closer after smoking some pot together, feeling brave enough to explore some uncomfortable truths; the barriers between them seem to just fall away. Englander is at his best here as he explores the various prisms such as religion and culture through which Jews filter their Judaism. He also seems to expose a raw nerve of the Jewish psyche by laying bare a range of deep-seated fears and subliminal thoughts in his characters related to the Holocaust.

As before, Englander extends his range of characters from secular to Orthodox. The settings range from a summer



camp in the Berkshires to an outpost beyond Jerusalem.

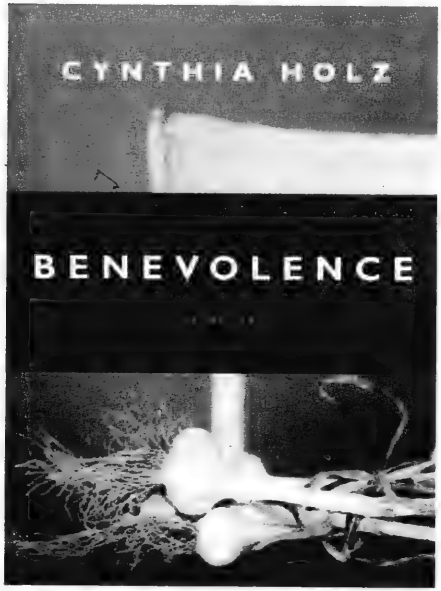
Everything I Know About My Family on My Mother's Side is a surprisingly good deconstructionalized tale that presents a numbered list of 67 observations about family members, through which character and meaning are slowly and artfully revealed.

In other stories, we see Jews variously seeking out justice, revenge, and their epic national dream. In *Camp Sundown*, a group of retirees at a Jewish seniors camp dispense their own brand of justice upon an old Nazi, while in *How We Avenged the Blums*, a group of students wreak revenge upon a bully.

In *Sister Hills*, a historic tale set on the outskirts of Jerusalem during wartime, Jewish settlers struggle heroically for the good of the nation, to the utter indifference of later generations. My least favourite tale in the bunch is *Peep Show*, a weird, sexually explicit moral allegory that may be deemed one of Englander's experimental failures. There was at least one such story in the previous collection, too.

Not all of these stories are compelling. But much can be forgiven the author of an iridescent piece like *What We Talk About When We Talk About Anne Frank*.

* * *



Bernard Wasserman and Renata Moon, the central characters in Cynthia Holz's *Benevolence* (Knopf Canada), are a middle-aged, childless couple straining to regain their former closeness even as they struggle with barriers that separate them from their clients in their professional lives, he as a doctor who assesses patients involved in organ transplants, she as a psychotherapist who helps patients desensitize their phobias and traumas.

The action is minimal in this domestic novel of emotions, and shifts episodically from Bernard to Renata together to each of them in their professional lives, and to Bernard's mother, Molly, a widow who is also striving for emotional closeness in an otherwise cold and sterile world.

Bernard assesses a patient named Arthur who wants to give a kidney to a neighbour: he probes whether Arthur has an ulterior reason for his benevolence. Meanwhile, Renata assists Stella, a woman who has lost her husband in a train wreck and then discovers she is pregnant. Although professional ethics prohibit it, both Bernard and Renata manage to get close to their patients, although they can't seem to get close to each other.

A secret about paternity hovers over these characters and threatens to break open when Molly invites an old male acquaintance, Saul, to rent a room in her home. Saul, and not Molly's deceased husband, is actually Bernard's father. There is no outward moment of revelation, but the seed of truth is definitely planted in Bernard's head.

Holz masterfully integrates the external and inward lives of her characters by showing us what they say and do while revealing their thoughts and adding details of their pasts. In spots, her prose seems as good as anything by Ann Tyler or Anita Brookner, even if the main theme might cause readers to ponder. Holz's previous novels include *Semi-Detached* and *A Good Man*, both equally worth reading.

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Thornhill sisters are national junior chess champions

Michelle Bitran
Special to The CJN

When Andrew Giblon signed up his young daughters for chess lessons at the local community centre in Thornhill, he had no idea that in just a few short years, both would become national chess champions.

"My cousin had already started playing chess, and my parents thought it'd be nice for us, too – something about wanting the kids out of the house," Rebecca Giblon said with a smile. She's 14 years old and the older of the two girls.

Rebecca began playing chess when she was about six years old and was soon followed by her younger sister, Melissa, now 12. Both girls had a bumpy start, but they were determined to improve.

"I was really not good at all, but I wanted to win," Melissa said of her early days playing.

The sisters practised a lot, undeterred by the steep learning curve of the classic strategy game, until finally, their work began to pay off.

"In Grade 3, something clicked," Rebecca said. "I'm not really sure how it happened."

As they improved, Giblon arranged for private chess coaching for his daughters. In 2007, Rebecca became a national champion for girls under 10. In 2009, she won again for girls under 12, and Melissa won for girls under 10. In 2011, Melissa became national champion for girls under 12.

"It got a lot more fun. Now I actually have something to look forward to," Rebecca said about her success.

Winning the national championships automatically qualified the talented sisters for the World Youth Chess Championships (WYCC). This past November, the girls flew to Brazil with their father, who served as head of the Canadian delegation, and the rest of the Canadian youth chess team to compete at their fourth WYCC. Previously, they had competed at two WYCCs in Turkey and one in Greece.

Melissa, left, and Rebecca Giblon stand at the top of Sugarloaf Mountain in Rio de Janeiro. The girls travelled to Brazil this past November for the World Youth Chess Championships. ***[Andrew Giblon photo]***

This year's championship featured some 1,100 competitors from 80 countries. The girls played their matches in a huge hall alongside hundreds of other players, with each match lasting anywhere from two to five hours.

Rebecca finished with the highest score for a Canadian in her section, while Melissa had the second-highest score for a Canadian in her section.

Although both sisters have impressive track records, the world of competitive chess is not exempt from sibling rivalry.

Rebecca said she refuses to play her younger sister because chess is the kind of game in which a worse player can beat a better player given the right scenario.

"If I lose to someone I should've beat, I get upset," she said.

Melissa, on the other hand, said she's open to the challenge of a sibling match. "I decided if Rebecca would be good, I'd be better," she explained matter-of-factly.

Outside of chess, the girls enjoy skiing and reading, and each one was clutching a stack of books they had just borrowed from the library as they arrived for their interview with *The CJN*.

Rebecca has recently started the gifted program at Thornhill Secondary School, a place where "being a nerd is actually respected," she said.

Melissa, who celebrated her bat mitzvah this past December, is in Grade 7 in the gifted program at Henderson Public School.

For Melissa, the ultimate goal is to earn a place on the Chess Olympiad team, and for Rebecca, it's to earn a title from the World Chess Organization, usually referred to by its French acronym, FIDE.

Currently, Rebecca's FIDE rating is 1720, and Melissa's is 1572. A chess Grandmaster, the highest title a player can earn, needs a minimum rating of 2500. Melissa is hoping to gain 500 rating points over the next six months.

Giblon said he's continually impressed by the dedication his daughters have shown to chess, a game that is often overlooked by young people and is not particularly popular among women.

"I was surprised – it's been a real testament to their skill and their hard work that they've gotten this far," he said.

With their notable titles and the chance to see the world, Giblon is proud of the girls. "Even if they quit chess tomorrow, what they got out of it until now was well worth it," he said.

Hab abruptly traded last week

David Lazarus
Staff Reporter

For many years – going back to Mathieu Schneider joining the team in 1987 – the Montreal Canadiens had a couple of Jewish players under contract.

But with the abrupt trade of star player Mike Cammalleri in mid-game Jan. 12, now there are none.

Cammalleri, the Habs' number 13, got a ticket back to the Calgary Flames, where the left-winger had come from in time for the Habs' 2009-10 season, between the second and third periods last Thursday night, when the slumping team lost yet again, this time to the Boston Bruins.

In return, the Canadiens got Flames left winger René Bourque.

Some were linking the trade to comments Cammalleri had made a day earlier about the team's performance so far this season.

In 2009, Cammalleri signed a five-year, $30-million contract with the Habs, but he was having a mediocre season leading up to the trade, scoring only nine times in the 38 games he played in.

According to Maccabi Canada's former president Gary Ulrich, Cammalleri was approached about a year ago by Maccabi officials in Toronto about possible involvement with the organization, but he was noncommittal.

"People in Toronto knew his family," Ulrich told *The CJN*.

Habs legend Jean Béliveau has been very supportive of Maccabi Canada, travelling twice to Israel with the Canadian team.

A native of Richmond Hill, Ont., Cammalleri, 29, has a Jewish mother and non-Jewish father.

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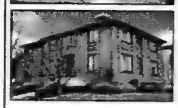

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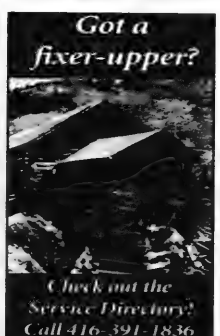

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Book reviewer focuses on 'quieter gems' for children

Riva Gold
Special to The CJN

Heather Feldstein knows how to spot a good book. She looks for a story that is short, sweet, and generally intended for children under 12.

The Toronto-based mother of two is the founder of wordsbymom.com, a website devoted to reviewing children's books.

"There are a lot of really great kids' books out there that are highly marketed, but there are also a number of quieter gems that don't get highlighted very well," she says.

"We all know the classics by Shel Silverstein or the books we grew up with, but what about some of the more recent works?"

Feldstein says that parents often can't browse in bookstores, so they end up buying bestsellers.

"When you go into bookstores, you often have one eye on your kids and you have to judge books by their covers. Or you can ask store clerks, but they usually point to books that are big sellers."

While those books can be really valuable, Feldstein says there is also a lot of great new work that deserves exposure because it speaks to modern children.

An avid reader and a writer, Feldstein regularly attends writers' conferences and reads several new books every week before posting reviews of her favourites.

"Because I'm entrenched in the industry, and this is my full-time job, I hope I can help others find good material."

Feldstein hopes her site is a valuable resource for parents, grandparents and teachers. Though you can't order books directly from wordsbymom.com, the site provides in-depth book reviews and offers suggestions for post-reading discussions.

She reviews books that have a good message, she says.

"The moral doesn't have to be overpowering or preachy. Kids at bedtime generally want lessons delivered in a way that is fun, sweet, or funny."

As an example, Feldstein recommends a book called *Ish* by Peter H. Reynolds, which is about a little boy who has a passion for drawing.

"It's a really cute book. To children, it's just a funny story at first, until you use it to talk to them about the beauty of encouragement, uniqueness and individuality."

Equally important is a book's pictures.

"The illustrations have to be engaging and bright. As you turn the page, you can see the child's eye as they take in the drawings," she says.

Also, a good children's book will be authentic, she adds.

"The voice of the character has to be genuine, because kids can really pick up on what is real. Kids are raw, and that must be spoken to through literature in order for them to believe it."

She adds that her policy is to read "everything," but only to review books she really loves.

One of her favourite holiday books is Eric Kimmel's *The Chanukah Guest*, which features a latke maker and a hungry bear.

"I think it celebrates the spirit of Chanukah and the need to invite guests into your home," she says.

Feldstein says that being exposed to good literature can be incredibly beneficial for children.

"The positive experiences we foster when kids are young correlate to early literacy skills," she notes.

She also says that reading to kids can be a bonding experience for families.

"With my own kids, bedtime reading seems to be when they are ready to air their grievances and want to talk about issues or what happened to them at school.

"And at the end of the day, there's something quite magical about snuggling up with a good book," she says. "It's a wonderful opportunity to spend some quality time with your kids."

For Feldstein, children's books can spark conversations about serious issues. She recommends Maxine Trottier's *Terry Fox: A Story of Hope*, which can be used to talk to kids about cancer, while stressing the importance of hope and recognizing dreams.

"There are certain unfortunate realities in life that we need to talk to our kids about, but we need to expose them in child-friendly ways," she says.

"Another great book is *All the Way to America* by Dan Yaccarino. It talks about heirlooms, and in our house, we were able to relate that to our own family history with the Holocaust."

Feldstein believes children's books can play a vital role in Holocaust education.

"As that generation dies off, we have some fabulous books that can help us keep their message alive," she says. "It's up to us as parents and grandparents to draw from them."

Feldstein has written a manuscript about her grandparents who survived the Holocaust, which she hopes to someday publish.

Her other book addresses the issue of sibling rivalry.

"With two kids, I can't imagine what inspired that," she joked.

Feldstein notes that it has become increasingly challenging for writers to get published because of competition from e-books and other new forms of literature.

"Traditional publishing houses now only publish the cream of the crop, and the industry is much more competitive [for] a writer," she says.

"From a consumer's perspective though, there's a benefit, because it means there are fewer poor quality books."

Aside from her website, Feldstein also writes regularly for the Huffington Post.

wordsbymom.com founder Heather Feldstein

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Can't stay silent

Dear Ella,

I'm not sure how much longer I can stay quiet. My daughter is falling apart and I'm standing by watching helplessly.

Sandi and Allen seemed to have a healthy marriage. They both worked hard and had a good mix of independence and togetherness. It appeared to all that they had everything.

Throughout her pregnancy, Allen treated Sandi like a princess. She had a rough few months, and Allen ran around doing whatever she needed. Then Asher was born, and it was like Allen became a different person.

Sandi is up with the baby all night, and she does her best to clean the house, shop for groceries, do laundry, make meals, all while she is breastfeeding and caring for an often-screaming child. Allen comes home, puts his feet up, says he had a stressful day and asks, "What's for dinner?"

I can see the physical and emotional toll this is taking on my daughter. She doesn't complain, but last week she burst into tears and let it all out. Her husband was no longer being a partner. She felt like she was drowning in a sea of chores with no help.

I've always prided myself on not interfering in my children's lives, but I'm worried about Sandi, and I can't stay silent any longer. Any advice would be appreciated.

Time to Meddle

Dear Time to Meddle,

I'm not sure "meddle" is the right word. Perhaps "help" would be a better way to phrase it. Who better to help than someone who is doing it out of love and concern? But you have to be smart.

Sandi is probably exhausted and can't think straight. She is caught up in a circle of chores and doesn't have the time or energy to figure out how to fix this. This is where you come in.

Make a plan. Tell Sandi you want to have a talk with her. Tell her you will come over for the day and babysit with Asher while she sleeps, bathes and regroups. Once she's refreshed, she'll be more open to listen to suggestions.

Tell her your observations and give her some practical solutions. Allen doesn't sound like a bad guy. He's adjusting to a new life and unfamiliar emotions, too, but Sandi has given him the luxury of doing it in his own time.

Here are some suggestions for you to give to your daughter: 1. Get a housekeeper to clean once a week. With two incomes, that should be attainable. In between, learn to live in a messier house. 2. Make meals easier. Have sandwiches, eggs or cereal for dinner. If Allen wants beef stew, he can make it. 3. Give Allen a list of reasonable responsibilities. He can certainly do grocery shopping, take out the trash and take over a feeding or two in the evening. 4. Offer to babysit on occasion so Allen and Sandi can have a couple of hours to themselves. It will do wonders for them, and give them time to talk.

Allen has to realize that Sandi is not sitting home all day watching soap operas. Her job is just as hard as his is. Only she can show him the light. Bringing a new baby into a marriage is a huge adjustment on everyone's part.

Ask Ella

By Ella Burakowski

Readers may submit their questions to Ella at The CJN, *e-mail: ellacjn@gmail.com. But Ella is not a professional counsellor. She brings to the questions posed by readers her unique brand of earthy wisdom. Her advice is not a replacement for medical, legal or any other advice. For serious problems, consult a professional.*

ELLA'S "KLOPS" MEATLOAF

(An Old World Recipe with a New World Twist)

2 lbs. ground chicken
2 eggs
1 lg. onion, diced finely
5 garlic cloves, minced
1/2 c + 4 tbsp "Diana's" spicy gourmet BBQ sauce
1/4 c ketchup
2 tbsp. Dijon mustard
1/2-3/4 c whole wheat bread crumbs
1 tsp. cumin
1/2 tsp. ground pepper
salt to taste
Cooking spray

Preheat oven to 350°. Coat loaf pan with Pam.

Your hands are the best utensils for this recipe.

In a large bowl add all ingredients (except bread crumbs) and 4 tbsps. BBQ sauce. Mix well; mixture will be wet. Add bread crumbs until mixture is moldable but still fairly wet. When all ingredients are incorporated place mixture firmly packed into loaf pan. Using the back of a tablespoon, coat entire top of loaf with remaining BBQ Sauce. Bake 1 hour. Freezes very well.

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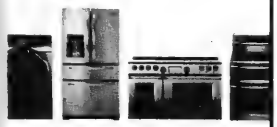

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On cjnews.com

The CJN's French-language reporter in Montreal, Elias Levy, writes about:

Award-winning Israeli author David Grossman's latest novel, *Une femme fuyant l'annonce* (*To the end of the land*, in English), about a mother who leaves her home to avoid the possiblilty of hearing a message that her son is dead, was translated from Hebrew this fall.

A panel of Sephardi academics and rabbis who discussed the future of Sephardi identity during this year's Festival Séfarad de Montréal.

Exclusive to cjnews.com in Hebrew

Changing Israel's governing system

Exclusive to cjnews.com

CJN web columnist Masada Siegel says we should focus on the postive, not the negative as we start the new year.

A new research team lead by Prof. Eitan Yaniv, head of the nose and sinus institute at the otolaryngology department at Beilinson Hospital in Israel, suggests that the communication style of a patient influences the success of surgery.

China Southern Power Grid (CSG) and Better Place, the Israeli provider of global electric car networks, announced the opening of their Switchable Electric Car Experience Center in Guangzhou's Pearl River New Town.

Artificial nutrition and hydration

A recent seminar organized by a professor of aging and health at the University of Dundee School of Medicine in Scotland was attended by students who are currently enrolled at the school, my alma mater. When I graduated in 1966, it was part of the University of St. Andrews.

It was the morning of my medical class' 45th reunion, and the group of seven students had just finished their educational module on aging and health. I was asked to speak about aging-related issues from the perspective of geriatrics and ethics, as I practise in Toronto.

I stressed the importance of discussing difficult issues with aged patients and their families, especially when illnesses such as late-stage dementia might be the medical problem. There was a consensus that "having the conversation" might be important in helping family members know the values and wishes on which difficult decisions might be based, such as when a loved one might no longer be able to take in adequate food and fluids to maintain nutritional needs.

I play-acted with the students, repeating the kind of conversations I often have in my office with patients and families, as I demonstrated the importance of asking the right kind of questions to help inform them of difficult decisions surrounding the possibility of artificial nutrition and hydration. This is usually provided by a feeding tube, inserted into the stomach and referred to as a PEG (percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy).

Senior Side of Life

Michael Gordon

I chose the eating of ice cream, as I often use that topic during my office conversations. By chance, the day before I had visited a friend from my Dundee university days. She recounted how when her mother was suffering from later-stage dementia, one of the few outings she liked was going out for an ice cream. My friend explained how she would offer her mother the outing, and after some deliberation, it was agreed that they would go and then her mother would deliberate over which flavour to request. Invariably, she ordered rum and raisin. Even though the eating was often messy, the ice cream outing seemed to be one of the woman's last enjoyable experiences. It became apparent to my friend that when ice cream was no longer an enjoyable option, the end would be near and artificial nutrition and hydration would not be a treatment consideration.

During the play-acting with one of the students, I used the typical conversation I have had with many of my patients over the past few years. "So, do you like ice cream?"

"Yes, I love ice cream."

"What is your favourite flavour?"

"Coffee, or sometimes strawberry."

"How would you feel if you could never taste ice cream again – in fact, if you couldn't taste anything ever again and everything that went into you went in through a tube into your stomach?"

At this point in the conversation, which I have had many times with patients in the presence of family members, the person will often look at me, and say, "Are you crazy? Who would want that?"

I then turn to the family and say, "This is just the beginning of the 'conversation,' but it is important that you remember it, because often in a situation of crises, you may feel compelled to agree to a PEG, forgetting what you heard here. I recommend that you have other conversations like this to help you decide how you will respond when the time comes."

Dr. Michael Gordon is medical program director of palliative care at Baycrest and co-author with Bart Mindszenthy of Parenting Your Parents (Dundurn Press). His latest book, Moments that Matter: Cases in Ethical Eldercare, follows his previous book, Brooklyn Beginnings: A Geriatrician's Odyssey. All can be researched at his website: http://www.drmichaelgordon.com.

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Yossi Klein Halevi
Special to The CJN

It was a nation of ambivalent Israelis that listened to U.S. President Barack Obama's latest Middle East plan – an interim agreement based on ending the occupation of the Palestinians while somehow ensuring the security of the Israelis.

Israeli ambivalence is peculiar. It has nothing to do with uncertainty or confusion. Instead, to be an ambivalent Israeli is to be torn between two conflicting certainties. An ambivalent Israeli believes that a Palestinian state is an existential necessity – and that

Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf
Staff Reporter

When the space shuttle Endeavour finally lifts off on NASA's penultimate shuttle flight later this month, for many Israelis, it will symbolize the continuing journey of astronaut Ilan Ramon.

The Endeavour is tentatively scheduled to launch no earlier than May 16, [illegible] Feb. 1, 2003.

On a visit to Toronto last week, Asaf Agmon, CEO of Israel's Fisher Brothers Institute for Air & Space Strategic Studies – a non-profit organization that [illegible] ministry of Science [illegible] works with NASA to bring Israeli experiments into space – said the Endeavour mission will carry two Israeli bio-medical experiments into space, one of which is a "legacy project" from Ramon's Columbia mission.

"There were more than 400 experiments on the Columbia. Only nine

Defence Minister Ehud Barak said: "Again we have come to realize that the fight against terror is shared with the world's leading democracies, and it will be won by a joint, multi-layered effort that has yet to be final-

[illegible] personally congratu- [illegible] as well as American [illegible] of Israel shares [illegible] on this histori- [illegible]ter."

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[illegible] hours after the announcement [illegible]den's death, U.S. Secretary of State [illegible]ary Clinton said: "I want to offer my [illegible] thoughts and prayers to thousands of families [illegible] of those killed in terrorist attacks.

"These were not just attacks against

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This Week

National

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Toronto MPs to honour Chinese 'Oskar Schindler.' *Page 5*

Montreal library to adopt innovative cataloguing system. *Page 34*

Heebonics

Brother-sister team works well together. *Page 46*

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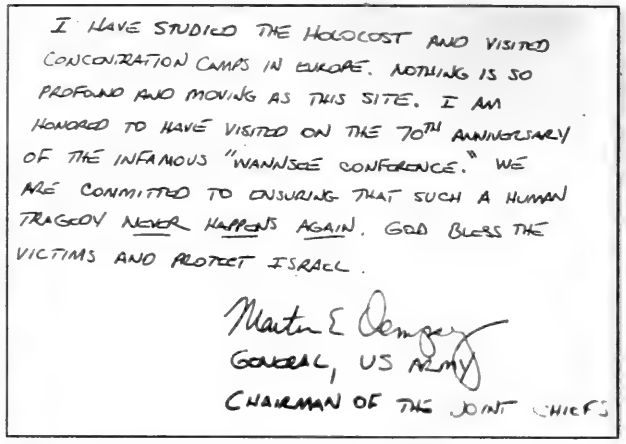
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Martin E Dempsey
GENERAL, US ARMY
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS

During his trip to Israel last week, Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, visited the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial on the 70th anniversary of the infamous Wannsee Conference, at which the Nazis planned the "Final Solution" for the Jews. Dempsey was moved to write a note in which he committed to preventing such an atrocity in the future. [*Israel Sun and Flash90 photos*]

Top U.S. general in Israel, discusses Iran

Gili Cohen
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — Israel and the United States have a shared understanding of security concerns in the Middle East, the chairman of U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Martin Dempsey, said last week during his first visit to Israel.

Dempsey's trip came as the United States has been trying to co-ordinate steps and clarify Israel's intentions regarding a possible attack on Iran's nuclear installations.

But in a statement released at the end of his visit – he arrived Thursday and left Friday afternoon before Shabbat – Dempsey did not include any direct references to the U.S. or Israeli positions on Iran.

In Israel, Dempsey met with President Shimon Peres, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Defence Minister Ehud Barak and Israel Defence Forces chief of staff Gen. Benny Gantz.

"We have many interests in common in the region in this very dynamic time, and the more we can continue to engage each other, the better off we'll all be," Dempsey told reporters after meeting with Barak.

He stressed that his main contacts during the visit were with Gantz. They discussed "relations between the two militaries, the Americans' new military strategy, as well as budgets and the economy," Dempsey said.

He also referred to the postponement of joint military exercises between Israel and the United States that were scheduled for April, but were believed to have been rescheduled to reflect U.S. President Barack Obama's desire to defuse tension with Iran. Demspey said the delay will lead to "better training results."

He also visited the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem on the 70th anniversary of the Wannsee Conference, during which the Nazis worked out the details of their "Final Solution."

Dempsey said that in the Yad Vashem guest book, he expressed U.S. commitment to preventing a future Holocaust.

Peres said the issue of Iran and its quest for nuclear weapons is not one of concern exclusively to the United States or Israel, but rather to the entire international community.

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Former Montrealer favoured in Israeli song competition – see page 37

CANADA

Writer Unrepentant

VANCOUVER — The author of a column in a leading Indo-Canadian newspaper that called Zionism a "cancer" defended his views in a followup article. Jewish groups criticized the original piece, published Jan. 7 in the Vancouver-based *South Asian Link*, as antisemitic, but Sawraj Singh, an Ellensburg, Wash.-based surgeon and chair of the Washington State Network for Human Rights and the Central Washington Coalition for Social Justice, said some critics "deliberately tried to confuse the word Zionism with Judaism" and denied the article was antisemitic. "Zionism is a political movement which many people, including some Jews, oppose," he wrote Jan. 15 in the *Link*. Citing the 1975 UN General Assembly resolution, Singh, a longtime *Link* contributor, charged that "Zionism is a system that fosters apartheid and racism," and that's why he opposes it. In a response to the controversy, *Link* editor Paul Dhillon wrote Jan. 15 that his paper supports Israel's right to exist, but he also distinguished between Judaism and Zionism, adding that "if Dr. Singh's article was perceived to be hateful or anti-Jewish – we apologize on Dr. Singh's behalf for any hurt or wrong it may have caused. We have also urged Dr. Singh to be cautious when it comes to using the Jewish community in the context of his arguments."

WORLD

More U.S. Jews?

NEW YORK — More than six million Jews live in the United States, according to two new studies. The studies, using different methodologies, found between 6.4 million and 6.6 million U.S. Jews – about 1.8 per cent of the population, the *Forward* reported. That's some 20 per cent higher than the 5.2 million reported by the 2000 National Jewish Population Survey, sponsored by the Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA), which was said to have undercounted the Jewish population. A study by Ira Sheskin, a University of Miami geographer, and Arnold Dashefsky, a sociologist at the University of Connecticut (UC), for UC's North American Jewish Data Bank put the correct figure at 6,588,000, while a study by Brandeis University sociologist Leonard Saxe put the number at 6.4 million. The studies are important because the once-a-decade JFNA survey wasn't conducted this year after JFNA declined to underwrite it.

Police Release Photos in Mosque Attack

OTTAWA — Police in Gatineau, Que., released security camera photos and video footage last week of a suspect they believe spray-painted a Star of David and hate slogans on a local mosque earlier this month

The incident, which occurred overnight on Jan. 5 was the fourth in six months and the second that week at the Outaouais Islamic Centre. Police believe the attack was perpetrated by a lone man in his early 20s who was caught on camera scrawling anti-Arab slurs on the centre's front doors, its side and on two other entrances.

Security photo

On Jan. 2, the windows of cars parked in front of the same centre were smashed.

The Jan. 5 security pictures show a 5-8, 175-pound man wearing a black coat over a grey hooded sweatshirt, and he wore black shoes, police said.

Police are treating the attack as a hate crime and urging anyone with information to contact them.

Rabbi Suspended

NEW YORK — The chief rabbi of Amsterdam has been suspended for signing a statement on curing homosexuality. Rabbi Aryeh Ralbag of New York, who travels to the Netherlands twice yearly to rule on halachic matters, signed a declaration that "therapy and tshuvah" can overcome homosexuality. He'll remain suspended until he discusses the issue in person with local Jewish leaders, who said gays are "full members" of the community.

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Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf
Staff Reporter

Two high-ranking Canadian cabinet ministers are scheduled to visit Israel after attending the World Economic Forum's annual meeting this week.

Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird and Finance Minister James Flaherty will both travel to Jerusalem in time for a dinner reception co-hosted by the Canadian Embassy and the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs' (CIJA) Israel bureau.

The Feb. 1 reception will celebrate the longstanding friendship between the two countries.

Baird and Flaherty are also scheduled to hold meetings with their Israeli counterparts, Avigdor Lieberman, minister of foreign affairs, and Yuval Steinitz, minister of finance, during their roughly week-long trip.

John Baird

James Flaherty

A spokesperson for Baird's office confirmed the ministers would be travelling to Israel immediately after their meetings in Davos, although he could not comment on a specific itinerary. The World Economic Forum's event runs from Jan. 25 to Jan. 29.

CIJA said it will host the Canadian delegation at the gala dinner in conjunction with the Canadian Embassy and the Canada-Israel Industrial Research and Development Foundation. Other Canadian delegates scheduled to take part in the trip include numerous CIJA board members and Mario Silva, the former Liberal MP for Davenport who was recently nominated to chair the Task Force for International Co-operation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research in 2013.

Shimon Fogel, CIJA's CEO, told *The CJN* his organization was "delighted" the ministers are going to Israel.

"We think it's a reflection of the level of qualitative collaboration and consultation between the two countries on so many different levels and across the spectrum of files," he said. "There is a deep alliance that has emerged between the countries."

Continued on page 4

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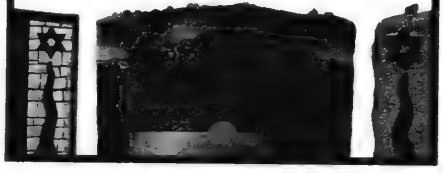

Israel's urgent priority

From the editor's desk...

CN columnist Jean Gerber this week eloquently pours out her heart and a deeply felt bit of her wrath on the subject of the recent unsightly efforts by some extremist haredim in Israel to segregate women away from men in the public domain of Israeli life.

She writes, of course, as an aggrieved Jewish woman. But more poignantly, she writes, simply, as an aggrieved Jew who is worried for the future of Israel, the "wonderful, flawed state" that means so very much to her.

"Israeli society has dangerous rifts that, unaddressed, will be more dangerous than 10 Arab armies," Gerber writes, referring to the hardscrabble resentments and distrusts among and within the various religious groupings to their non-religious fellow countrymen and women.

Gerber aptly described the bullying of eight-year-old Na'ama Margolese and the subsequent aggressive protests last month in Beit Shemesh as "a public display of choleric fundamentalism."

And she was absolutely correct.

The rowdy, crude, boorish behaviour we witnessed directed at Na'ama and her mother was shocking, an affront to our sensibilities as human beings, let alone as Jews. And we were ever more puzzled and wounded and angered because the justification for the behaviour was said to emanate from the teachings of the holy texts.

Last week, in an op-ed essay in the *Globe and Mail*, the eminent Israeli commentator, writer, scholar Yossi Klein Halevi also condemned the extremist haredi behaviour.

But he explained the recent boldness of the violent behaviour in terms that were new, not often, if indeed noted at all by social and political writers.

"The haredi community is hardly monolithic and is divided by its attitudes toward the secular state. It is, in part, the growing involvement of some haredim in mainstream Israeli society that has led to an extremist backlash among others. This new wave of fanaticism isn't a sign of self-confidence *but of desperation*." (My emphasis)

Klein Halevi points out that the integrative steps that increasing, though still small, numbers of haredim have taken to find employment, to serve in the army, to join in the national public discourse are worrying some of the even more cloistered and insular haredim. And thus, the latter, such as the sect in Beit Shemesh, lash out with greater "religiously based" ferocity.

In an essay titled Gender Troubles on the website Jewish Ideas Daily, Yehudah Mirsky makes much the same point.

"But the mounting violence against women, no doubt reflecting sincere conviction... also seems to bespeak increasing internal tensions.

"Though traditionalist, they have internalized modern aspirations to remake society and strategies of ideological mobilization. Far from monolithic, they have their own internal *kulturkampfen*. Haredi singers perform before mixed audiences. Haredim serve in special military units – and often face community ostracism. Haredi women have made extraordinary educational and occupational strides. The response by some has been to send them, literally, to the back of the bus – and push them out of view elsewhere."

The harsh and ugly images we have seen of late involving the haredi violence in Beit Shemesh and Mea Shearim do indeed depict a certain truth of haredi attempts to manipulate public life to suit their own narrow mysogynist purposes. But as Klein Halevi and Mirsky – both astute and knowledgeable observers of Israeli life – suggest, the violence also depicts a certain turbulence stirring within the variegated stripes of haredi life.

Notwithstanding the sociological roots of the haredi violence, Klein Halevi, Mirsky and Gerber also point out that the key cornerstone of any ultimate response to the violence must be political.

"Israel's dysfunctional coalition system," as Klein Halevi describes it, must be permanently reformed.

"The real threat to Israeli society comes not from the acts of haredi extremists but from the distorted relationship of the haredi community to the state. Haredim not only exclude themselves from the responsibilities of Israeli citizenship but demand that the mainstream subsidize their separatism."

Klein Halevi concludes as so many others concerned for Israel have concluded: "The large major political parties [must] join together to change the current coalition system, which allows minority parties to force their will on the majority."

As urgent a place as the Iranian threat, the rise of Arab Islamism in the Middle East or the moribund peace process with the Palestinians occupy on the national agenda of the State of Israel, so, too, should the subject of electoral reform.

If the State of Israel is to be eternally for the citizens of Israel and for the people of Israel, the government of Israel must set to this task as a matter of the highest national priority.

–MBD

Ministers to meet with Israeli counterparts

Continued from page 3

Fogel said his organization had issued invitations to both Lieberman and Steinitz to attend the reception for the Canadian ministers, but as of the weekend, neither had confirmed their attendance. However, he expressed certainty that both Baird and Flaherty would meet with their counterparts and participate in a series of bilateral discussions that would also "extend beyond their direct counterparts as well."

"I understand that there will be time spent with both Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President Shimon Peres as well," he added.

According to Fogel, most of the trip will be spent travelling within Israel, with Baird scheduled to make stops at Yad Vashem and present a keynote speech at the annual Herzliyah Conference and Flaherty scheduled to meet with members of Israel's financial community.

Yuval Steinitz

Avigdor Lieberman

'Chinese Schindler' to be honoured by MPs

Sheri Shefa
Staff Reporter

Three Toronto MPs will come together Thursday night to honour a man some refer to as the Chinese Oskar Schindler.

The late Feng Shan Ho, a Chinese diplomat who helped thousands of Jews escape Nazi-occupied Austria by granting them immigration visas from 1938 to 1940, will be honoured by York Centre MP Mark Adler, Willowdale MP Chungsen Leung and Etobicoke-Centre MP Ted Opitz at the Hillcrest Library on Jan. 26 at 6:30 p.m.

Speaking from her home in San Francisco, Ho's daughter, Manli Ho, said she is very proud that her father is being honoured and that people are beginning to learn about his life-saving actions.

She said it wasn't until her father died in 1997 at the age of 96 that she learned about how he helped Jews escape Austria.

Feng Shan Ho
[Ho Family Collection]

Manli said she has since spent more than a decade researching her father's past and is working on a book.

She said her father had been very vague about his years as the Chinese consul general in Vienna, but in the weeks following his death, she began to do some research and discovered that he issued immigration visas to Jews who were desperate to escape Vienna after Nazi Germany's annexation of Austria in 1938.

"When I started, [his story] really was virtually unknown. No one had heard about my father," she said.

Few countries were willing to open their doors to Jews, but Ho, who had a "liberal policy," authorized visas to anyone who asked.

Word quickly spread among the Jewish population that the Chinese consulate was granting papers. In the months before the outbreak of war, Ho issued thousands of visas, averaging 500 a month.

Manli said that, interestingly, in 1937, after Japan invaded China, visas to Shanghai issued by Chinese diplomats were virtually worthless. She explained that Shanghai's harbour had no passport control, meaning anyone could cross the border into China unchecked.

But the visas weren't necessarily tickets into Shanghai. Rather, they were tickets out of Vienna.

She said issuing end-destination visas to Shanghai was a ploy to provide Jewish refugees with the proof of emigration required by Nazi authorities to leave Austria.

"I have one quote from [his memoirs] that said, 'Visas to Shanghai were in name only. It was really a means to facilitate people to get out of Austria.'"

The visas even helped Jews who were imprisoned in Dachau and Buchenwald concentration camps prior to the war.

"If your father, brother or uncle had been arrested... and deported to Dachau or Buchenwald, if you went to the Gestapo and said, 'Look, look, look – I have a visa, I have proof that he can emigrate somewhere,' they let him go," she said.

As many as 18,000 Jews reached Shanghai, and thousands more used their visas to reach other destinations, including Palestine, the Philippines and Cuba.

Manli said that when she began researching her father's past, "I started looking for people... who had gotten these visas."

The first survivor she tracked down who had kept a visa that her father had issued was Toronto resident Eric Goldstaub.

"As a result of my finding survivors like Eric Goldstaub and his cousin, Harry, who was born in Shanghai... people like them wrote into Yad Vashem and Yad Vashem investigated, and three years after my father's death, they designated my father as Righteous Among the Nations [in 2000]."

Adler, who will be speaking at Thursday's event from the perspective as a son of a Holocaust survivor, praised Ho as an example of one of the countless "unsung heroes" who helped Jews survive.

"There are a lot of unsung heroes that did a lot of good work at the time and rescued a lot of lives, and I think there are probably dozens and dozens more that we don't know about and probably will never know about," Adler said.

Goldstaub, a 90-year-old Willowdale resident who was issued 20 visas for himself and his family members by Ho in 1938, plans to attend the event.

In November, Goldstaub told the *National Post* that he owes his life to Ho.

"If I never knocked on that door in Vienna, I would have been in a concentration camp," he said. "And I would have died, I am almost sure of that. Our whole family would have died. We needed Feng Shan Ho. He saved us. It was a miracle."

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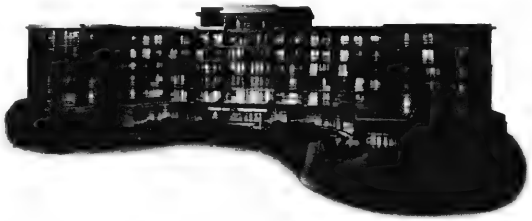

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Technion's contribution to Israeli economy lauded

Dinner honours new Generation Next project

Sheri Shefa
Staff Reporter

Technion professor emeritus Shlomo Maital was in Toronto last week to share inspirational success stories about Israel's technology institute.

The Canadian Technion Society (CTS), which raises funds and awareness for Haifa's Technion – Israel Institute of Technology, organized a dinner in honour of the new Generation Next project, an initiative to attract the 25-to-45 crowd to become involved with the organization.

The event, held at Dr. Laffa restaurant in North York and led by CTS national development director Hershel Recht, Generation Next chair Jack Bensimon, and CTS president Eddie Pal, brought together about 25 young professionals who represent the future of the organization.

Shlomo Maital

Technion's Maital, an author, researcher and educator who also taught at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) for 20 years, began his lecture by referencing a study that documented MIT's contribution to the U.S. economy.

"It showed that 26,000 businesses were started by MIT grads and if you put their GDP, their product, their value together, it would be an economy that would be the 11th largest in the world. I wondered about the Technion," said Maital, who has served in Israel's economic ministry and is about to release a book he co-authored with Technion professor Amnon Frenkel called *Technion Nation: Technion's Contribution to Israel and to Humanity.*

He said that it cost about $1 billion to educate the 2010 undergraduate class, but their contribution to Israel's economy is expected to be an estimated $1.76 billion to nearly $3 billion a year.

However, Maital stressed, the success of Technion graduates shouldn't be documented using statistics, facts and figures alone.

The book, scheduled for release in June, will also present stories about the contributions Technion graduates have made to Israeli society and the rest of the world.

Maital referred to 2004 Nobel Prize winners and Technion professors Avram Hershko and Aaron Ciechanover, who, along with American scientist Irwin Rose, discovered ubiquitin, a protein that causes cells to turn off and die.

"Everyone in biology was studying how cells live and divide. Hershko thought it would be great to study how cells died," Maital said.

"Everyone told him, 'That's a graveyard for your career. Nobody cares how and why cells die.' It turns out when cells don't die, they become something called cancer."

Maital said that based on these findings, a pharmaceutical company developed a drug that kills cells before they can develop into cancer cells.

Maital added that one of Hershko's friends has benefited from his scientific work. When his friend was diagnosed with stage-three myeloma – a bone marrow cancer that gave him about five years to live – the drug that was produced based on Hershko's discovery worked to slow down the development of the cancer, adding years to his life.

Another inspirational story Maital shared highlighted the work of Technion electrical engineering graduate Amit Goffer, who was involved in an accident that left him unable to walk and confined to a wheelchair.

Instead of being resigned to his fate as a quadriplegic, "He asked, 'How can you take people who cannot move their legs and put them on their feet and enable them to walk?' That's a question with a lot of chutzpah, even to ask the question," Maital said.

Goffer designed a prototype he called an exoskeleton, a mechanical device that a person wears on his legs.

"When a person leans forward, the computer senses that and moves the leg, and then the other leg."

The technology is called ReWalk, and it enables people with lower-limb disabilities to stand, walk, and even climb stairs.

"The device is being used now in veterans hospitals in the U.S. to help soldiers who've been wounded and crippled by war to walk. And you can imagine what that feels like for a 21-year-old ex-marine who is in a wheelchair, to be able to stand up and walk," he said.

Maital, who said he was asked to keep his talk brief, stopped himself from sharing many more awe-inspiring stories that showcase Technion's positive contribution to the world. But he encouraged the gathering to learn more about the technology institute and help the next generation of Technion students turn their ideas into something tangible.

"The thing about the Technion... is that the scientists who have made these discoveries, mostly are not satisfied with writing academic papers. They like to... implement their ideas."

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Hillel starts new group for gay students

Sheri Shefa
Staff Reporter

Hillel of Greater Toronto has launched a new group to help gay Jewish students and young professionals bridge their cultural and sexual identities.

LGBTQ Jews, which represents lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and queer young Jews, was founded to address a need expressed by Toronto-area students, said Sara Cuneo, Hillel of Greater Toronto's engagement co-ordinator.

"We recognized that among our student base there are LGBTQ Jewish students who wanted to see out of Hillel some sort of program or service that would be catered towards that population," she said.

Until recently, Hillel partially funded Kulanu Toronto, a social group for Jewish LGBTQ people of all ages.

Cuneo said Hillel saw a need to start another group that catered specifically to students and young professionals.

"The people who come out to Kulanu events tend to be of an older demographic, so there was an expressed need from Hillel students and young professionals that they wanted something that targeted their [age group]," she said.

The logo of the LGBTQ Jewish group

"Kulanu for us really stands as a model for what LGBTQ programming can look like. We're also interested in providing social and cultural programs to students and young professionals and they've really done a lot of groundbreaking work in the community," Cuneo said, adding that Kulanu's executive director Justine Apple helped put her in touch with students and youths who would be interested in the new group.

On Jan. 19, LGBTQ Jews held its kick-off event, a meet-and-greet held at the Wolfond Centre for Campus Jewish Life, which later moved to a local University of Toronto pub called the Red Room.

"The response we've gotten has just been incredible. People are coming out of the woodwork and saying, 'Thank you, we really wanted to see this happen,'" Cuneo said.

Ryan Kraft, a 28-year-old at George Brown College studying to be a sign language interepreter, said he's thrilled about joining the new Hillel initiative.

"We're all really excited about it. This is an important community group and we're thrilled that this is coming together," said Kraft, who came out to his family when he was a 15-year-old student at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto.

Kraft said he's encouraged that people seem to be more accepting and aware of people's sexual identities.

"It is a different world from when I came out 13 years ago," he said. "There are a lot more resources now than there were when I was younger, and I think taking advantage of those resources is really important.

"Groups like [Tanenbaum] CHAT's new gay-straight alliance is an excellent, excellent initiative, and I think LGBTQ Jews is an excellent initiative."

Cuneo said she hopes to network and co-ordinate with other like-minded campus groups including U of T's LGBTOUT, which might have Jewish members who could be interested in Hillel's programing.

Kraft added that in addition to social events, LGBTQ Jews also plans to hold educational programs, including bringing in representatives from Aguda, the Israeli LBGT advocacy organization, to do a presentation.

Cuneo said this group offers people the opportunity "to explore the intersection of religious and sexual identities.

"I think it is important to let students who identify as LGBTQ to know that it is possible to bridge the two identities and that they don't have to be at odds with one another."

For more information, contact sara.cuneo@hillel-toronto.org.

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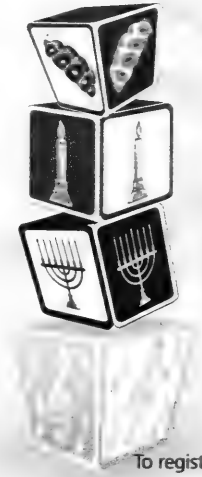

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The world shifts

Seldom has there been as succinct an assessment of the Iranian regime's statements about the peaceful purposes of its nuclear program than that made by Prime Minister Stephen Harper to the CBC last week.

"There is absolutely no doubt they are lying," the prime minister said.

Iran's scheme to develop nuclear weapons "is just beyond dispute at this point," he added. "The only dispute is how far advanced it is and how far off it will be until they actually develop those weapons and develop the capability of delivering the weapons."

As Harper also suggested in the interview, a majority of world leaders have arrived at the same conclusion. Of late some of these leaders seem to be shifting their policies on Tehran to reflect their growing concerns and worries.

For example, as reported in the London *Telegraph*, after a visit to the Gulf States last week, itself an unsubtle act of diplomatic message-sending undoubtedly not lost on the Iranian regime, Chinese premier Wen Jiabao said that "China adamantly opposes Iran developing and possessing nuclear weapons."

Far more pointedly, China has also decided to speak to Iran in a language that cuts far deeper than a strong political statement about nuclear weapons. The *Washington Post* recently reported that China reduced its January oil imports from Iran from a daily average of around 550,000 barrels to 285,000 barrels a day.

The United States has already implemented a newer level of banking system sanctions against the Iranian regime that have reportedly started to severely affect the Iranian economy. And the European Union is also currently considering implementing wide sanctions against Iran and cuts in Iranian oil imports. Frustrated and feeling the economic strain, the Iranians have lashed out, threatened to close the Strait of Hormuz, put on more demonstrations of military swagger and once again boasted of their progress in the enrichment of their uranium.

Against this turbulent international scenario, the chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Martin Dempsey, visited Israel last weekend to meet with the Israeli political and military leadership.

At the end of his visit all Dempsey would say about his purpose in Israel was to "advance a shared understanding of the security situation in the region."

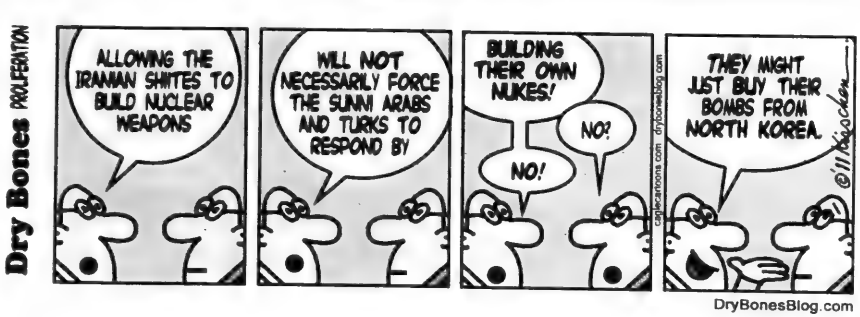
Iran was clearly the subject of discussion. Israel and the United States are taking all necessary steps to ensure the lines of communication and co-ordination between them are constantly engaged.

In his CBC interview, Harper said he was frightened by the government in Tehran. "I've watched and listened to what the leadership in the Iranian regime says, and it frightens me."

We should all be frightened. Apparently most of the world is.

25 years ago in *The CJN*

CRIF, the umbrella group for French Jewry, urged Jews in Lebanon to leave immediately to save their lives after a Shiite terror group said it had killed another Jewish kidnap victim, bringing to nine the number of Lebanese Jews kidnapped and murdered in less than two years. The latest was a 70-year-old man whose two sons were also killed. Two other kidnapped Jews were believed to be still alive.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Not easy to establish a museum

In the article "Cash shortfall delays human rights museum" (Jan. 5), you note that the private sector's fundraising goal for the Canadian Museum for Human Rights was $150 million. When the federal government first expressed interest in making the museum a Crown corporation, it entered into an agreement in 2007 with the various stakeholders, including the Friends of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. The Friends agreed to raise $105 million toward the construction and development costs. The commitment of the Friends was to deliver a cheque for $105 million by April 1, 2011. This is what the Friends did, so in fact, we met our goal of raising $105 million. Recently, when costs increased to $310 million, the museum asked the Friends to increase their goal from $105 million to $150 million. We have been steadily working on raising this amount and have raised an additional $25 million over our original goal, which in and of itself was viewed as quite ambitious.

We will continue to seek support from the private sector so that this federal Crown corporation can open as soon as possible. Happily, our donors continue to show unwavering support and are rising to the challenge. As we have said to our supporters, no one said this would be easy, and it probably explains why this is the only new national museum established in more than 45 years. While it is definitely not for the faint of heart, the good that this museum can do definitely makes it worth the effort.

Gail Asper
National Campaign Chair
The Friends of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights

* * *

Pfefferkorn's Holocaust memoir (1)

Eli Pfefferkorn's powerful new Holocaust memoir, *The Muselmann at the Water Cooler*, tells the story of a life impacted by the Holocaust, a worldview shaped by its trauma, beyond detailing the horrors that have been painfully shared by others ("Memoir as literature," Dec. 22). Reading it, I often felt that he concealed the terrible details of his experience, even as he openly shared his reflections on them and their relationship to our lives.

Some years ago, students at Or Chaim-Ulpanat Orot visited public and Catholic schools in Toronto and presented on the Holocaust. I asked Pfefferkorn to help guide us in creating the curriculum. Looking back, I see that the same themes that animate his writings were the very notions he encouraged the students to think about and confront – and which you raise in your column – as they thought about presenting to a non-Jewish audience. This vision added to the power and impact this program had.

Rafi Cashman
Toronto

LET THEM GO...

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz

* * *

Pfefferkorn's Holocaust memoir (2)

You are to be commended for your extremely positive review of Eli Pfefferkorn's book *The Muselmann at the Watercooler* ("Memoir as literature," Dec. 22). However, at the end of your review, you left readers with the impression that the book is "hard reading." Yes, the Holocaust is a difficult subject, but how can such a riveting account, one that draws in the reader from the very first page, be "hard reading"? After having read Pfefferkorn's book, I would agree only insofar as it is a hard book to put down.

Vivian Felsen
Toronto

* * *

Misplaced nostalgia for BJCC

Although the new JCC will not be opening until 2016, it's important to remember that the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto waited until a new, contemporary exercise facility was built before the old Bathurst Jewish Community Centre was demolished. It is currently operating on the same site ("Federation says new JCC to open in 2016," Jan. 5). The article seems to make light of the fact that this facility is already operating at 80 per cent capacity. There seems to be a lot of misplaced nostalgia about the BJCC. The truth is that when I was using the facility as a member on numerous occasions, we never knew the temperature of the shower to expect, and we were often appalled by the rundown nature of the building. What is now available is a vast improvement over what was.

Ed Rosenberg
Toronto

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The Iranian nuclear threat to Israel

What are the remaining options?

Louis René Beres

On Jan. 16, 2003, Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon was advised by a security policy group about the threat of Iranian nuclear weapons.

This report by the Daniel Project Group, which contained substantial legal and strategic recommendations, urged the prime minister to suitably enhance Israel's deterrence and defence postures; to consider a prompt end to deliberate nuclear ambiguity (if Iran should be permitted to become nuclear), and to appropriately refine pertinent pre-emption options. It also concluded that Israel should not expect stable coexistence with a nuclear Iran and that active national defence should be increased and strengthened accordingly.

Israel's active defence strategy involves mutually reinforcing the Arrow, Iron Dome and, in the future, Magic Wand missile systems. To adequately protect against a potential attack of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) from Iran, however, these advanced elements of ballistic missile defence are not enough. They must be complemented by improved Israeli nuclear deterrence and by a capacity for viable conventional first strikes against selected Iranian military and industrial targets. Under no circumstances, advised Project Daniel, should Israel assume that a safe and durable "balance of terror" could ever be created with Tehran.

Generally, in strategic thinking, deterrence logic must be based on an assumption of enemy rationality. This assumption might not always be warranted in the case of Iran. Any purported analogy between Iran and the United States deterrence relationship with the former Soviet Union would be facile or simply misguided.

If Iran's current leadership could somehow meet the core test of rationality, always valuing national survival over other preferences or combination of preferences, there could still remain intolerable security risks to Israel. In part, these risks would be associated with Tehran's expectedly problematic command and control of any future nuclear capabilities. For example, even a determinedly rational Iranian leadership could base critical nuclear decisions upon erroneous information, assorted computer errors, or fragile pre-delegations of launch authority.

The related vulnerability of command and control to violent regime overthrow in Tehran must also be taken into close account by decision makers in Jerusalem. Ironically, there can be no assurances that any new or "improved" regime in Iran would necessarily pose a diminished security threat to Israel.

If Israel's active defence systems were accurately presumed 100 per cent effective, even an irrational Iranian adversary armed with nuclear or biological weapons could be kept at bay without defensive first strikes or any threats of retaliation. But no ballistic missile defence system can ever be "leak proof."

Terrorist proxies in ships or trucks, not missiles, could deliver Iranian nuclear attacks upon Israel. In such low-tech but distinctly high-consequence assaults, there would be no security benefit to Israel from its deployed anti-missile defences.

Israel can never depend entirely upon its anti-ballistic missiles to defend against future WMD attacks from Iran any more than it can rely entirely on nuclear deterrence. This does not mean that active defence is a less than vital part of Israel's larger security apparatus. It is vital, but it is not sufficient.

Israeli Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Benny Gantz, right, and U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Army Gen. Martin Dempsey, salute during a welcoming ceremony in a military base in Tel Aviv, last Friday. Dempsey began an intense string of closed talks with Israeli leaders, amid apparent disagreements between the two countries over how to handle Iran's nuclear program. ***[Gideon Markowicz/FLASH90 photo]***

Every state has a right under international law to act pre-emptively when facing potentially existential aggression. The 1996 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice even extends such lawful authority to the pre-emptive use of nuclear weapons in certain residual or last-resort circumstances. For now, however, any purposeful Israeli resort to "anticipatory self-defence" would surely be non-nuclear.

Nonetheless, it is quite likely that the operational window for any such cost-effective conventional tactic has already closed and that Israel would decline any remaining nuclear pre-emption option, albeit lawful. For now, it seems that any Israeli "pre-emption" would necessarily be far more limited, perhaps involving the targeted killing of selected enemy scientists or military figures and substantially expanded cyber-warfare.

If Iran should be allowed to become nuclear, in plain contravention of its Non-Proliferation Treaty obligations, Israel would immediately need to enhance the credibility of its (presumed) nuclear deterrent. This robust second-strike strategic force, hardened, multiplied, and dispersed, would have to be fashioned, observably, to inflict a decisive retaliatory blow against selected enemy cities. In military terms, this means for Israel a more openly counter value-targeted nuclear force.

Significantly, the dangers of a nuclear Iran could directly impact the United States. While it might still be several years before any Iranian missiles could strike American territory, the United States could still become as vulnerable as Israel to certain nuclear-armed terrorist surrogates. In this connection, any American plan for a "rogue state" anti-ballistic missile shield, for us and our NATO allies, would have precisely the same limited protection benefits as Israel's already-deployed active defence systems.

As long as Iran proudly announces its literally genocidal intentions toward Israel, while simultaneously and illegally developing nuclear weapons and infrastructures, Jerusalem has no reasonable choice but to protect itself with the best means available.

Under long-standing international law, every government's most basic and incontestable obligation is the assurance of protection to its citizens.

Louis René Beres is a professor of international law at Purdue University. This essay was published as a Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies Perspectives paper.

Societal rifts threaten Israeli democracy

Deep divisions inherent in the civil society of Israel have finally come into the public eye. With the repulsive attack on an eight-year-old girl in Beit Shemesh, haredim made a statement about their intent. This most recent event has been accompanied by a public display of choleric fundamentalism demonstrated by repeated haredi attempts to segregate women in public areas.

The outrage in Beit Shemesh would have gone unnoticed had it not been so egregious: a religious child on her way to a *dati* school was verbally abused by the self-named *sicarii* (more about that later) for not being modestly dressed. Who knew that there was a salafist sect within Judaism? The frightening skirmish over a child made headlines, revealing what we should have known a long time ago: Israeli society has dangerous rifts that, unaddressed, will be more dangerous than 10 Arab armies.

Jean M. Gerber

in Vancouver

The destruction of the Second Temple was accompanied by vicious internal bloodshed, with Jew fighting Jew. Hence the rabbis' dictum that hatred between Jew and Jew caused its downfall. The *sicarii* were the anti-Roman uprising's most infamous fighters, stabbing any Jew they decided was a traitor to their cause. Their weapon of choice, the blade, gained them the name. That some haredim have adopted this sobriquet is beyond frightening, until we realize that the schools to which these people go have taught them no Jewish history whatsoever. Or is that even more alarming?

Now readers of our dailies and listeners to CBC know that in parts of Israel women are segregated to the back of the bus. Those of us old enough to recall that epithet shudder at the overtones. "Women to the back!" can be easily heard as "Blacks to the back," and we all know where that ended.

While some may claim that the women doing this are "secular," making a provocation, no one can argue that Yocheved Horowitz is anything but a God-fearing and educated haredi woman. A member of the Gurer Hasidim, she, too, has been yelled at and denigrated within her community for rightly pointing out the wrong-headedness of this bus tommyrot.

My own *dati* friends in Israel tell me that such verbal (and sometimes more physical) attacks are not uncommon, and becoming more common. Sometimes it appears that the perpetrators want to empty a neighbourhood for their own followers to occupy. Could this be the case in Beit Shemesh?

More distressingly, they also retain their grip on political power and the amazing amounts of money that flow into their systems from a government cravenly beholden to them in the Knesset.

These incidents, and so many more that we may never hear about, point to a darker reality.

A system of separate and unregulated schools for sectarian communities – seemingly designed to accommodate a few at the inception of the state – now threatens to overwhelm not just the political life of the country, but its most cherished values of democracy, freedom from religious persecution (in this instance being perpetrated by the haredim and some chassidic sects), and equality for men and women in all walks of life.

A few dozen Israeli women participated in a flash-mob dance event on Ben Yehuda Street in the centre of Jerusalem last week. The flash mob was organized in response to the demand by some religious bodies to exclude women from public life in Israeli society. ***[Flash90 photo]***

The separation of state and synagogue has been eroded by years of bowing to demands by sectarian political parties for a place at the governing table, enabled by Israel's bizarre voting system. It has been weakened considerably by the growth of schools that teach not the values of a democracy, but the demands of a narrow theocracy. Both the political and cultural stresses on civil society have been exposed by these latest happenings.

Some haredim claim that, once things die down, they can deal with the extremists internally. A few others, such as Yocheved, have gone public and suffered for it, among the threats being that no one will marry their children.

How to begin to address these issues?

Public services need to stand firm against attempts to make them into private apartheid places. Politicians need to overcome their addiction to haredi and extremist parties. No less importantly – indeed crucially – the education system in Israel must be reconfigured.

Those within the haredi community who know that change has to come from within need to open their schools and minds to see that they are a part of a wonderful, flawed state, along with every other citizen of Israel. As with so much, change can only happen from within.

What would Zach do?

My son, Josh, led a leadership seminar with the title "What would Zach do?" Zach is his son. I'm borrowing this title and idea from Josh.

As many of you know, my husband had a stroke. At the time, Zach was preparing for his bar mitzvah. It was to take place in the same synagogue as my husband's own bar mitzvah celebration 58 years ago. It soon became obvious to all that Howard and I would not be able to go to New York for that occasion. So Zach and his parents had a decision to make. The parents left it up to Zach. Children surprise us. Zach's reasoning throughout this whole event amazed all of us who know him so well and perhaps, were ready to sell him short. Many adults think: "Kids! What do they know? Kids! What are they capable of?"

Zach thought: "I have only one *Saba* [grandfather in Hebrew]. He can't travel here, so we should go there for the bar mitzvah." This was a big sacrifice, but somehow he didn't see it that way.

Can we as a community sometimes understand our own decisions and actions in so simple a manner? If they won't come here, we should go there. It reminds me of Abraham's decision to move his entire camp so that his nephew's crew could choose their land and the fighting between sheep herders would stop. There was no arguing about who was correct – no negotiating, no side battles.

But that wasn't the end of our story, or even the most poignant leadership moment. On the big day itself, Zach assumed a role no one could have envisioned.

The time came in the Shabbat service for Zach to start reading the Torah. But *Saba* was not there. We were late. Oy! So Zach told his father: "I came here to share my bar mitzvah with my one grandfather. It makes no sense for me to start before he gets here. Let's wait."

What to do? Could an entire congregation wait?

Howard was their rabbi emeritus, but there is a principle of Jewish law that we don't place a burden on the entire community (*tircha d'tsibburah*). How can the service be stopped and everyone be made to wait? So Zach got up to give a speech. He would teach the congregation some of his grandfather's Torah – the teachings that Howard had taught Zach over the years. An impromptu speech followed. Slowly but surely, with help from others, Zach had his way. Everyone waited until his grandfather arrived and he could start properly.

Aside from bragging, what's my point?

Zach led the congregation that day with straightforward logic. His ritual passage into Jewish manhood ended up being a real rite of transformation. He demonstrated for us an adult understanding of the purpose of the ritual and celebration. His community centred on family, and for him his grandfather was a central pin. To pull that pin out was to remove a core. We could not. Moreover, he wasn't shy in front of other rabbis and congregants to state his need and his view. He was Zach, a person with a perspective, and he counted. So he could tell us to wait. And he was right.

Norma Baumel Joseph

in Montreal

Josh used this quote from the late management professor Peter Drucker to further the discourse: "Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things."

In this context, doing things right would have meant continuing services in a timely pattern. That is usually the correct approach, for surely we cannot establish a pattern whereby the congregation waits for latecomers. But leaders recognize those times when doing the right thing requires leaving the secure path of the way things are always done and following a new need.

In the future, I will ask myself, "What would Zach do" when faced with students whose needs or course work differ from university protocol.

Finally, I must add that while all this was buzzing in my head, I realized that there were narratives in the biblical text that have bothered me because I thought they represented examples of the ends justifying the means. But after this experience, I began to re-examine them in light of Zach, and I now think of many as stories in which the actors did the right thing, instead of doing things correctly.

The new Egypt poses fresh challenges to Israel

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

In an announcement earlier this month, Egypt's military rulers proclaimed Jan. 25 as an official holiday to mark the first anniversary of the 18-day national uprising that led to the ouster of Hosni Mubarak's authoritarian regime. Roughly 800 protesters were killed during that brief rebellion, which doomed a secular, pro-western government that broadly honoured Egypt's historic peace treaty with Israel.

While many Egyptians regard the holiday in celebratory terms and look forward to the day when Egypt will truly be a beacon of democracy in the Arab world, Israel is wary, fearing the unintended consequences of democratization.

Free elections in the Gaza Strip in 2006 brought Hamas – Israel's Islamist arch-enemy – to power. Now, in Egypt, two formerly banned Islamic fundamentalist political parties that are just as unfriendly to Israel, the Muslim Brotherhood and Al-Nour, have won about two-thirds of the seats in parliamentary elections.

Egypt is thus on the cusp of acquiring an Islamic government.

Reading the handwriting on the wall, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu recently predicted that Israel cannot realistically expect to have the same level of "intimacy" with the new Egypt.

Although he observed that Egypt has a vested interest in preserving its 1979 peace treaty with Israel, a cornerstone of Israel's strategic doctrine, he added a telling caveat: "We may find ourselves in an environment more hostile than ever."

More ominously still, Netanyahu noted that Israel cannot solely rely on the peace treaty for its security in the south, warning that it "could come undone."

Since the momentous uprising in Egypt, a by-product of the so-called Arab Spring in the Middle East, Israel has increased military spending and upgraded defences adjacent to the porous Egyptian border.

Along the entire frontier, Israel is continuing to build a security fence, which was originally envisaged as a barrier to stem the infiltration of illegal migrants from Africa.

Since Mubarak's downfall, Israel has had reason to be concerned by developments in the Arab world's historically most important, and populous, country.

A wide range of Egyptian politicians have questioned the peace treaty, although the head of Egypt's ruling military council, Field Marshal Mohammed Hussein Tantawi, has declared that previously signed agreements will be respected.

The Muslim Brotherhood, however, has projected a mixed message. It has called for a review of the treaty, and one of its spokesmen has recommended that it be subjected to a referendum. The party's vice-chair, meanwhile, has said that relations with Israel will be determined by its treatment of the Palestinians.

Al-Nour, which is more radical than the Muslim Brotherhood, has indicated it will respect the treaty.

Egypt's former prime minister, Essam Sharaf, has said that the Camp David accords, which underpin the treaty, is not "a sacred thing and is always open to discussion." Nabil El-Araby, the Egyptian secretary general of the Arab League, has said the treaty is not as sacred as the Qur'an.

One of the treaty's most ardent defenders in Egypt is its former ambassador to Israel, Mohammed Bassiouny, who served from 1988 to 2001. By his reckoning, it enabled Egypt to regain the Sinai Peninsula, stabilized the region, enhanced the importance of the Suez Canal flows and Egypt's ties with the West, and increased foreign investment.

Nevertheless, many Egyptians want to revoke the treaty. According to a Pew Research Center poll conducted last year, 36 per cent of Egyptians are in favour of maintaining it, while 54 per cent want it scrapped.

Observers were not surprised by the results of this survey. On the grassroots level, as well as in intellectual circles, anti-Israel sentiments run deep in Egypt.

Last September, in an unprecedented turn of events, the Israeli embassy in Cairo was sacked as police stood idly by. The attack, which came on the heels of an incident in which a protester climbed up to the embassy and tore down the Israeli flag, forced Israel to evacuate the building and fly most of its diplomats home.

Prior to these events, thousands of Egyptians marched to the Israeli consulate in Alexandria on two separate occasions, chanting pro-Palestinian slogans and demanding a complete halt in Egypt's co-operation, such as it is, with Israel.

Israel, too, is concerned by the deteriorating security situation in the Sinai Peninsula. Last August, a band of Palestinian terrorists crossed into the Sinai from the Gaza Strip and murdered eight Israelis, six civilians and two soldiers, in the Negev. Israel retaliated, killing six Palestinians. Amid the fighting, Israel accidentally killed several Egyptian policemen and soldiers.

Egypt lodged an official protest and threatened to recall its ambassador in Tel Aviv, but was dissuaded from doing so by the United States. Israel defused the crisis by issuing a statement of regret for the deaths of the Egyptians.

Given the lawlessness that has prevailed in the Sinai since 2011, Israel has permitted Egypt to station more troops there than allowed by the Camp David accords.

But the deployments have not made much of a difference so far. Although Egypt claims that the security situation is well in hand, smugglers transporting arms into Gaza are operating freely, and the pipeline there that supplies Israel with 40 per cent of its gas has been blown up 10 times since last spring.

These repeated acts of sabotage emboldened Netanyahu to say that Egypt has had a "hard time" controlling the Sinai. Strangely enough, Netanyahu's comment angered Egypt's ambassador to the Palestinian Authority, Yasser Othman, who claimed that Israel is plotting to retake the Sinai.

The pipeline issue has aroused indignation in Egypt.

Egyptians who are critical of the 2005 deal in which Egypt agreed to ship gas to Israel for the next 20 years contend that Mubarak, his son and their cronies improperly negotiated the sale of gas to Israel at disadvantageous prices. Amid the furor, the former minister of energy and five ministry employees have been arrested, having been accused of cheating the state out of more than $700 million.

Mohammed Bassiouny

Much to Israel's concern, Egypt has loosened border controls at the Rafah crossing leading into Gaza. During the Mubarak era, the border was opened only sporadically, ensuring that terrorists did not slip into Israel.

To Israel's additional annoyance, Egypt has established better relations with Hamas. Last May, Egypt brokered a Fatah-Hamas reconciliation agreement, which remains unimplemented. Egypt claimed that the pact would end Palestinian divisions and thus uplift the prospects for peace with Israel. Israel has warned that Hamas' inclusion in the Palestinian Authority will dash the chances for peace.

In yet other signs of the times, Egypt permitted the passage of two Iranian warships through the Suez Canal for the first time in three decades and informed Israel that Jewish pilgrims will no longer be able to visit the tomb of Yaakov Abu Hatzira, a revered 19th-century rabbi, in the Nile Delta.

And in line with its traditional Mideast policy, Egypt has continued to criticize Israel's settlement activities in eastern Jerusalem and the West Bank.

It's evident that Israel faces a new reality in Egypt since last year's uprising.

I feel fortunate to follow in my father's footsteps.

My father grew up in a world of uncertainty and volatility. He came to Canada, worked hard to build a successful business and a stable life for his family. Part of that stability is the Romspen Mortgage Fund which has delivered a reliable fixed income to both of us each and every month. It's important that my father has an investment he trusts. Knowing that he doesn't have to worry is very comforting to me.

Leon Katz (with father Eugene)

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Sledge hockey champ to speak about literacy struggles

Cara Edell
Special to The CJN

Paul Rosen

Paul Rosen, a Canadian sledge hockey gold medallist, is not only a winner on the ice. Having recently confronted his secret struggle with reading and writing, the Thornhill, Ont., native has become a literacy awareness champion.

On Jan. 27, Rosen will take part in ABC Life Literacy Canada's Family Literacy Day and spread his message about the importance of learning. Rosen will make an appearance at the Hershey Centre, where the Ontario Hockey League's Mississauga Majors and Peterborough Petes are scheduled to battle on the ice.

Family Literacy Day is a national initiative created by ABC Life Literacy Canada in 1999 to raise awareness of the importance of reading and engaging in other literacy-related activities as a family.

While hockey and skating are classic Canadian pastimes, they also teach great life lessons, said Rosen, a Life Literacy Ambassador and Family Literacy Day spokesperson.

"Sport offers tremendous learning opportunities, whether you play the game or watch it from the stands. I will be teaching fans a bit about sledge hockey and challenging lucky fans to take part in an on-ice competition. It's going to be a fun night of learning and growing together."

Rosen, 51, suffered a leg injury during a hockey game as a teenager. The damage, infections and pain plagued him for years, until his lower leg was amputated when he was 39. During rehabilitation, Rosen became interested in sledge hockey – ice hockey for people with physical disabilities – and within one year, he made the Canadian National Sledge Hockey Team.

At age 41, Rosen was the oldest rookie in the history of the sport when he played for Team Canada at the 2002 Salt Lake City Paralympics. At the 2006 Games in Torino, the Canadian team won the sledge hockey gold medal.

While Rosen is currently ranked as the number 1 sledge hockey goaltender in the world, he says overcoming his challenges with reading and writing has been equally fulfilling.

After six months of courses, he went from a Grade 6 reading level to a university reading level. He said he was inspired to go public with his story after Jacques Demers, a former head coach in the NHL, who is now a Canadian senator, revealed his own struggles with literacy a few years ago.

"This doesn't have any boundaries," Rosen said. "You can be anyone in the spotlight and still have difficulties with reading and writing. It's not your fault."

Rosen said his eldest daughter, who recently had a baby, really pushed him to improve his abilities. "She wanted me to go back and confront my demons from school and show myself that I'm capable of accomplishing anything. I did it for myself and my kids. I can now sit down and read to my grandson."

At the Jan. 27 event, Rosen said he will stress to attendees how anything is possible when you put your mind to it. "Literacy is so important. Reading, writing, education is so important. You can go anywhere in the world by reading a book. If there's a challenge in your life, take it as an opportunity, not an obstacle."

He said being an ABC Life Literacy ambassador is a huge honour. "Education was never something I took seriously growing up. I never read books. I was always ashamed of my struggles. I'm thrilled to have the opportunity and responsibility now to get adults to realize that they don't have to feel embarrassed."

Rosen is now in midst of writing his own life story. "It sends out the message that anything is possible. Dreams can come true, and to believe in someone is so much more rewarding than giving up on them," he said.

For tickets to the game at Hershey Centre, call 905-502-7788, ext. 1, or visit the box office. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. with the puck drop at 7:30 p.m. For more information, visit www.familyliteracyday.ca.

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Multiculturalism based on 'flawed logic:' prof

Paul Lungen
Staff Reporter

Salim Mansur is an immigrant who questions open immigration; a member of a visible minority who's a fierce critic of multiculturalism, and a Muslim who's pained by criticism of his prophet but who would never contemplate penalizing someone for their words.

Last week, the native of India delivered an impassioned defence of individual rights and Enlightenment values while denouncing multiculturalism's collectivist mindset that would put group rights ahead of the individual.

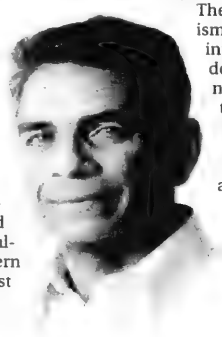
Canada should rid itself of the policy of multiculturalism, which "is based on the fatuous assertion that all cultures are equal," he told about 50 people at a lunchtime address sponsored by Advocates for Civil Liberties and the Canadian Jewish Civil Rights Association.

Mansur, a professor of political science at the University of Western Ontario and a newspaper columnist, recently published *Delectable Lie: A Liberal Repudiation of Multiculturalism*.

The principle of multiculturalism was from its inception, "based on flawed logic and bad faith," he said. Canadian values derive from the Enlightenment's stress on individual rights. "Multiculturalism comes in and is the acid that eats into it."

Bringing an academic's analytical tools to bear on the issue, Mansur said the idea of multiculturalism arose during the 1960s – a troubled decade in which the Cold War was heating up, race relations were hostile, cities were burning, political leaders were being assassinated and students led a revolt in Paris. Following two world wars and anti-colonial struggles, western intellectuals and political leaders "lost their sense of conviction about their own history."

Responding to this "crisis of the spirit" they promoted the idea that all cultures were equal.



Salim Mansur

It was a view that was barely questioned – in certain circles. "To be progressive at the time, the idea was to trash your own culture and civilization," Mansur stated.

Former prime minister Pierre Trudeau introduced the concept into Canadian law in 1971, and support for multiculturalism spread to other western democracies. But in the last year, the leaders of France, Germany, Britain and Holland have all questioned its merits, and the Canadian public has never been as enthusiastic for it as have the country's political and media elite, Mansur said.

"Forty years later, you can see how utterly weak those arguments were... How is the culture of the Taliban equal, when you consider how they discriminate against women and other religions?"

If support for multiculturalism continues unabated, Mansur predicted a vastly different Canada. "Fifty years from now, if all cultures are equal why not have sharia (Islamic) law in Canada" or Sikh or Hindu law for people of those backgrounds, he asked.

Today, "judges are confused," human right commissions try to stifle free speech and students feel stifled on university campuses, he said.

The antidote to multiculturalism is promoting Canada's own intellectual heritage. "Liberal democracy itself is a culture. It's not some fuzzy idea. It is a culture that emanates through five centuries of historical struggle." It places "man as the measure of all things" and the liberal struggle is the struggle for individual freedom, he said.

Adding to the "bad logic" that substituted group rights for individual ones was the "bad faith" approach by politicians who saw multiculturalism as a means to gain favour with hyphenated Canadians, Mansur said.

He called for repeal of Section 13 of the Canadian Human Rights Act, which regulates online hate speech.

And he urged the audience to "respect and engage each other as individuals" and to advance traditional Canadian values of individual rights in their own corner of the world.

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Kenney honours Wallenberg

Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf
Staff Reporter

The Canadian government paid tribute to Raoul Wallenberg last week.

Jan. 17 was Raoul Wallenberg Day in Canada, and Jason Kenney, minister of citizenship, immigration and multiculturalism, issued a statement commemorating the Swedish diplomat who helped save the lives of some 100,000 Hungarian Jews from certain death at the hands of the Nazis.

Raoul Wallenberg

Wallenberg disappeared under mysterious circumstances while in Soviet custody in 1945. While there's no definitive proof, he is presumed dead. He would have turned 100 in August of this year.

Kenney called Wallenberg "one of the greatest heroes of one of the darkest periods of human history."

"In 1985, Wallenberg became the first-ever honorary citizen of Canada," he said. "The government of Canada is committed to carrying on the legacy of Raoul Wallenberg and to being a leader in the international fight against antisemitism."

David Koschitzky, chair of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), called Wallenberg "righteous among the nations" in his own statement issued Jan. 17.

He said Raoul Wallenberg Day serves two purposes: first, that "even a single person of conscience can have an extraordinary impact."

Second, it's a day that should inspire Canadians to "continue to take a firm stand against evil."

"We can best honour his legacy by speaking up and taking action on behalf of those who face persecution around the world," Koschitzky said.

In related news, on Jan. 17, Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti was scheduled to issue a proclamation in council about International Holocaust Remembrance Day, which occurs every year on Jan. 27.

Also scheduled to be in attendance were members of the Azrieli Foundation's Holocaust Survivor Memoirs Program.

Preschool teacher is 'queen of sensory'

By Frances Kraft

Robin Pamensky's supervisor at the Village Shul's Tots Together program, Esther Stein, calls her "the queen of sensory."

At the entrance to Pamensky's preschool classroom, where she works with two assistants, are "sensory" bins filled with winter-themed items. One has plastic shovels and little snowmen encased in rubber balls on a bed of artificial snow that is cold to the touch. Another holds child-sized mittens and Ziploc bags filled with blocks of ice, each surrounding a toy fish for "ice fishing."

Classroom activities also combine seasonal and holiday themes with a Jewish component. A "mitzvah mailbox" holds snowflake-shaped notes highlighting children's good deeds. Around Rosh Hashanah, Pamensky used apple-shaped notes, and notes shaped like leaves reflected an autumn theme.

Young children learn best through their senses, she said. Through free play, she explained, they learn about colour, volume, texture, and language, and at the same time develop their fine motor and cognitive skills.

Pamensky, 46, has a storage room in her house filled with shelves of items she has collected over the years to use in her classrooms. Many of her finds are toys related to sensory development.

Currently working with two- and three-year-olds three mornings a week, Morah Robin, as she's known to the children, has been at the preschool for eight years.

A native of Teaneck, N.J., Pamensky moved to Toronto with her family 15 years ago from Jerusalem. She and her husband, Moshe, a businessman and native of South Africa who moved here at 13, met in New York. Their large brood ranges in age from seven to 21.

Balancing work and home life hasn't been an issue for her. "You manage," she said. "I love what I do... I feel very fortunate."

She enjoys the "very warm, very nurturing" work environment at the shul, as well as its "Jewish *ta'am*," she said.

A graduate of Touro College with a BA in education and Judaic studies, Pamensky began her career as a Grade 1 teacher in New Jersey and worked as a tutor during the seven years she lived in Israel. She obtained her ECE certification after moving to Toronto.

Robin Pamensky *[Frances Kraft photo]*

A lesson from the teacher: *"Each child is a star. Each child needs to shine. It's the responsibility of the teacher to identify each child's strength so that they will shine."*

"I always loved teaching," she said of her passion for her work.

Before she returned to the classroom, while she was a stay-at-home mom, Pamensky wrote a children's book, *Avi's Adventure in the Mitzvah Car*, published by Gefen Publishing House in 1996. She submitted the book, a story in rhyme, on a whim, she said.

In the classroom, humour is useful, Pamensky finds. She might compliment a little girl on her dress, for example, then ask if she can borrow it.

The "key to being successful," especially with such young children, she said, is to be warm, inviting and nurturing, particularly when greeting them in the morning. "I try to have a great big smile, a nice tone, and I try to make each child feel special in some way."

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Shaare Zedek ski fundraiser renamed for late lawyer

Compiled by CJN Staff

The Canadian Shaare Zedek Hospital Foundation has renamed its annual Ski Day fundraising event On the Slopes for Candy in memory of Candy Schaffel Black, who passed away in January 2011.

Schaffel Black was a loyal donor and supporter of On the Slopes Ski Day and the Canadian Shaare Zedek Hospital Foundation and participated in the annual fundraiser every year she was able.

This year's On the Slopes for Candy Snow Day will take place on Feb. 29 at Alpine Ski Club in Collingwood.

Schaffel Black was a well-respected Toronto lawyer who passed away a year ago after a long and brave battle with cancer. Throughout the 7-1/2 years of her treatment, she inspired her family, friends and colleagues with her courage and passion for life.

Schaffel Black and her husband, Philip Black, first became involved with the neonatal clinic at Shaare Zedek in Jerusalem when their eldest daughter was born three months prematurely. At that time, they began to support the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) at Shaare Zedek financially, as well as through volunteerism and by creating a relationship with Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto.

At Candy Schaffel Black's 50th birthday party, from left, Arly, Philip, Candy, Shira and Estee Black

Her roles as a mother of three daughters and as a daughter were of paramount importance in her life and she wanted every woman to experience this joy.

Proceeds from the event will be used to purchase critically needed medical equipment for the NICU at Shaare Zedek.

More than 14,000 babies were born at Shaare Zedek in 2011, making Shaare Zedek's maternity department the most active in the country. The NICU serves approximately 700 high-risk infants annually.

Over the past 15 years, On the Slopes has raised approximately $600,000 to support the hospital in providing life-saving patient care and advanced medical treatment for the population it serves. Shaare Zedek relies heavily on the generosity of donors in the Diaspora, as it doesn't receive any funding from the Israeli government.

For tickets or to make a donation to the On the Slopes for Candy Snow Day, call 416-781-3584 or register online at www.ontheslopes.ca

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Nortel justice system

The mention of Nortel Networks makes many a Canadian cringe. Once the darling of the tech world and the most heavily weighted stock in the Toronto Stock Exchange, today it serves as symbol of failure. The worst one can wish upon a company is wondering if it's another Nortel. The recent sale of its 6,000 patents marked the end of a company that once had a market capitalization of $398 billion.

I write these words as opening arguments are scheduled to be heard in the fraud trial of three of its past executives. It seems that trials of this sort always involve companies that have lost, or are in the process of losing, lots of money. When everyone is making money, people tend to ask fewer questions. This is most unfortunate, as it is highly unlikely that levels of deceit – and their less offensive cousin, cutting corners – are much lower in successful than non-successful companies.

Reading about the trial brought to mind (at least) three basic differences between the approach of secular law and Jewish law in dealing with white collar crime.

The executives are being tried for fraud over $5,000. One of the fundamental rules of Jewish justice is that cases must be tried on a first-come, first- serve basis. A case of $10 million or even $1 billion may not bump a case worth five cents. Justice isn't a numerical concept, but one of fairness and equity, and theft is theft, irrespective of the sum involved.

While it's true that the harm caused to others increases as the numbers increase, a failure to conduct oneself honestly runs much deeper. All theft demonstrates a lack of faith in the Creator and destroys the moral fabric of a person, not to mention the harm done to others. Requiring repayment to the victim – both of the amount stolen, and in most cases a fine equal to such amount – recognizes such harm. Incarcerating people was to be limited to those who posed a physical threat to others.

Money Matters

Rabbi Jay Kelman CA

With the massive dollar amounts of today's cheating executives, amounts that were inconceivable in talmudic times, it's generally impossible to fully compensate the victim. Nonetheless, at no point would one who owes money be able to declare bankruptcy, freeing them from repayment and allowing perpetrators of fraud to later enjoy a luxurious lifestyle without full restitution. Future earnings above a very basic subsistence level would be earmarked for the victims.

As the trial begins, it's instructive to note a basic distinction in acceptable testimony. It's most difficult for people to be objective about themselves. As our sages note, "a person is close to him or herself." Therefore, neither self-incriminating testimony nor that of a close relative is admissible in a Jewish court of law. Nonetheless, there is an exception to this rule: someone who admits that due that to his criminal activity he owes another person money would be obligated to pay. Yet we would not accept the testimony of one who enters a plea bargain to gain a lesser sentence by snitching on his colleagues. Not only does this carry moral rancour, but one cannot trust such testimony even if given under oath.

Send comments to rabbijay@torahinmotion.org.

Book examines haredim through their popular literature

The ideology of modern-day haredi (fervently Orthodox) Judaism is, people imagine, straightforward. Haredim ostensibly derive all their values from classical Jewish texts and traditions and eschew modernity, except in those rare cases when it coincides with Jewish tradition. But Yoel Finkelman's new book, *Strictly Kosher Reading: Popular Literature and the Condition of American Orthodoxy*, raises doubts about this view.

In this readable and interesting book, Finkelman builds his case by analyzing haredi popular literature, mostly North American works written in English. Popular haredi writing today ranges over many genres. It's not surprising to see apologetic literature that defends haredi Judaism or books that deal with perceived conflicts between science and religion. But there is a surprising variety of other types, including children's literature, cookbooks, works of fiction, parenting books, marital guides and other pop-psychology "self-help" books. Most of these genres were not on the traditional Jewish bookshelf before the 20th century.

Views & Reviews

Martin Lockshin

The crux of Finkelman's argument arises out of the content of the books. He recognizes that not all haredi books of any genre have the same values. For example, some of the books that deal with conflicts between science and religion simply assert that all truth is to be found in Torah. Any science that appears out of sync with Torah is automatically incorrect. (This model of dealing with conflicts between science and religion does have precedent in some pre-modern Jewish communities.)

But Finkelman also analyzes haredi books that see science as a legitimate source of truth and try to reconcile that truth with Torah. He contrasts current haredi books of this nature with the harmonizations proposed by medieval Jewish thinkers such as Saadya Gaon and Maimonides. The medievals, Finkelman notes, asserted that the task of harmonizing science and religion was difficult. Modern haredim assert that it is perfectly simple. The medievals accepted the dominant science and philosophy of their own day and strove to show how Judaism was truly consonant with those systems. Contemporary harmonizing haredi literature finds and highlights fringe scientific opinions (for example, those of creationists) that align with haredi truth claims. Haredi proponents of this approach need to explain why real scientific truth is found only in the works of non-mainstream scientists. They argue that truth is found through scientific inquiry only if the inquiry is free of the incorrect secular preconceptions that allegedly characterize establishment scientists. Finkelman sharply concludes: "If secular scientists can be led wrong by bias, how can haredi apologists rely on science for their own demonstrations, and how can they be sure that their own reasoned arguments might not be similarly coloured by self-interest? I have not seen any reflection on this question in haredi popular theological literature."

Finkelman also discusses another tension that one finds in contemporary haredi literature. Modern haredi self-help books often promote the idea that their message, like everything else in haredi Judaism, has not changed. But he shows just how many modern cultural values really are found in these books. Some of his most telling examples are drawn from the genre of parenting books.

Finkelman analyzes a number of modern haredi parenting books that unabashedly promote what he labels "the modern American notion of affectionate, child-centred parenting." Yet traditional Jewish literature leads to the conclusion that in Jewish households before the second half of the 20th century (just as in gentile households then) children were regularly disciplined with corporal punishment and repeatedly reminded of their proper place (occasionally seen, rarely heard) which was hardly at the centre of the household. In the past, Jewish texts from the Bible and rabbinic literature were often cited to promote these stricter parenting practices (e.g. "He who spares the rod hates his son," Proverbs 13:24). But now, haredi parenting books are singing almost the same song as the relatively permissive post-Spock secular parenting manuals.

Finkelman notes that some haredi writers simply deny that any change has taken place, insisting that their permissive parenting handbooks represent the same approach that Judaism has always promoted. The fact that their approach appears similar to modern secular parenting books is because secular childrearing experts have allegedly finally learned the old-time Jewish way of raising children. But other haredi writers acknowledge the novelty of their approach and try to defend it with the standard "times have changed" argument that is most often associated with other Jewish denominations. For example, Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe, according to Finkelman "one of the most renowned musarists [teachers of traditional Jewish ethics] of the second half of the twentieth century," suggests that "in previous generations, the situation was different. Children had more tolerance, and therefore they could tolerate spanking. Children also had stronger character… If someone [today] tries to crush a child by spanking him, he can hurt the child and his relationship with the child." Prolific haredi author, Rabbi Dr. Abraham Twerski, has, according to Finkelman, "dedicated much of his career to spreading the idea that the Orthodox community must gain a richer understanding of psychology and psychiatry in order to treat dysfunctional or abusive behaviour." On the issue of childrearing, Rabbi Twerski has written: "The challenges and stresses of modern-day parenting are both qualitatively and quantitatively greater than those confronting earlier generations." Accordingly, "we cannot have recourse to practices of the past."

Finkelman, a modern Orthodox Jew, teaches Torah at a number of modern Orthodox religious seminaries in Israel. He teaches academic subjects at Bar-Ilan University. He writes that his book should not be seen as modern Orthodox bashing of haredim but as an academic attempt to understand haredi society through reading haredi books.

Judging from his tone, perhaps he has accomplished that goal. His message is never as strident as, for example, what Peter Beinart wrote recently (in the online newspaper the Daily Beast): "Haredi Judaism – it can never be stressed too often – is not Judaism as it was practised in centuries past." Finkelman concludes more gently: "Contemporary haredim are profoundly acculturated." They have "converted many aspects of general culture, koshering them, turning them into Torah." My own conclusion from reading this book is that North American haredim generally practice a modern-lite version of Orthodox Judaism.

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Reena in the News

Reena

Ryan Garnet and Sally Wasserman's magnetic personalities draw people into the gift shop.

The Reena Gift Shop provides an exciting opportunity for Reena participants to develop vocational skills in sales and service by working in the gift shop. Every Wednesday, participants from the Pathways Program, with a staff person as coach, learn the prices of the merchandise, help to ensure the presentation is attractive and dust free, assist customers, handle change and collate the money. Because of all the unique and sought after merchandise carried in the gift shop, it can be a very busy and exciting place to work.

Fridays are a particularly fun time to visit the gift shop with the presence of a very special couple who together have transformed the shop into a boutique with pizzazz! Whether or not visitors to the shop need something particular, they make it their business to drop in for a quick chat and a laugh. Ryan Garnet, a participant of the Pathways Program, is an extremely friendly and persuasive young man. If you hadn't planned on purchasing something, not to worry – he'll find your soft spot and with his great sales ability, win you over. His incredible partner is none other than Sally Wasserman, his grandmother, who has been volunteering in the Reena Gift Shop since May 2009. Nothing is too difficult for Sally. She shops for great merchandise, solicits donations and nobody works harder to set up the shop with flair. Sally is a wonderfully warm, loving and positive influence on Ryan and everyone at Reena is charmed by her appealing personality. What a team they make and how very lucky we are to have such a dynamic duo around. The expression "double your pleasure, double your fun" fits them perfectly. May they continue to spread their magic for many years to come!

When you are in the area of the Toby and Henry Battle Developmental Centre on Clark Avenue, drop in and buy great gifts for family and friends at Reena's Gift Shop.

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Sinai is becoming a Hamas stronghold

A critical threat has been developing on Israel's southern border with Egypt. Although it has received relatively little media attention, the Egyptian army has all but yielded control of the Sinai Peninsula to Bedouin tribes who have allied themselves with Hamas and other radical forces.

The growing lawlessness that has resulted poses a major security challenge not only to Israel but to Jordan as well. These groups are using Egyptian territory, which they consider to be immune to pre-emptive Israeli military operations (such as the occasional IDF attacks on Hamas' bomb-making factories and smuggling tunnels in Gaza), to build massive weapons caches and establish a staging ground for attacks on Israel.

Yaakov Katz, the *Jerusalem Post*'s military affairs correspondent, reported late in 2011 that "Hamas has established forward bases and rocket production facilities in the Sinai Peninsula in an effort to protect them from Israeli air strikes." Katz further noted that Israel had tried prevailing upon the Egyptian government to take control and restore order – even allowing Egypt to bring in more troops than permitted under the Camp David agreement. Cairo responded by issuing an official denial that there had been any such breach of its sovereignty.

It's important to recall that, last August, the IDF pursued gunmen who fled back into the Sinai after murdering eight Israeli civilians just across the border in southern Israel. When five Egyptian policemen were accidently killed in the subsequent shootout, the outrage in Cairo (which led to an assault on Israel's embassy and the evacuation of the ambassador and embassy staff) prompted Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak to apologize for the incident. Such is the concern in Jerusalem about the delicate state of the Israel-Egypt peace treaty in this post-Mubarak "Arab Spring" era.

Hamas and other Palestinian factions (Islamic Jihad and the Popular Resistance Committees), working with Bedouin tribes, have also reportedly brought weapons into the Sinai that were looted from Libya's military warehouses when Gadhafi's regime fell. These include missiles and Russian-made shoulder-launched rockets that can be used against aircraft flying out of Ben-Gurion Airport.

For years, the Bedouin have profited from smuggling weapons into Gaza, mainly through the tunnels running from the town of Rafah. But since the fall of Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak and the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood (of which Hamas is an offshoot), the smuggling has increased in multiple directions. That is, weapons are also flowing into Gaza from other sources, including Iran, Sudan and Libya.

One reason is that Hamas feels increasingly emboldened by the Brotherhood's fortunes, in particular in Egypt's recent parliamentary elections, which saw the Brotherhood and Salafist parties capture more than 65 per cent of the seats. To make matters worse, the Sinai's Bedouin, on at least nine occasions, have sabotaged the Egyptian pipeline that provides Israel and Jordan with a substantial portion of their gas.

By far the most detailed publicly available account of what is transpiring in the Sinai is Israeli journalist and author Ehud Yaari's 20-page report titled *Sinai: A New Front*, published this month by the Washington Institute.

Ya'ari notes that in late 2010, even before Mubarak's ouster, "Hamas was already in the process of transferring heavy long-range missiles to secret storage places in the Sinai, including Grad rockets and extended-range Qassams. On Oct. 6 of that year, the Israeli port of Eilat and its Jordanian sister town of Aqaba were hit by a salvo of missiles fired from the Sinai."

This process has escalated since Mubarak was deposed. "Today," writes Ya'ari, "a significant number of Hamas military operatives are permanently stationed in the Sinai... A solid network of the group's contact men, safe houses, and armories covers much of the peninsula. In addition, Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and other factions have been moving some of their explosives workshops... from Gaza to the Sinai on recent months. In many ways, the Sinai has become a sort of hinterland for Hamas military forces in Gaza."

It's a hinterland other journalists might want to explore.

Paul Michaels is director of research and media relations for the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs.

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United Jewish Appeal
OF GREATER TORONTO

The ever-changing face of Shabbat dinners

One of the finest traditions of the Jewish religion is the weekly custom of Shabbat dinner.

The beauty of Shabbat rests in its consistency to bring families and friends together, apart from the stress, pressure and unpredictability of everyday life. Above all, Shabbat dinners exist as a reminder to separate trivial matters from what is truly important.

Campus Life

Jessica Pollock

I grew up devoted to Shabbat dinners. Every week, I eagerly anticipated the comfort of being among my immediate family in either Toronto or Montreal. The location of the weekly gathering was insignificant, as long as familiar faces were discernible.

My concept of Shabbat has evolved and changed over the past few years. Three years ago, my maternal grandfather passed away.

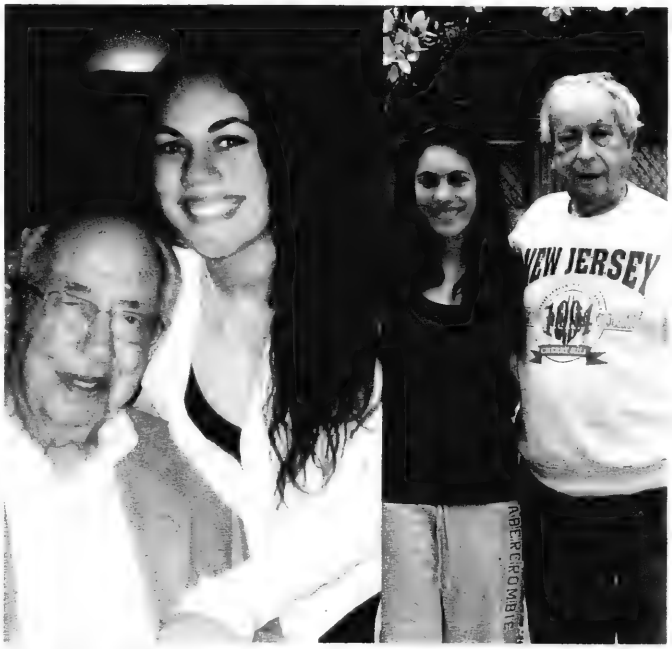
Shabbat for me then changed dramatically. His seat at the head of the table is now vacant, and his soothing voice chanting the weekly prayers is absent. However, the invaluable lessons and knowledge he bestowed upon my family is what I miss the most.

Until you endure the profound loss of a grandparent, it is difficult to truly recognize and appreciate his or her remarkable wisdom.

When I was feeling a heavy void from the loss of my grandfather, the Shabbaton program at my high school, the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto, successfully revived my spirits.

I was given the opportunity to experience Shabbat with my closest friends in an organic and spiritual atmosphere. I began to cherish the opportunity of spending Shabbat with non-family members, who eagerly introduced me to new and fascinating Shabbat rituals.

Thus, the meaning of Shabbat deepened for me yet again, and I began to embrace the practice of spending Shabbat with other like-minded young adults, irrespective of our various backgrounds.



Left: Pollock with her paternal grandfather, Misha Pollock from Montreal, Right: Her maternal grandfather, Leslie Wise, who passed away in 2008.

Graduating from the comfort of my high school to the University of Western Ontario (UWO) in London, Ont., was challenging.

In addition to being distanced from my family and our Shabbat traditions, I, too, left behind the familiarity of Shabbaton retreats.

Thankfully, Hillel at UWO works tirelessly to encourage Jewish students to continue participating in Shabbat dinners.

This past month, Hannah Gofman, Arielle Kaplan and Emma Leese, three Hillel members and students, organized the Shabbat Across London program.

The goal of the program was to conduct numerous Shabbat dinners among Jewish students in London in order to keep alive the tradition of Shabbat.

Groups or individuals signed up to host dinners, and were supplemented with Shabbat candles, two loaves of challah, a bottle of Manischewitz wine and a specially designed prayer book.

Thanks to Hillel, Birthright Israel and private donations from various Jewish camps, 21 hosts opened their homes to about 350 students.

Shabbat Across London was immensely successful in its ability to appeal to Jewish students of all denominations and backgrounds with the shared objective of celebrating Shabbat.

Similar to my experience on Shabbatons, I found my idea of Shabbat again shifted with a newfound reverence among my fellow Jewish students in London.

My latest modification of Shabbat is rather fresh. In my last column, I wrote about my intention to volunteer in Florida during my family winter vacation.

Unfortunately, this vacation never came to fruition. Receiving the dreadful call that my paternal grandfather in Montreal required emergency surgery resulted in my family immediately terminating our visit.

The endless hours spent in the hospital during my weeklong stay in Montreal were exhausting.

Nevertheless, once Friday evening came, it seemed only natural to congregate at my grandparents' home for Shabbat dinner. Though that dinner seemed somewhat quiet and far less vibrant than usual, I believe it was the mysterious and mystical power of Shabbat that was able to keep my family calm and optimistic and thus soon welcome a successful outcome.

I will forever be grateful that in the face of happiness, success and even loss and tragedy, Shabbat dinners will always remain a constant time of rest and reflection.

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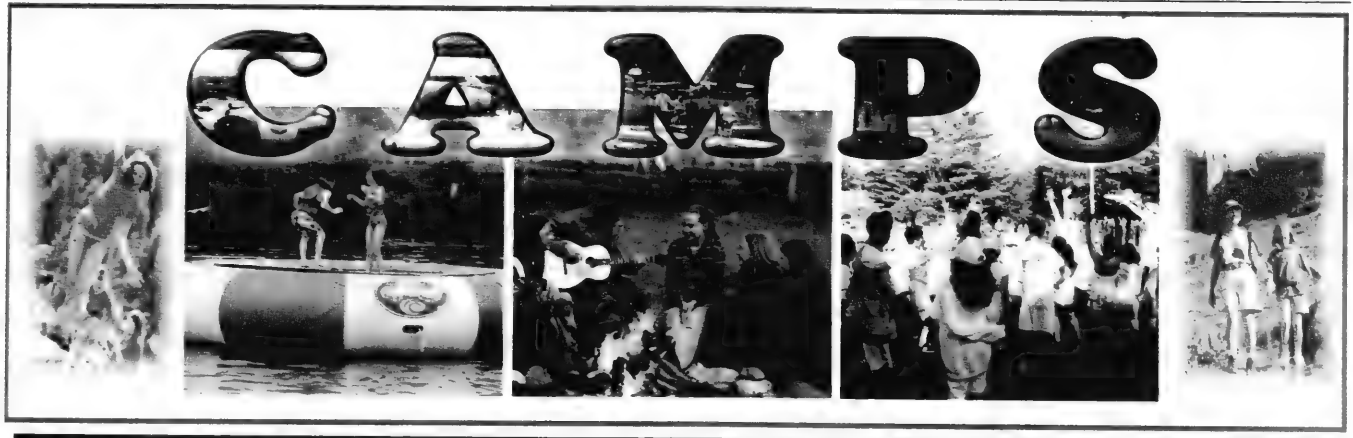

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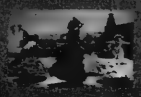

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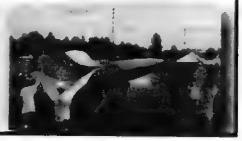

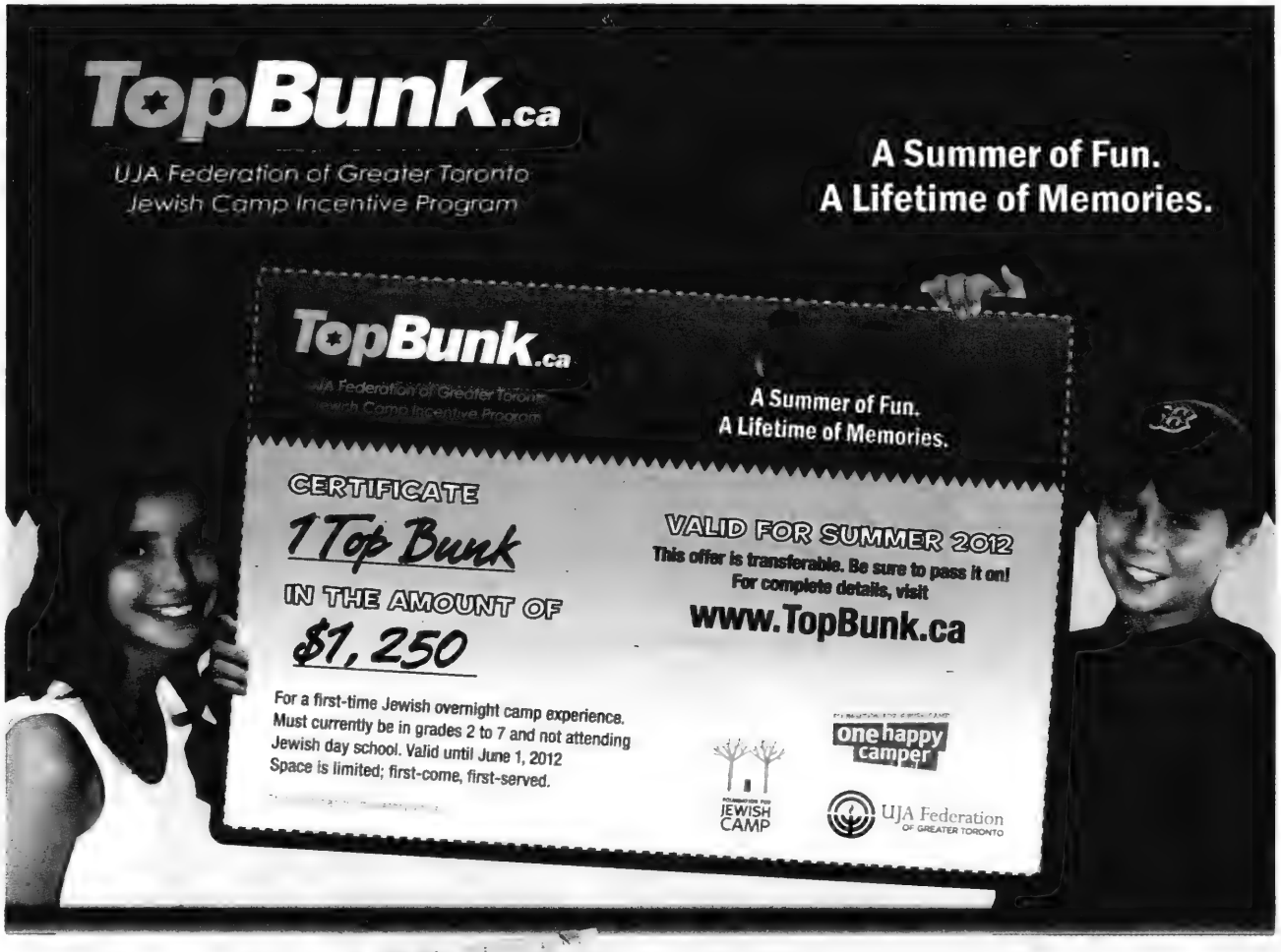
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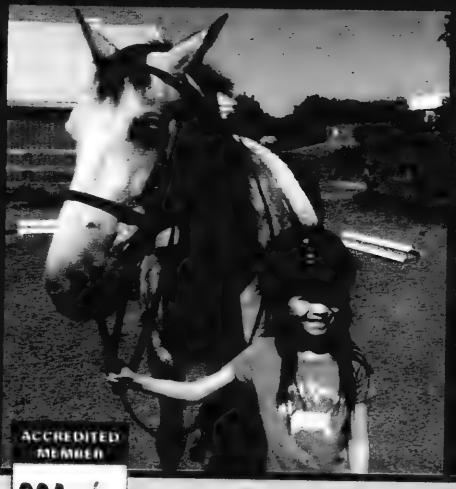

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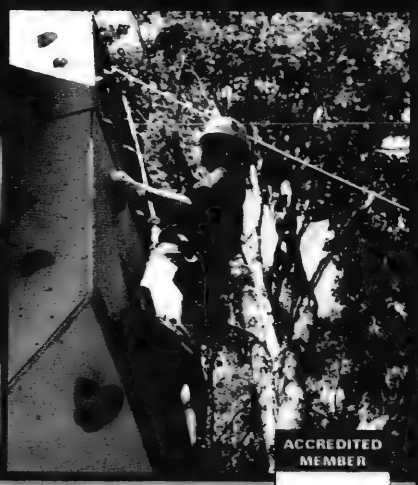

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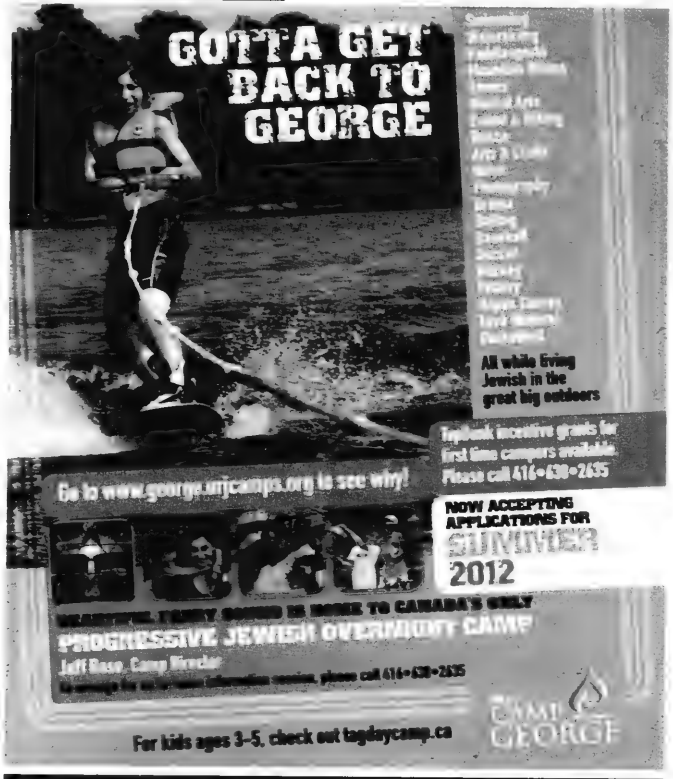
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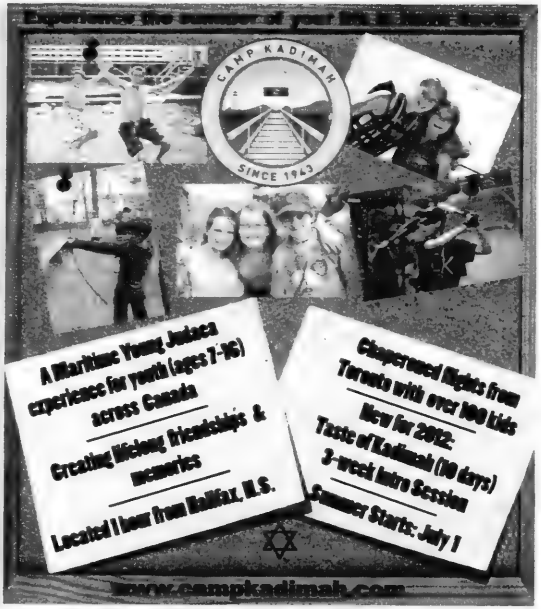
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JCamps - home of Camp Espana, established since 2003, organizes International Jewish Summer Camp programs in Spain, London and China geared toward 10-19 year olds. Our staff is experienced, talented, multicultural and multilingual. JCamps offers the opportunity to travel, learn a new language and meet Jewish youth from all over the world.

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4300 Bathurst St., Downsview
Tel: 416-638-6910
Administrator: Helen Dodick
Menorah Nursery is a place where each child has an opportunity to learn through play with other children, with appropriate toys and materials, and where their mental, emotional, and physical growth is fostered. Choosing Menorah Nursery, assures you that we will provide a warm, stimulating and secure place for your child.

MOSHAVA BA'IR TORONTO
12 Dana Cres.
Thornhill, ON L4J 2R5
Phone: 905-370-0448
Fax: 905-581-6621
Email: mbt@bneiakiva.org
Website: www.moshavabairtoronto.org
Moshava Ba'ir Toronto opened last summer in 2011, and is opening again for the summer of 2012 with even better programs than before! MBT offers a quality Jewish & Zionist camping experience for children entering JK-Grade 5. Well-rounded programs take place at the centrally located, fully air-conditioned facility. Our program includes instructional swim three times a week, free swim once a week, weekly trips, sports, music, dance, martial arts, cooking, drama, arts & Torah learning. We provide a safe, secure & caring environment for children to experience the lifelong values of Bnei Akiva.

PRIPSTEIN'S CAMP MISHMAR
Directors: Avi Satov & Emerson Thomas
Owner: Ronnie Braverman
Tel: 514-481-1875 or 1-866-481-1875
Email: camp@mishmar.com
Website: www.mishmar.com
Our amazing ice hockey & skating arena is a huge hit, plus all your favourite traditional camp activities like waterskiing, sailing, windsurfing, tennis, basketball, creative arts & more! Don't forget to try the exciting skatepark ramps. It never rains on the fun at Pripstein's, with the most and greatest all-weather facilities! Same-family ownership since 1941!

ROUND LAKE CAMP
Lake Como Pennsylvania
Tel: 973-575-3333 x145
Website: www.roundlakecamp.org
Email: rlc@njycamps.org
Round Lake is a kosher, residential Jewish camp for children with special needs (ages 7-18). Our campers may be identified as having ADHD, Aspergers, high functioning autism, social skills challenges or communication disorders. Camp offers a full range of activities including aquatics, chess, athletics, horseback riding, arts, ceramics and ropes course.

SHENDY'S SWIM SCHOOL
Director: Eric Shendelman
Tel: 416-576-SWIM (7946)
E-mail: eric@shendys.com
Website: www.shendys.com
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TOPBUNK
Bryan Keshen
TopBunk@ujafed.org
Jewish overnight camp has proven to be a portal to Jewish identity for thousands of youngsters over the years. TopBunk, UJA Federation's Jewish Camp Incentive Program, provides a $1250 financial incentive to families of first-time campers to encourage parents to choose Jewish camp over other summer activities. For complete details and a list of participating camps, visit TopBunk.ca

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Website: www.westcoastconnection.com
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The Canadian Jewish news

Watch for our annual Education Feature

LIVE AND LEARN

March 8, 2012 ISSUE

Research sheds light on predisposition to diabetes

Or Shmueli
NoCamels

Research carried out at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem has provided the first proof of molecular risk factors leading to Type 2 diabetes, providing an "early warning" sign that could lead to new approaches to treating this and other human disease conditions.

Despite extensive research on the molecular basis for the difference in susceptibility between individuals to common diseases, the subject is still poorly understood. A prime example of this is Type 2 diabetes, a very widespread human disorder.

What is it that characterizes the susceptibility to this disease? Epigenetic variations – which are small molecular marks superimposed on the DNA structure – have been frequently hypothesized to modify predisposition, but direct evidence was missing.

Now, a research team led by Dr. Asaf Hellman of the Hebrew University's Institute of Medical Research Israel Canada has developed a novel, multistep, study design involving the analysis of disease-contributing epigenetic variations among hundreds of patients and control individuals.

Up until this research was conducted it was customary to map the sequence of molecules in the DNA to find patterns that distinguish between patients who are diagnosed with diabetes and healthy individuals. The researchers hypothesized that an epigenetic mark is affected by the environment we live in, such as the food we eat and chemicals or toxins we are exposed to. Their assumption was that epigenetic marks can prevent proper functioning of genes, causing diseases, even when the sequence of the DNA appear to be completely normal.

To examine the assumption, the researchers mapped the epigenetics of hundreds of patients with Type 2 diabetes, and compared them to the epigenetics of healthy individuals. The differences in the epigenetics were found in a large number of patients and revealed a clear-cut distinction between sick and healthy patients.

Hellman said that "this method of mapping epigenetics allows a much more efficient prediction of risks to the disease in young people that have not yet showed any other symptoms of the disease."

According to the researchers, the results shed new light on the mechanism of individual predisposition to the disease and perhaps to other complex diseases, such metabolic, autoimmune and psychiatric disorders.

The researchers from the Hebrew University hope that this discovery could contribute to future development of drugs and measures to prevent these diseases.

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Wish to extend our deepest sympathy to the family of the late

Dr. Jocelyn Zuck ז"ל

He served our organization with devotion, zeal, and integrity from 1985 to 2011.

He will be dearly missed

May you be comforted among all mourners of Zion and Jerusalem

HAIR DONATION

Ehden Keselman, a Grade 7 student at Associated Hebrew Schools Danilack Middle School, recently cut her hair and donated it to the Pantene Beautiful Lengths program, which provides wigs for cancer patients. Her act was part of the school's Hineni (I am here) initiative, which encourages students to make a positive impact on the world. Ehden grew her hair after seeing her mom's best friend lose her hair while undergoing cancer treatment. It took her two years to grow and donate nine inches.

דער ייִדיש ווינקל

דזשערי קעין

יוליאַן טווים

דער פּוילישער ייִד

נאָענם צו יידן אָבער חיים פֿון ייִדישקײַם

פֿון שמחה סימכאָוויטש

מיר דערמאָנען אינעם פֿון די באַרײַטינסדיקע פּוילישע פּאָעטן פֿון צווישן בײדע וועלט-מלחמות – דעם פּוילישן ייִד יוליאַן טווים. אָן די עס שטייט אין קעפּל פֿון קָאלום – אַ מענטש נאָענט צו יידן אָבער חיים פֿון יידישקײט.

טווים איז געבוירן אין 1894 אין לאָדזש בײַ אַסימילירטע עלטערן. די אומגאַנצע שפּראַך אין הויז איז געווען רוסיש אָן פּויליש אָן דער יונגער טווים האָט אָנגעהויבן גאָר פֿרי שרײַבן אין ביידע שפּראַכן.

אין 1918 האָט טווים דעביוטירט מיט דער לידער–זאַמלונג "אין געלויבער אויף גאָט", וואָס האָט אים גלײַך אַוועקגעשטעלט צווישן די סאַמע אָנגעזעענסטע פּוילישע פּאָעטן פֿון זײַן צײַט. פֿון האָט זיך דערשלאָגן צו די טיפּסטע קרעלן פֿון פּוילישן לשון אָן באַרײַכערט איר ליטעראַטור מיט נאַטאַראַלישע שאַפֿונגען אין פֿאָרשידענע דזשאַנראָרן, אָנהויבנדיק מיט ערנסטע לידיק ביז צו סאַטירעס און וואָדעוויל–לידער. אין זײַנע איבערזעצונגען פֿון דער ווײַטונג פֿון פּושקין, לערמאָנטאָוו אוו אָנדערע האָט טווים אַרויסגעוויזן זײַן מײַסטערשאַפֿט אין ביידע לשונות.

–טראָץ דעם וואָס יוליאַן טווים איז געווען אינגאַנצן אַרײַנגעטאָן אין דער פּוילישער ליטעראַטור האָט ער קיין מאָל נישט פֿאַרליקנט זײַן יידישן אָפּשטאַם אוו נישט איבערגעגאַנגען צום קאַטוילישן גלויבן.

טווים איז געווען אַליינגע אין באַוווּסטער אין בריסט קרײַז פֿון דער פּוילישער אינטעליגענץ אוו געווען הויך געשאַצט פֿון דער ליטעראַטור קריטיק. ביז צום אויסברוך פֿון דער צווייטער וועלט מלחמה האָט טווים געשריבן בלויז אײַנציק לידער וועגן יידן.

טווים האָט זיך געראַטעוועט פֿון די נאַצים אוו איבערגעלעבט די מלחמה יאָרן אין בראַזיל אוו אין ניו-יאָרק. ער האָט זיך צוריקגעקערט קײן פּוילן אין 1946. דאָ האָט ער זיך אָנגעטראָפֿן פּנים אל פּנים מיטן אומגעהיירטן ייִדיש חורבן אוו מיט די פֿאַרבליבענע רערשטלעך פֿון די איבער דרײַ מיליאָן פּוילישע יידן.

אין ליד "בלוטיק ברויט" שרײַבט ער וועגן דער פּוילישער ערד, וואָס איז אָנגעטרונקען מיטן בלוט פֿון די מיליאָנען מאַרטירער:

ס'וועט אײַך וואקסן פֿון דער פּעטער ערד אויסערגעוויינטלעכע תבואות
שווערע, אימפּאָזאַנטע זאָמען. אָנגעקוואָלענע זערנער
ניסים וועלן נעשען אין דער וויכער, נאָכגיביקער ערד, פֿון איין קערנדל
– קראָנץ וועט שוואַרצערד דערלאַנגען.

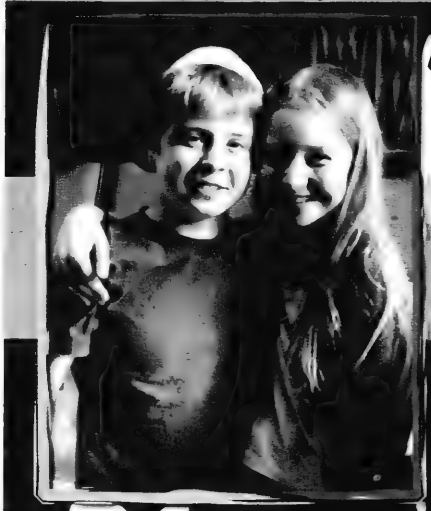
דער פּויער וועט איינזאַמלען דעם ערשטן שניט, דער מילנער וועט צעמאָלן אירף מעל, פֿאַרמישן אוו באַקן וואָס ברויט...

אוו בײַ דער פֿאַרטיקער שיסל וועט ער זיצן,
מיט נאָטס וואַרט וועט דער פֿאַטער זיך איבערצלמען פֿאַרן לאָבן ברויט.
אָבער וועג ער וועט אים שנײַדן מיטן שטשערביקן מעסער
וועט פֿון אים אַ שפּריץ טאָן אַ שטראָם רויטן בלוט.

טווים איז אַוועק פֿון אונדז אין 1953: אַ וועלט באַרמיטער פּאָעט – נאָענט צו יידן אָבער חיים פֿון יידישקײט.

פֿון רעדאַקציע: אויב איר האָט נעדאַנקען וועגן אונדזער וויקל לאָזט וויסן, דורך פּאָסט אַדער בליץ-פּאָסט: cjninfo@gmail.com

HEART HEROES: Once again, as they have for the past 11 years, Leo Baeck Day School students are taking part in the Heart and Stroke Foundation's Jump Rope and Hoops for Heart, raising more than $93,000 and teaching students the importance of healthy living and tikkun olam. Pictured are student "Heart Heroes" – Grade 8 ambassadors for the program – from left, Jessica Bargman, Samantha Steiner, Hayley Schwartzberg and Jonah Solomon.



SPELLING CHAMPS: Brother and sister Jonathan and Danielle Sharir-Smith beat 18 other contestants to win the annual spelling bee at Robbins Hebrew Academy's Beth Tzedec campus.

PUPPET LESSONS: Important social issues such as bullying were addressed through lively scripted puppet performances when TAP, an interactive awareness through puppetry program, visited students in grades 1 and 2 at the Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School recently. Pictured, from left, are puppeteer Kirsten Sixt, students Eli Sidlofsky, Adina Macklin, Rhyenne Brown-Bowdler and Raffi Lambert-Green, and puppeteers Susan Cooper and Laura Berkely.

Mazel Tov

מזל טוב

Happy eighth birthday Emma-Belle. Wishing you the very best year. Love, Mom, Dad and all your family.

Mazel tov to Lori & Michael Ricer on the engagement of their daughter Rachel Ricer to Noah Zimner, son of Tami & Yossi Zimner.

Forty Years of love, laughter and friendship. Happy anniversary Rolanda and Coby from your children and grandchildren.

Mazel tov on your bat mitzvah Veronica Mercedes. We are so proud of you! We love you! Mom, Dad and Stephanie Marissa

Irving & Betty Schonfeld, Nicky Madoff & Rikee Gutherz-Madoff are thrilled to announce the engagement of their children, Jason Schonfeld & Tanya Madoff

Mazel tov to Kiki (Sylvia) & Jake Rosenberg on their 65th wedding anniversary, Dec. 24. Love, Eddy, Lynda, Eileen, Issie, Rosalee, Pat, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Email your digital photos to cblackman@thecjn.ca or go online to www.CJNews.com and click the "Family Moments"

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Deadline reminder: Jan. 30 is the deadline for the issue of Feb. 9. Feb. 6 is the deadline for the issue of Feb. 16. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; e-mail whatsnewcjn@gmail.com, or fax 416-391-0829.

Friday, Jan. 27

PARENTING CHALLENGES

Sheila Bjarnason, a social worker at the Hospital for Sick Children, speaks about "Dealing with Discipline, Bullying and Other Challenges," after Shabbat services, 8 p.m., at Temple Emanu-El.

Saturday, Jan. 28

SINGING THE DIVINE

Singer **Aviva Chernick** speaks about "Singing the Divine: The Potency of Music and Prayer," at 10:30 a.m., Temple Emanu-El. 416-449-3880.

CASINO NIGHT

Beit Rayim Synagogue holds its casino night fundraising event at Pride of Israel Synagogue, 59 Lissom Cres., 7:30 p.m. For tickets: events@beitrayim.org or 905-889-0276.

AROUND SHABBAT

Shaar Shalom Synagogue holds "Around Shabbat" services in a relaxed atmosphere in the social hall at 8:45 a.m. 905-889-4975.

Sunday, Jan. 29

JEWISH MEDICAL ETHICS

Rabbi Moshe Meirovich, Dr. Daphna Grossman and **Dr. Brian Goldman** discuss "Jewish Medical Ethics," 7 p.m., the Lodzer Synagogue. 416-636-6665.

TORAH SEMINAR

Hana Werner teaches a Torah seminar Sundays at Adath Israel Synagogue, 10:30 a.m. starting today. 416-635-5340.

BOOK LAUNCH

A book launch for *Chienke's Motl and Motl's Chienke: A Twentieth Century Story* by **Jacob Sivak** will be held at Darchei Noam Congregation, 2:30 p.m.

Monday, Jan. 30

FAMOUS JEWISH LEADERS

Hana Werner teaches a course on visionary Jewish leaders Mondays at 7 p.m. starting tonight at Beth David Synagogue. To register, call 416-633-5500, ext. 32.

Tuesday, Jan. 31

YOO HOO MRS. GOLDBERG

The film *Yoo Hoo Mrs. Goldberg* will be shown at Beth Tikvah Synagogue at 2 p.m. **Larry Anklewicz,** programming co-ordinator for the Toronto Jewish Film Festival, provides a commentary.

RAISING A MENSCH

Psychologist **Sol Goldstein** speaks about "Raising a Mensch," 8 p.m., Chabad of Markham, 83 Green Lane, Thornhill. RSVP 905-886-0420, ext. 221.

Wednesday, Feb. 1

BAT MITZVAH PROGRAM

Torah in Motion presents a 10-session mother and daughter bat mitzvah program, 7 p.m., Or Chaim Yeshiva, 159 Almore Ave. 416-633-5770.

Continued on page 33

Did You Know...
Four Elms Retirement Residence offers Independent and Assisted Living Services. Also, Take Part in Our Exclusive Brain Gym® and More Program.

DIABITES SCREENING EVENT
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9TH 2:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M.
Vaughan Community Health Centre will be assessing a person's risk of developing diabetes. Participants will be tested with a glucometer and results are available in 5 seconds. Diabetic friendly refreshments will be served.

VALENTINE'S DAY PARTY
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14TH
2:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M
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Continued from page 32

Thursday, Feb. 2

ORGAN DONATION

National Council of Jewish Women presents a program on "Organ Donation: It's a Mitzvah," noon, 4700 Bathurst St. Speakers include **Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl; Joanne Schenker**, of Trillium Gift of Life Network, and liver recipient **Frank Bialystok**. RSVP 416-633-5100.

JEWISH THINKERS

Edward Breuer discusses "Moses Mendelssohn: A Traditional Jew Answers the Challenges of Modernity," 8:15 p.m., Or Chaim Yeshiva, 159 Almore Ave. 416-633-5770.

Other News

HARBORD CI REUNION

Anyone who ever attended or taught at Harbord Collegiate Institute is invited to its 120th birthday party, April 26-27, 2012. www.HarbordClub.com.

RAMAH OPEN HOUSE

Camp Ramah holds an open house Feb. 12, 2 p.m. at the First Narayever Congregation, 187 Brunswick Ave. RSVP **Michelle**, mbass@campramah.com or 416-789-2193.

CHOIR LOOKING FOR MEN

North York's Yorkminstrels Show Choir is looking for tenors, baritones and basses. Call **Sandi Horwitz,** 416-229-9313, or www.yorkmistrels.com.

FOOD CONFERENCE

Shoresh Food Conference on Jewish tradition and contemporary food issues, Feb. 5, Miles Nadal JCC. www.shoresh.ca or 416-805-8382.

SHABBAT SHIRAH

Temple Har Zion continues its 40th anniversary celebration. Musician **Alan Goodis** will sing with the primary and junior choirs, Feb. 3 at Shabbat services, 7:30 p.m. Goodis will also sing at a coffee house Feb. 4, 8 p.m. 905-889-2252.

Shaarei Shomayim will hold a *kumzitz*, Feb. 4, 7:30 p.m., with **Cantor Avraham Sultan.**

KOL AMI DEDICATION

Temple Kol Ami will dedicate its newly renovated sacred space, 36 Atkinson Ave., Thornhill, Feb. 3, 7 p.m.

LOOKING TO RENT?

If you are looking to rent your basement apartment or extra room, you can list it free with UJA's Jewish Information Service of Greater Toronto in the Lipa Green Centre. People looking for a place to live can find help as well. 416-635-5600 or jinfo@ujafed.org.

JF&CS GROUPS

Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 215, or www.jfandcs.com. All programs require pre-registration. All programs are held at the Lipa Green Centre, unless otherwise noted.

The Challenge of Anger for Women: A 6-session group for women, starting Feb. 1, 7:30 p.m.

Living With Teens: A 6-session group for parents, starting Feb. 1, 7:30 p.m.

Life Skills for Today's Woman: A 6-session group for women, starting Feb. 2, 7 p.m.

Effective Parenting: A 4-session group for parents of children ages 2-11, starting Feb. 7, 7 p.m.

Beyond the Chupah, Becoming a Couple: A 5-session marriage preparation course, starting Feb. 14, 7 p.m., Beth Tzedec Congregation.

Dating in Midlife: A workshop for men and women over 40 who have been single for more than 2 years. Feb. 15.

You're About to Separate, What to Tell The Kids: A workshop for parents, Feb. 16, 9:30 a.m., Promenade Mall, Suite 313.

High-Conflict Divorce: A workshop for parents, Feb. 22, 6:30 p.m.

FOR SENIORS

National Council of Jewish Women, Aviva branch, is looking for women over 70 for their group, which meets mid-day every other Tuesday. Call 416-633-5100.

Seniors Social Club, meets once a month at Earl Bales Community Centre. **Warren Green** discusses "Jews as Capitalists, Merchant Princes and Pirates," Feb. 12, 7 p.m. Call **Sandy,** 416-736-8073, 416-458-1440.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park. (60+). **Valerie**, 416-395-7881. Hairdresser/barber, Feb. 2, 9 a.m. Casino Rama, Feb. 15. Tuesdays, gentle exercise, 10 a.m.; Wednesdays, duplicate bridge, 12:30 p.m.; Thursdays, line dancing, 10 a.m.; social bridge, 12:30 p.m. Non-members welcome.

LZA Seniors Cultural Club meets Tuesdays, 10 a.m., Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell. 416-630-9444.

New Horizons is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club that offers kosher food, casino trips. Romi and ulti card players welcome. 416-256-1892.

SINGLES EVENTS WILL RETURN

Adath Israel Congregation. Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub. Refreshments $2. Call **Pearl**, 416-635-6317, or **Sheila**, 416-665-3333.

Bernard Betel Centre 416-225-2112. Jan. 26, **Jeff Brown** discusses "What To Do in a Medical Emergency," 1:30 p.m.; Jan. 31, **Michal Schwartz** discusses "Popular Themes from the Kabbala: Reincarnation, Angels and Magic," 10 a.m.; Feb. 2, **Leah Sultan-Khan** discusses "Epilepsy and Seizures in Seniors," 1:30 p.m.

Active Seniors, Miles Nadal JCC, 416-924-6211, ext.155. Jan. 26, ROM curator **Corey Keeble** discusses "Masterpieces of Judaica for Home and Synagogue: Jewish Textile Arts from Roman Times to Present," 1:30 p.m.; Feb. 9, **Jordan Klapman** gives a musical presentation on "Tin Pan Alley's Greatest Music Publishers and Their Hits," 1:30 p.m. Computer beginners course starts Feb. 14 for 8 weeks. Small class with personal attention $70.

Senior Gentle Fitness Club offers tai chi classes at Edithvale Community Centre, Tuesdays, 10 a.m., or Wednesdays, 7:15 p.m. Call **Helen**, 416-665-9050.

PROSSERMAN JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com.

Daycare and preschool registration for the 2012-13 school year is open. Spaces available for preschool, nursery, junior and senior kindergarten. Call **Kailah Rubin**, ext. 4351.

A program about ovarian cancer and Jewish women will be held Jan. 26 at 7 p.m. Call **Karen**, ext. 4255.

The senior social art group is looking for a volunteer to assist participants, Mondays, 2-4 p.m. Call **Janet**, ext. 4259.

Spaces are still available in preschool Shabbat, music and sports programs. Call ext. 0.

Bridge with **Zelig Rubenstein**, beginners start Jan 30; advanced Feb. 6.

Social yoga classes will be held Thursdays, 10:30 a.m.

Ian Scott discusses "Opera Without Fear," Wednesdays, 1 p.m.

Tickets now on sale to see *All Shook Up*, at Stagewest, Feb. 29. Buffet and transportation included.

MILES NADAL JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org.

Kevin Courrier discusses "Movies in the Nixon Era," Jan. 30, 7 p.m.

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner teaches a course on "Icons of Spanish Jewry," Thursdays 8 p.m., starting Feb. 9. Call ext. 154.

Hebrew conversation club meets Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m. Call ext. 154.

Rabbi Rena Arshinoff discusses "Forgotten Mourners: Jewish Responses to Bereaved Children," Feb. 12, 11 a.m.

The adult daytime choir, conducted by **Gillian Steyck**, meets Tuesdays, 1 p.m. E-mail gillians@mnjcc.org.

Play in a klezmer ensemble with **Eric Stein** Tuesdays 7:30 p.m.

Textiles, an exhibit by **Sheree Rasmussen**, is at the gallery until Jan. 30.

Mazel tov to the winners of the story contest for Israelis in Toronto, **Aviva Yerushalmi, Rachel Cohen** and **Arie Eigner.** Read the winning entries in Hebrew at http://mnjcc.org/jewishlife.

A TRIP BACK IN TIME: Grade 3 students from the Toronto Heschel School visited Black Creek Pioneer Village where they experienced doing chores, carving wood and churning butter as part of their studies on "First Canadians, New Canadians: Co-operation and Conflict." In the picture, students Zoe Beiles and Max Leibovich learn how a spinning wheel works.

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JPL to adopt innovative cataloguing system

Janice Arnold
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — The Jewish Public Library (JPL) is about to become the first public library in the world to adopt a radically new cataloguing system that it says will make it easier to find exactly the book or other material sought.

The JPL will, in fact, be only the second library of any kind (the first was a Belgian academic institution) to switch to FRBR/RDA, an acronym commonly used for Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records/Resource Description and Access.

This system ferrets out the not always obvious relationships among diverse resources in the database by describing a collection in an entirely new way.

FRBR/RDA is especially suited to the JPL because its close to 200,000-item collection is in five principal languages, said Eddie Paul, head of bibliographic and information services. Many of its titles are available in multiple editions and translations.

The system links resources in whatever language or form they are in, whether print or audiovisual.

The system is also a boon to a library specializing in Judaica.

"For example, we have a thousand works of the Bible, Talmud and other core Jewish canonical works in various forms, subsections, editions, portions and translations," Paul said. Depending on their religious or cultural backgrounds, people frequently ask for these works by different names.

"It becomes difficult for them to find the works by themselves without the mediation of a reference librarian."

When fully operational, the system will enable users to link, for example, the oldest book in the JPL collection, *The Antiquities of the Jews* by Flavius Josephus, written in Latin in 1481, to its newest edition, *Iudeiskaia voina*, published in Russian in Moscow in 1996.

Implementation of the new system will begin in February and take three or four months to complete, Paul said. "It involves a massive retraining of the cataloguers."

The new system will be available online. Just how ahead of the curve the JPL is can be appreciated when it is realized that even the Library of Congress is only starting to organize its new acquisitions under RDA rules, but is not using the FRBR data model yet, Paul pointed out.

FRBR/RDA is built on the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules – Second Edition (AACR2), the standard in the English-speaking world for more than 40 years.

In Paul's opinion, AACR was outdated a decade after its introduction. "It's inflexible and not as user-friendly, intuitively and visually, as FRBR/RDA."

FRBR/RDA has caused "quite a stir in the library community," and there continues to be considerable resistance to its adoption, said Paul, who attributes this to discomfort with change rather than objective assessment of its value.

He predicts it will be only a few years before FRBR/RDA becomes standard.

"The JPL turns 100 in 2014 and, as a kind of birthday gift to ourselves, we are adamantly expressing our youthful ambition to remain contemporary and on the cutting edge of integrated library services technology, while at the same time trying to balance precarious budgets and the rapidly shifting ways in which people read and incorporate information," he said.

The JPL's collection is primarily in English, French, Yiddish, Hebrew and Russian, but it also includes many items in dozens of other languages, among them Polish, German, Spanish, Ladino and Aramaic.

Young adults come "Together"

Cara Edell
Special to The CJN

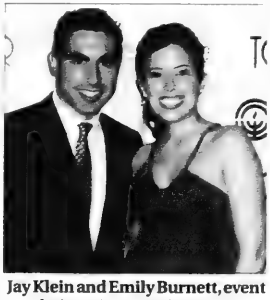
Almost 800 young Jewish professionals recently attended "TOgether 2012" to party and support the United Jewish Appeal's 2012 campaign.

The lavish event, held Jan. 21 at the Royal Ontario Museum, transported guests back to a golden era of hip hop. The lineup of live entertainment included Maestro, Young MC (*Bust a Move*), Rob Base and DJ E-Z Rock (*It Takes Two*), Naughty by Nature and Rapper's Delight (formerly the Sugar Hill Gang).

Attendees were asked to make a donation to the 2012 campaign in order to participate in the evening, said Dan Horowitz, editorial director of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

"Funds raised by annual campaign gifts will go toward the entire array of what UJA supports annually. Whether it's caring for our community's vulnerable, strengthening Jewish identity or standing with Israel, UJA annual campaign gifts ensure that Toronto is one of the great Jewish communities of the world," Horowitz said.

The event is "a vital initiative in that it will engage and educate the next generation of leaders throughout Jewish Toronto as to the full extent of UJA's reach," he added. "A gift to UJA connects us with our Jewish values and to each other so that we can create a compelling and caring community for today and ensure that Jewish Toronto continues to build for a better tomorrow."



Jay Klein and Emily Burnett, event co-chairs *[Cara Edell photo]*

Emily Burnett, who co-chaired the event with Jay Klein, said she got involved to help build "a sustainable movement" for UJA. "I thought it was important for our generation to begin a more widespread contribution to UJA, rather than leaving it to our parents' generation."

Klein said he has been "inspired and energized by seeing so many leaders in the community give their time and resources to UJA, so it feels good to be able to give something back that will engage so many people."

As young people grow, so, too, does their interest in giving back to their community, Horowitz said. "I think it's important for young people to start making their own gifts and to take ownership in our community. They should take pride in Jewish life in this great city and our responsibility to Israel and Jews in need everywhere."

While UJA's 2012 campaign closes on Feb. 9, there are still upcoming events. On that date, Richard Lewis, stand-up comic and star of *Curb your Enthusiasm*, will be the featured performer at Events on the Park. On March 1, the SMASH ping-pong tournament with celebrity players will take place at Koolhaus.

For more information, visit www.jewishtoronto.com.

OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Stark, Honey Lee	**Jan. 6/12**	**5 Shady Oaks Cres**
Riger, Moshe	**Jan. 9/12**	**6000 Bathurst St**
Sugar, Harry	**Jan. 7/12**	
Rotman, Mollie	**Jan. 6/12**	**Private**
Fox, Harold	**Jan. 7/12**	
Noss, Annie	**Jan. 8/12**	
Quitt, Gordon	**Jan. 9/12**	**187 Cocksfield Ave**
Metz, Philip	**Jan. 9/12**	**541 Finch Ave. Ww**
Weinberg, Jack Murray	**Jan. 8/12**	**3560 Bathurst St**
Oziel, Anita	**Jan. 10/12**	**4415 Bathurst St**
Pepper Griggs, Amy	**Jan. 3/12**	**51 Rio Vista Ave**
Levy, Fanny	**Jan. 10/12**	**Private**
Wineberg, Susan Lynn	**Jan. 10/12**	**65 Marquette Ave**
Levy, Fanny	**Jan. 10/12**	**Private**
Sinobicher, Illya	**Jan. 11/12**	**6250 Bathurst St**
Volsky, Lev	**Jan. 11/12**	**Private**
Taveroff, Bertha	**Jan. 10/12**	**7825 Bayview Ave**
Berle, Eleanor	**Jan. 7/12**	**Edmonton, Alberta**
Zuck, Jocelyn	**Jan. 12/12**	**157 Charlton Blvd**
Apanovich, Vladimir	**Jan. 12/12**	**Private**

RICHMOND, Stanley Julian - On January 6, 2012 at his home in Boca Raton, Florida. Stanley Richmond, formerly of Sudbury and Toronto, Ontario. Loving father and father-in-law of Sharon and Eric Thorsteinson, Jay and Joanne Richmond, Marissa Richmond and Stacey Curtis and Serena Richmond. Dear brother of Donny Richmond and Sheila Goldberg and brother-in-law of the late Sam Goldberg. Devoted Zaidy of Adam, Mara, Billy and Grant. Fondly remembered by Helen Richmond and Marie Richmond and her children. Memorial service was held at Temple Sinai on Wednesday January 11, 2012. Memorial donations to the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation would be appreciated.

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Esther Malka Minz	**Jan 7/12**	**4000 Yonge Street**
Saul Cohen	**Jan 7/12**	**265 Ridley Blvd.**
Rose Chikofsky	**Jan 7/12**	**265 Ridley Blvd.**
Isadore Slabodkin	**Jan 7/12**	**43 Ambrose Road**
Sylvia Marks	**Jan 7/12**	**650 Briarhill Avenue**
Sadie Shapiro	**Jan 8/12**	**205 Cummer Avenue**
Gertie Brenner	**Jan 5/12**	**1955 Valley Farm Road**
Marilyn Tennebaum	**Jan 8/12**	**9 Buggey Lane**
Harry Cohen	**Jan 9/12**	**205 Cummer Avenue**
Irving Steinberg	**Jan 10/12**	**65 Skymark Drive**
Skeezix Farb	**Jan 9/12**	**56 Laureleaf Road**
Martha Martin	**Jan 8/12**	**3 Arrowflight Drive**
Elaine Finley	**Jan 10/12**	**5 Mallory Gardens**
Bea Estrin-Freeman	**Jan 12/12**	**55 Skymark Drive**
Saul Fox	**Jan 13/12**	**1939 Veterans Way**
Rose Hillsberg	**Jan 13/12**	**2 Rostrevor Road**

HEBREW BASIC BURIAL

Norman Binns	**Jan 6/12**	**70 Ruddington Drive**
Jean Spector	**Jan 13/12**	**1925 Steeles Avenue**

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Hamas chief Meshal to leave post

Avi Issacharoff
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JERUSALEM — Hamas chief Khaled Meshal will not seek re-election as the organization's political leader in forthcoming elections, he told a meeting in Khartoum three weeks ago.

There has been a widening rift between Hamas leaders in Gaza and those abroad. Palestinian analysts say Meshal recently realized that the Gaza leadership was determined to prevent his reappointment and decided instead to preempt them and quit.

However, the move may be intended to exert pressure on the Gaza leadership, which is demanding an increase in its power, and objects to the significant agenda changes advanced by Meshal.

The controversy between Hamas' leaders in Gaza and abroad focuses on the approach to Israel, the reconciliation between Hamas and Fatah, establishing a Palestinian state and, above all, the relations with Syria and Iran.

Hamas' Gaza leader, Ismail Haniyeh, and his advisers decided to prove to the organization's leaders who recently fled Damascus they could no longer impose their decisions on Gaza.

The Gaza leadership's position was bolstered by the realization that Meshal was trying to change Hamas' struggle strategy and lead it to an historic reconciliation with Fatah, while concentrating its energies on an Arab Spring-type struggle. Haniyeh, meanwhile, is sticking to his former stance, demanding to close ranks with Islamic Jihad.

Khaled Meshal

The head of Hamas' military wing in Gaza, Ahmed Jabril, has not said which side he supports yet.

Last November, Meshal said that Hamas was in favour of establishing a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders, joining Fatah and focusing on the "popular struggle" without the use of firearms.

Haniyeh reacted swiftly, declaring the armed struggle a strategic choice and Hamas' only way of achieving its goals. Haniyeh made it clear that a Palestinian state would be established on every inch of Palestine, and Hamas would never recognize Israel.

The confrontation between Haniyeh and Meshal escalated in the organization leadership's meeting in Khartoum, where Haniyeh openly criticized Meshal.

Thus, within a few weeks, Haniyeh –who was seen as one of the most pragmatic of Hamas' leaders – turned into a hawk showing Meshal the way out.

At the same time, Meshal's position weakened due to the fraying relations with Syria and Iran.

Syrian President Bashar Assad's weakness and the riots in Syria significantly reduced the funds Syria transferred to Hamas and reduced Hamas' training in Syria. Iran also reduced funds given to Hamas.

Hamas is trying to distance itself from Damascus and senior Hamas families have left Syria in recent months. Only a few senior Hamas officials remain in Syria.

The tension between Hamas and Iran has also increased, following Hamas' refusal to heed Iran's pleas that it stays in Damascus.

The Islamic Jihad movement in Gaza is rapidly coming closer to Assad's regime. At the end of December, the group sent dozens of activists to train in Syria and Iran. Palestinian sources reported that the move was made after Iran pressured the Jihad leadership to openly support Assad's regime. Tehran even hinted it would stop the financial support to Islamic Jihad unless it sends its activists to the training courses in Syria.

In related developments, an adviser to Hamas' prime minister said Haniyeh will visit Iran, Qatar and other Muslim countries at the end of the month.

Yusef Rizka says Haniyeh will embark on his second international trip outside the Gaza Strip. He returned last week from a tour of Egypt, Sudan, Turkey and Tunisia.

Hamas said the visits indicate the movement's increased international recognition, and the growing influence of Islamic groups in the region.

The Palestinian Authority, which is dominated by Fatah, has been concerned by the warm welcome Haniyeh has received.

EU adopts Iran oil embargo

JTA

BRUSSELS — The European Union adopted an oil embargo against Iran.

The embargo was approved Monday by the European Union's 27 foreign ministers during a meeting in Brussels.

Under the measure, part of sanctions over the Islamic Republic's nuclear program, the countries will impose an immediate embargo on new contracts with Iran for crude oil and petroleum products, and existing contracts must end by July 1.

Catherine Ashton

"The pressure of sanctions is designed to try and make sure that Iran takes seriously our request to come to the table," EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton said.

Iran says its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes, while western nations are concerned that Iran is preparing to build nuclear weapons.

The EU sanctions come on the heels of new financial sanctions on Iran from the United States. The sanctions, in the law signed by President Barack Obama on Dec. 31, target third parties that deal with Iran's financial and energy sectors. The United States has already banned dealings by its own citizens with those sectors.

New EU sanctions approved Monday also include a freeze on the assets of Iran's central bank.

The new sanctions were met with additional threats from Iranian parliamentarians to close off the Strait of Hormuz, which would cut off much of the West's oil supply.

"In case of threat, the closure of the Strait of Hormuz is one of Iran's rights," senior parliamentarian Heshmatollah Falahatpisheh said. "So far, Iran has not used this privilege."

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Netanyahu orders probe of mufti's speech

JTA

JERUSALEM — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ordered Israel's attorney general to open an investigation into Jerusalem's top Muslim cleric, who called for Jews to be killed.

Mufti Mohammed Hussein, speaking last week at an event celebrating the 47th anniversary of Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah movement, cited a traditional text attributed to the Prophet Muhammad that says: "The hour of judgment will not come until you fight the Jews. The Jew will hide behind the stone and behind the tree. The stone and the tree will cry, 'Oh Muslim, Oh Servant of God, this is a Jew behind me, come and kill him.'"

A video of the mufti's speech was posted on YouTube by Palestinian Media Watch, and the group's account was frozen for several days over the content. The video also shows a man introducing the mufti, saying, "Our war with the descendants of the apes and pigs is a war of religion and faith. Long live Fatah!"

Netanyahu said Sunday that "these are grave words that the world needs to condemn."

Hussein told Israel Radio Sunday that he was just quoting the religious text, not calling for the murder of Jews. No Palestinian leader has condemned his words.

YouTube image of Mufti Mohammed Hussein

Newspaper owner apologizes for Obama assassination scenario

JTA

WASHINGTON — The owner of the *Atlanta Jewish Times* apologized for an opinion column in which he counted U.S. President Barack Obama's assassination as among Israel's options in heading off a nuclear Iran.

"I very much regret it. I wish I hadn't made reference to it at all," Andrew Adler told JTA on Friday.

He said he would publish an apology in his next edition, and that reaction from readers had been overwhelmingly negative.

Fox News reported late Friday on its website that the Secret Service was investigating the column. In his interview with JTA, Adler said he had not been approached by the Secret Service.

In a Jan. 13 column, Adler, who is also the paper's publisher, outlined what he said were three possible responses by Israel to Iran's acquiring a nuclear weapon: a pre-emptive strike against Hamas and Hezbollah, terrorist groups that he said would be emboldened by a nuclear Iran; a direct strike on Iran, and "three, give the go-ahead for U.S.-based Mossad agents to take out a president deemed unfriendly to Israel in order for the current vice-president to take his place, and forcefully dictate that the United States policy includes its helping the Jewish state obliterate its enemies."

He continued: "Yes, you read 'three' correctly. Order a hit on a president in order to preserve Israel's existence. Think about it. If I have thought of this Tom Clancy-type scenario, don't you think that this almost unfathomable idea has been discussed in Israel's most inner circles?"

Gawker, the U.S. gossip and media news website, first reported on the column Friday.

Ophir Aviran, the Israeli consul general in Atlanta, condemned the column "in the strongest possible terms."

In response to a JTA request for comment, Aviran said in an e-mail that he was "appalled at this deranged and morally repugnant assertion."

The Anti-Defamation League condemned Adler's column as "outrageous."

"An apology cannot possibly repair the damage," said the ADL's national director Abraham Foxman in a statement.

Foxman added that "Mr. Adler's lack of judgment as a publisher, editor and columnist raises serious questions as to whether he's fit to run a newspaper."

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Israel Briefs

Anti-racism protest

Thousands of protesters demonstrated in Jerusalem against racism and discrimination against Ethiopians in Israel. Some 5,000 protesters marched in front of the Knesset Jan. 18 before proceeding to Zion Square for a rally. They carried signs: "Blacks and Whites – We're all Equal," "Social Justice" and "Stop racism." The protest came a week after hundreds of Israelis of Ethiopian descent and their supporters demonstrated in Kiryat Malachi against housing discrimination. A residential committee of a block of apartments in Kiryat Malachi reportedly signed residents to a contract committing that they would not rent or sell to Ethiopian Israelis.

Hackers retaliate

Israeli hackers said they brought down the websites of the Saudi Stock Exchange and the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange. The hackers, who call themselves IDF-Team, said in a post on the PasteBin website that the attacks were in retaliation for the cyber attack the previous day on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange and El Al's website, adding that "This is only the beginning." The Israeli hackers also threatened to paralyze websites for up to a month if attacks on Israeli sites continue. Saudi hackers used the PasteBin website last week to publish the credit card information of thousands of Israelis. Also last week, the pro-Israel hacker Hannibal published a list of e-mail addresses and Facebook passwords for some 30,000 users from Arab countries. He also claims to have information to allow access to 10 million Iranian and Saudi bank accounts.

Second murderer sentenced

Amjad Awad, 19, was sentenced last week to five consecutive life sentences in a military court for the murder of the Fogel family in Itamar last March. He was convicted in November for the March 11 murders. Awad also was sentenced to an additional seven years in prison on two counts of weapons trafficking and one count of conspiracy to commit murder, for a total sentence of 132 years in prison. The panel of judges said it had considered giving Awad the death penalty. The judges also said in their decision that Awad "doesn't have a fragment of regret in his heart." Awad and his cousin, Hakim Awad, murdered Udi Fogel, 36, and Ruth Fogel, 35, and their children, Yoav, 11; Elad, 4; and Hadas, 3 months, in a Shabbat eve attack on their home in the northern West Bank. Hakim Awad was sentenced in September to five life sentences plus five years, for a total of 130 years. Three of the Fogel children survived the attack. Two were sleeping in a side bedroom and were not discovered, and a daughter was out of the house at the time of the killings. She came home to discover the bodies.

With files from JTA

Former Montrealer in Israeli song competition

Viva Sarah Press
CJN Israel Bureau

TEL AVIV — It takes a big voice and a chunk of audacity to cover British star singer Adele's *Rolling in the Deep* – especially live on television. But that's exactly what Montrealer Kathleen Reiter did recently on the debut episode of the new Israeli Channel 2 reality show, *The Voice*.

Reiter, 23 – the same age as Adele – proved that she, too, has an impressive singing voice.

"I chose to sing *Rolling in the Deep* mostly because the song has so much soul and it does something to people, it moves them, and for me, this is what I look for when I'm performing onstage," Reiter told *The CJN*.

Although the story behind the participant is not meant to sway opinion on the show, Reiter's aliyah from Montreal has piqued interest among viewers and the judges alike. She arrived in Israel just a few days before the taping of the show.

"I am so proud of where I come from. I grew up in Montreal, and I think that just growing up there made me into this person that I am today," she said. "I take a lot of pride in where I come from. As a Jew, it was important for me to make a home here, in Israel, as well."

Reiter's parents are Israelis and she grew up speaking Hebrew, English and French at home – making her aliyah a little easier as she already speaks the language. She is the youngest of three siblings and says she is "a typical last child."

On a visit to Israel last summer, she heard about auditions for the *The Voice* and decided to try her luck. Reiter moved to Tel Aviv by herself, leaving her parents, brother and sister back in Montreal.

"I think it was the right thing for me," she said of aliyah. "As a Jew, I've always felt a strong sense of belonging in Israel, and this is what ultimately made me choose to live here."

It isn't by chance that her debut audition is still reverberating among Israeli television viewers. Reiter has taken voice-training lessons since she was 12 years old, focusing on pop and classical music. At the age of 15, while still a student at Herzliah High School, she won Montreal's first Jewish Idol competition organized by Centre Hillel.

"Jewish Idol was an amazing experience, and I can only hope that my journey on *The Voice* continues to be as amazing as my blind audition was," she said. All I can say is that I will certainly work very hard to make it happen."

The Voice is a vocal competition based on Holland's top-rated vocal talent discovery show, *The Voice of Holland*. It features three stages of competition: blind audition (the mentors/judges sit with their backs to the contestants and swivel their chairs around if they like the voice they're hearing and then court the contestant to their teams); battle phase (a vocal face-off between two contestants), and live performance (finalists compete during a live broadcast).

The four Israeli mentors/judges are Aviv Geffen, Sarit Hadad, Shlomi Shabat and Rami Kleinstein. The host is local television personality Michael Aloni.

The show is aired every Saturday night. The opening episode broke records for the Reshet production team with a 43.4 per cent rating of 1.6 million viewers. Reiter has her eye set on the final prize – a recording contract.

Although the show has only just begun, her powerful rendition of *Rolling in the Deep* has already made her a favourite. During the blind audition, she was the first contestant to prompt all four judges to turn their swivel seats and woo her to their teams. She even got Kleinstein to stand up and dance while she was singing.

"It was surreal. I couldn't believe that these four amazing artists were saying so many wonderful things," she said. "I have so much respect for all four of the mentors, and having them say these amazing things, it's humbling and I was just amazed."

Kathleen Reiter
[Yanai Yechiel photo]

On stage, she is a power ball of energy. "The stage is the place I am the most comfortable. It's my home," she said. "I'm usually very shy and quiet, but when I perform all that changes."

She chose Hadad as her mentor after the acclaimed Israeli songstress told Reiter that "it's all about girl power."

She also gives credit to her grandfather for her love of music. She told the judges that she remembers listening to him sing when she was younger and says she got her voice from him.

While the remaining auditions are still underway, the team behind *The Voice* continues to release short bio videos of the contestants who made the cut for the next round. Reiter's videos are hugely popular, with more than 70,000 hits already.

"I'm so proud to be a part of *The Voice* here in Israel," she said. "I came to Israel to have a new start. It's my dream to have a career in music. Hopefully, I can have a career in music in Israel."

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Israeli trade in Muslim world an open secret

Shuki Sadeh
Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

TEL AVIV — Motti (not his real name), a businessman with connections in Arab countries, was stunned several months ago when representatives of a well-known Israeli food company asked him to check the possibility of exporting to Iran. They told him an Iranian company had approached them through contacts abroad.

Motti refused. He didn't want to violate the embargo. But since then, he said, he's discovered that quite a few local companies and businessmen trade indirectly with Israel's No. 1 enemy. So he wasn't shocked by a Bloomberg News story a few weeks ago about Allot Communications selling Internet surveillance and monitoring equipment to Iran over five years through a Danish distributor.

"Trade with Iran is an ancient story," said Prof. Uri Bialer of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, an expert in international relations who has researched ties between Israel and Iran. "Money has no smell. Iranians always try to do business, and there have always been Israelis with an eye for making money."

Nachum Shiloh, an expert on Iran and owner of Gulf Markets Intelligence, said for some Iranian businessmen it makes sense to import from Israel. "Here, we view Iran as the enemy, a demon," he explained, "but not every Iranian gets up every morning thinking of ways to destroy Israel. Iran has a large segment of businessmen who are not fanatics, people who want to make money and further their businesses – if they could only trade, even indirectly, with businesspeople and companies from Israel."

Sanctions threatened by Israel and the United States are intended to deter companies from considering ties, even indirectly, with Iran. But in today's reality, with crises weighing on western markets, there are companies ogling the Third World, with some finding markets in countries hostile to Israel. These countries also have many adoring fans of Israel's technology and products, but because of political sensitivities, everything must be done on the QT. Stickers and packaging saying "Made in Israel" must be removed and a bill of lading must be produced from an intermediary country, Turkey or somewhere in Europe.

"It's forbidden to talk about these things," said Dan Catarivas, director of the foreign trade and international relations division of the Manufacturers Association of Israel. "Israeli industrialists want to stay as far out of the spotlight as possible."

"Operating surreptitiously is inconvenient and involves hard work and investment, but sometimes there's no choice," said a senior official at a well-known Israeli high-tech company. "Our foreign competitors deal freely with Arab countries. It's worth entering these markets to narrow the gap even slightly."

Israeli business quietly thrives in Saudi Arabia and Iraq, and in countries like Indonesia and Malaysia. Company owners on both sides do all they can to avoid harmful publicity. Contacts are made at international conferences overseas, through European and U.S. companies familiar with both sides, and directly over the Internet.

"Technology, particularly the Internet, is making the world smaller," said Eliran Malul at Arab Markets, which brokers deals in Arab countries. "Arab entrepreneurs are interested in Israeli technologies and search them out through the Internet and social networks like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn."

Israel also uses businessmen and trade networks for political and commercial purposes. The state monitors activities of businessmen from Arab countries and enlists the help of Israeli businessmen in carrying out diplomatic missions and serving as intermediaries in clandestine intrigues. After it was revealed that ships belonging to the Ofer Group docked in Iran, foreign publications claimed the Ofer family's ships had for years helped Israeli agents infiltrate Iran.

Billionaire Sammy Ofer, right, shakes hands with Defense Minister Ehud Barak. Ships owned by Ofer companies reportedly assisted Israeli agents infiltrate Iran. *[Moshe Shai/Flash90 photo]*

Relations with Muslim countries extend far beyond the Middle East. In the late 1990s, the Foreign Ministry tried to establish trade with Indonesia and Malaysia. Muslim countries with strong economic potential but without diplomatic relations with Israel. It was the heyday of the Oslo accords and many believed Israel's economic ties to Muslim and Arab countries would become much more open and productive. Several years earlier, Koor Trade had opened an office in Indonesia and had begun establishing low-profile trading relations there.

Trade continues covertly with Indonesia at the lowest possible profile and without diplomatic relations. Singapore serves as a base for businessmen trying to penetrate there. In 2007, a subsidiary of Ormat Industries signed a $200-million contract to supply electricity for 30 years.

An Indonesia-Israel trade bureau was opened two years ago. Indonesia is one of the world's fastest growing markets, with great potential in the field of communications because of its population of more than 200 million. Clandestine trade is also carried out in the opposite direction. Israel imports eight times as much as it exports in its trade with Indonesia.

One of the most interesting countries for duality of relations is Saudi Arabia. Quite a number of Israeli companies export products to Saudi Arabia, including technological goods. This is sometimes done through their U.S.-registered subsidiaries.

Another interesting field is trade in plastics. Israel receives polyethylene and polypropylene, derived from petroleum production, from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries. These materials are sent in a roundabout way, but Israeli authorities are aware of their source. Israel's plastics industry, in turn, exports greenhouse sheeting, irrigation drippers, house and garden products, disposable utensils and food packaging to Saudi Arabia. Some of these products are made in Turkish factories established by Israeli companies.

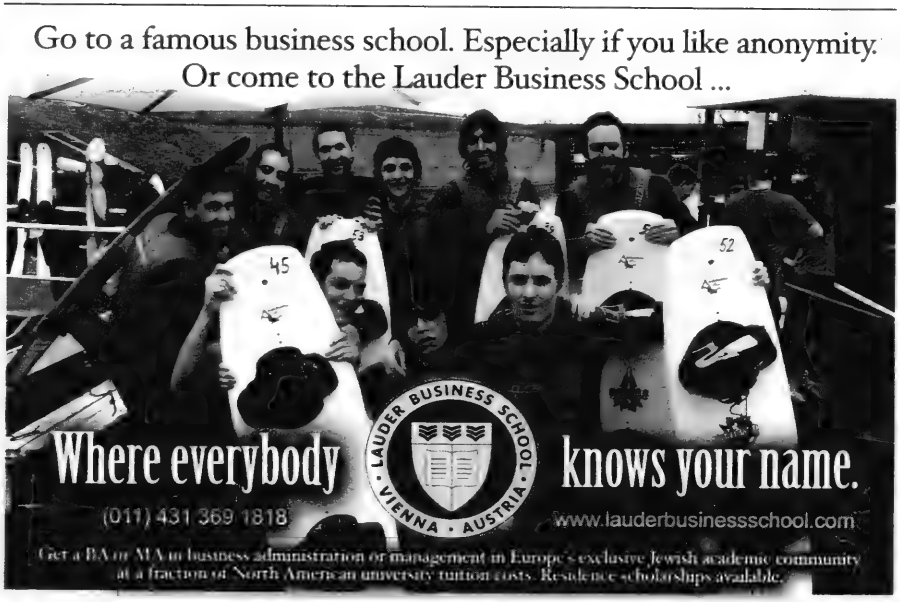
The wealthy Gulf countries are, without doubt, the most attractive places for Israeli business. As Dubai was building the Palm Islands real estate project, Israelis had a hand in providing some of the shingles through an Italian roofing tile company.

A fair number of Israeli high-tech companies operate in the Gulf states, with Israel exporting medical, agricultural and water technologies.

One field in which they are active is internal security – the oil fields in one of the states are protected by Israeli guards hired by an Israeli-owned security firm.

Naava Mashiah, who lives in Geneva and brokers deals in the Middle East, belongs to Israeli Peace Initiative, whose membership wants to establish an alternative to the political deadlock in the region.

In dealings in Arab countries, it's impossible to separate the political and business aspects, said Mashiah. "The Saudi [peace] initiative didn't get a response from Israel, and the Arab world sees this as an insult. The Israeli peace initiative, in a way, provides an answer to the standstill because it shows there are serious Israelis aware of the political situation and working to change it. Israel is becoming increasingly isolated in the world, and our group is trying to break this isolation. One way is by creating business ties with Arab countries."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Letters of a poet, on legal letterhead

Reviewed by

Norman Ravvin

EDITED BY ELIZABETH POPHAM

The dust cover of the recently released *A.M. Klein: The Letters*, edited by Elizabeth Popham (University of Toronto Press) tells its own melancholy tale. A portrait of the poet dressed in homburg and three-piece suit – de rigueur lawerly garb circa the 1940s – is paired with a letter from September 1951. Addressed to a major poet and editor of the period, Klein's neat script provides a "Declaration of Intentions" regarding his 1951 novel *The Second Scroll*.

But the letterhead atop this "Declaration" is that of Chait, Klein & Aronovitch, whose offices were on St. Catherine Street in Montreal. Klein's mix of professional pursuits arises in many anecdotes, as visitors to his law office found his desk spread with Milton or Shakespeare rather than legal files.

The autumn of 1951 is near the end of Klein's productive years. *The Letters* open in 1928, with a note regarding the acceptance of his work in the major American journal *Poetry*. By the end of 1951, there is a sense of great promise and productivity in the correspondence.

New York's Alfred A. Knopf has brought out *The Second Scroll*; Klein's work on James Joyce has found its way into the hands of major Joyce scholars; and he is in a position to promote the work of his protégé, Irving Layton, to his publisher.

Yet, in Klein's fifth decade the output of correspondence collapses, both in quantity and quality. The early 1950s offer a few long letters regarding proposals for Broadway projects that were not completed.

Klein accepts and then cancels a series of Canadian and American speaking engagements. By the fall of 1952 he tells his old friend and colleague Leon Edel that "because of other plans" he is putting his "Joyce work aside." Most abruptly, in 1956, he takes leave of his law career, writing to his firm and to the Bar Associations of Montreal and Quebec. After these turning points, though Klein lived until 1972, *The Letters* offers a bare skeleton – a handful of letters, two of which are sad, formulaic birthday greetings addressed to Sam Bronfman – representative of the final 16 years of Klein's life.

The Letters, revealing as they are of periods of great activity and then withdrawal, are effective at conveying the unpredictability of a writing life. The collection's editor, Elizabeth Popham, tells us in her introduction that letters to family are embargoed until 2022, so the dimensions that this correspondence might add remain unknown.

Other absences in *The Letters* are notable. There is no sustained correspondence with other writers. Klein exchanges letters with editors and publishers, sometimes revealing the meagre returns of writerly success: in 1944 the pay for the use of two poems in an anthology was four dollars. At times, the distractions provided by Klein's work for Sam Bronfman at Seagram's take on a darkly comic tone, as he acknowledges that he is "looking forward to reading" and providing editorial suggestions for a manuscript titled "History of Distillation." Chapters yet to be dealt with include "Bottles," "Corn" and "Humorous and Comic Tavern Signboards."

In the letters chosen by Popham, Klein rarely reflects on how his more prosaic responsibilities affected his goals and routines as a writer. Rather, he takes these pursuits for granted, or, defaults to them as literary work becomes more difficult to attend to. As early as 1945 he belittles his own reputation as a "leading Canadian poet." He writes, "I have been anthologized, publicized, criticized; as a writer on Jewish themes, re-circumcised. I have not been curtly ignored; I have been nodded at and then ignored." This is from a letter in which Klein introduces his poem *The Portrait of the Poet as a Nobody* to a California-based journal.

Klein's poetry has become central to Canadian literary life. Not too long ago Parks Canada declared him a National Historic Figure, and plans a commemorative marker for his longtime Montreal address on Hutchison Street. *The Letters* help us appreciate this status alongside the darker elements of a creative life.

Norman Ravvin's recent publications include the novel The Joyful Child *(Gaspereau Press) and* Failure's Opposite: Listening to A.M. Klein, *co-edited with Sherry Simon (McGill-Queen's).*

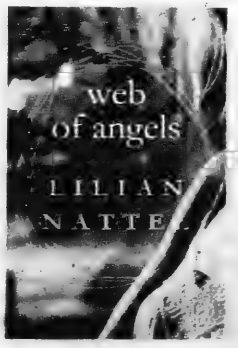
Novel tackles mental illness

Compiled by CJN staff

Just as Jodi Picoult tackles controversial contemporary issues in her compelling domestic dramas, bestselling novelist Lilian Nattel explores the vivid reality of what used to be called multiple personality disorder.

The Toronto-based writer interviewed 25 people with dissociative identity disorder (DID) for her upcoming novel *Web of Angels* (Vintage Canada), which will be released in early March.

The story follows Sharon Lewis who is a lot like any other happily married mother. She is the beating heart of a house full of kids, cooking and chaos, the one who always knows the after-school practice schedule; where her husband put the car keys and who needs a little TLC.



Life is definitely normal and good until the morning a friend of the family kills herself. The reverberations of that act, and the ugly secrets that sparked it, prove deeply unsettling for the whole family and stir up Sharon's own troubling secret: she has DID. Will she be able to persuade her quiet and respectable community that evil things can happen even in the nicest homes?

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2) Advise our Circulation Department to suspend delivery until you return to Canada with your expiry automatically extended. You can still access the eCJN while away.

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Fax changes in your delivery to 416-932-2488 or call the Circulation Department at 1-866-849-0864 allowing a maximum of two weeks notice.

EYE ON ARTS

By BILL GLADSTONE

MUSICIAN-IN-RESIDENCE WEEKEND AT TEMPLE HAR ZION

As part of its 40th anniversary celebrations, Temple Har Zion of Thornhill, Ont., is hosting a Musician-in-Residence weekend, Feb. 3 to 5. The featured musical guest is **Alan Goodis**, a nationally touring musician who grew up in the synagogue and performs often at temples, Hillels, conventions and Jewish summer camps across North America.

Goodis and others are participating in Shabbat Shirah services on Feb. 3 and 4. Also, he and friends are performing a Coffee House musical evening on Saturday, Feb. 4, 8 p.m. $10 at the door; refreshments. 7360 Bayview Ave. www.templeharzion.com

* * *

New in Print: When Toronto fantasy-literature fan **Alisse Lee Goldenberg** isn't busy with her husband, Brian, or their triplets, Joseph, Phillip and Hailey, she's a writer. The fine arts and education graduate has just published her debut novel, *The Strings of the Violin*, a fantasy-adventure based on eastern European folklore and geared toward young women. The plot? In a quest to save their people, three girls battle Asmodeus, the powerful king of the dybbuks. The book was self-published through iUniverse. It can be purchased from Amazon and Indigo.ca

* * *

Names in the News: Audience members who called to **Vladimir Spivakov** several years ago at a Toronto concert, asking him to put down his conducting baton and play his violin ("*Skripke! Skripke!*") will soon get their wish. Show One Productions presents Spivakov and pianist **Olga Kern** performing an evening of romantic and 20th-century masterworks, the first time the Russian-Jewish violinist has performed with Kern as a duo. $50 to $120. Koerner Hall, 273 Bloor St. W. Thursday, Feb. 23, 8 p.m. 416-408-0208, http://rcmusic.ca.

* * *

Arts in Brief

• Author-critic **Kevin Courrier** continues his series of film lectures with clips, Reflections in the Hall of Mirrors: American Movies and the Politics of Idealism. The next program is "The Nixon Era: *Midnight Cowboy, Alice's Restaurant, Easy Rider* and more." Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, Jan. 30, 7 to 9 p.m. $12 drop-in at the door; students $6. 416-924-6211, ext. 606; film@mnjcc.org

• Active Seniors at the Miles Nadal JCC presents music historian **Jordan Klapman** offering a presentation with live piano on "Tin Pan Alley's Greatest Music Publishers and Their Hits." Thursday, Feb. 9, 1:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 155.

• Play in a klezmer ensemble with **Eric Stein**. Miles Nadal JCC, Tuesdays 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. through April 24. Prorate available. 416-924-6211, ext. 0; music@mnjcc.org

• The Al Green Theatre and MNJCC present acclaimed Israeli pianist **Yitzhak Yedid** in a solo piano concert titled Reflections on Chagall. The original compositions were inspired by six paintings "conveying images of beauty, prayer and Jewish tradition fused with sadness and strife." $15. Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre, Thursday, March 1, 8 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 0; www.algreentheatre.ca

• *My Mother's Italian, My Father's Jewish & I'm in Therapy!*, the **Steve Solomon** comedy currently at the Bathurst Street Theatre, will close on Feb. 5. 855-985-2787, www.italianjewish.ca

Jewish singer to represent Turkey in song contest

JTA

Turkey's Jews are pleased that, for the first time, a Jew will be representing their country at this year's Eurovision Song Contest.

But the singer, Can Bonomo, isn't exactly trumpeting his accomplishment in being chosen to compete with singers from other European countries – at least not the Jewish part.

"We would like to inform that Mr. Can Bonomo is bound to refuse answering all the questions about his religious beliefs, antisemitism and political subjects," Bonomo's spokesman, Ece Kahraman, wrote in a statement to *JTA*.

Bonomo has taken pains to tell fans that he will be participating in Eurovision as a Turk, not as a Jew.

"My family came from Spain 540 years ago," Bonomo said in an interview on the *Aksam* news show in a video posted Jan. 11 that has gone viral. "I am Turkish and I am representing Turkey. I will go out there with the Turkish flag and represent Turkey. I am an artist, a musician. That's all that everybody needs to know."

Prior to his appearance on *Aksam*, radical right-wing papers had accused Bonomo of being a tool of Zionists and Freemasons.

The anchor framed her question this way: "People might say you were chosen because Turkey wants to ingratiate itself with Israeli lobby groups," she said. "I would like to get your comments."

The intimation that the state-run Turkish Radio and Television Corp., which makes the Eurovision selection, would kowtow to pro-Israel groups seems a little bizarre with Turkey's moderate Islamist government doing its best to distance itself from Israel. One of the crises that fuelled the current tensions between the two countries, in fact, was the broadcast in 2010 on state-run TV of a drama series that portrayed Israelis as harvesting organs from Iraqis.

It is true that Bonomo's selection for the annual contest, which is being held this year in Azerbaijan in May, has sparked a glint of hope in Turkey's 20,000 Jews, who have watched anxiously as their country's historically strong relations with Israel have deteriorated.

Can Bonomo

"It is the first time in history that a talented young Turkish Jewish singer will represent Turkey in the Eurovision Song Contest," Derya Agis, a scholar of Turkish Jewish culture and history at Brandeis University, wrote on her Facebook page. "Turkey will show the importance of diversity in Europe where antisemitism, Islamophobia and xenophobia have been problems since centuries."

Or, put a little less academically by Denise Saporta, a spokeswoman for Turkey's Jewish community: "A Jewish boy is going to represent Turkey!" she told *JTA*. "We're all very proud."

Saporta downplayed the attacks on Bonomo, saying they are typical of political factions that deride minorities in general and are not representative of Turks.

"This always happens with 'firsts,'" she said. "If he were anything other than a Sunni Muslim male – a woman, even –these media would attack."

Going by his Facebook fan page, Bonomo has a solid following among Turks of all stripes. The video of the *Aksam* interview drew hundreds of comments supporting him. One fan, Osman Kural, denounced the "radical, right wing agitprop," and said it "in no way represents all of the country."

Bonomo, 24, oozes hip, with his retro caps and his blazer over T-shirt look. His Twitter biography describes him as "musician/illustrator/writer/drunk/bast'E'rd. (– Chill dude)." (His facility with English is another factor riling Turkish ultranationalists.)

EuroVisionary, a Eurovision fan site, describes the singer-songwriter's style as "Istanbulian music that works with tunes from Alaturca to international indie style." The Shins, Wax Poetic, the Kinks, the Libertines and the Beatles are listed by the site as his influences. His vocals incorporate the rising and falling quartertones typical of his country's music, and are set against throbbing drums and guitar and oud riffs.

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Actor portrays general in Egoyan-directed play

Kathryn Kates
Special to The CJN

Toronto actor Daniel Kash plays a tormented general in *Cruel and Tender*, a play directed by Academy Award-nominated filmmaker Atom Egoyan, now running at the Bluma Appel Theatre.

Written by British playwright Martin Crimp, *Cruel and Tender* is based on Sophocles' ancient Greek tragedy *Trachiniae* (or *The Women of Trachis*). Sophocles' story focuses on Heracles, Greece's national hero, and what happened when he sent a captured princess home to his pining wife, while plundering the village of Euboas.

In Crimp's play, Kash plays Heracles, a modern-day military general fighting a war on terror in bloodstained Africa. His pampered wife, Amelia, waits at home, unaware that her world is about to be shattered with the arrival of Laela, a young African woman for whom her husband has committed unspeakable atrocities.

"In our production, the general is famous for achieving success, security and peace on behalf of his non-aggressive home country," Kash says. "My purpose was to fight terror in the world, but something has happened. While I'm away from home doing my duty, an incident has happened where I pulled the heart out of a young boy on a bus. Then, I went back to his hometown, levelled it and killed the guy who was running it, in order to get his daughter, Laela, who I am in love and in lust with.

"The politicians back home perceive that I have gone rogue and want to control me and show that I am a criminal now. So they have put my wife and her servants in a bunker outside of an airport in our home country. It is revealed to my wife that I am in love and in lust with Laela and she goes crazy about it."

Heracles's wife, Amelia, is played by Egoyan's real-life wife, the award-winning actor Arsinée Khanjian. Although he's directed her in several of his films, including *Adoration*, this is first time Egoyan will direct her on stage. He also previously directed Kash in the 1993 CBC film *Gross Misconduct*, about the late hockey player Brian (Spinner) Spencer.

Kash says that when directing a play, Egoyan has a chance to express his ideas of the themes in a symbolic version using stagecraft, and thinks Egoyan likes the intellectual literary aspect of theatre.

Kash is the father of two sons, Mackenzie, 10, and Tyson, 13, with his actor wife, Hayley Tyson. She's not Jewish, but Kash was raised in a Reform Jewish home and recently commemorated his oldest son's 13th birthday with what he calls a "fauxmitzvah."

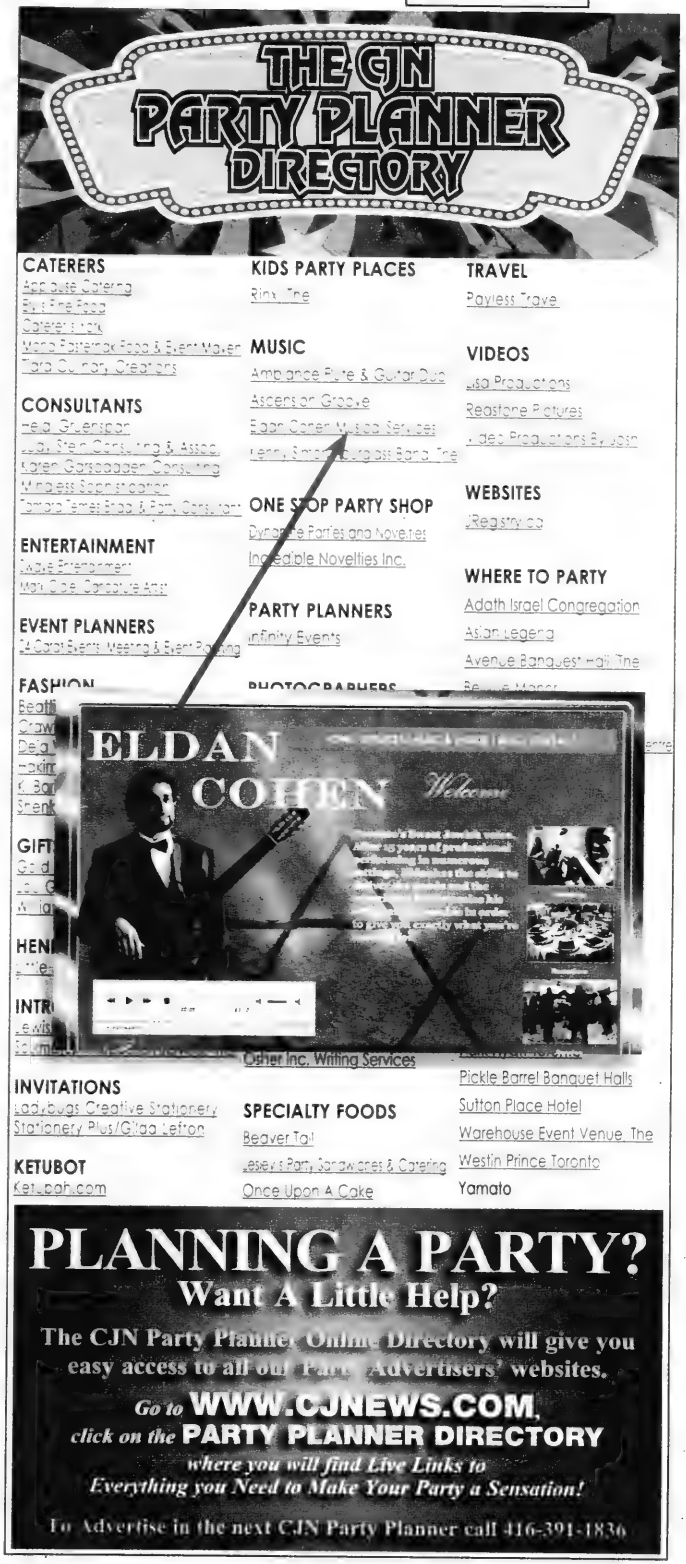
Although Kash, the son of the late conductor Eugene Kash and the late opera singer Maureen Forrester, is musical himself, he decided to pursue acting instead. His career spans two decades, and he's graced the stages of CanStage, the Stratford Festival, Tarragon Theatre, Edmonton's Citadel and the Winnipeg Jewish Theatre. His film and television appearances include *Alphas*, *Casino Jack*, *Skins*, *The Line*, *Aliens*, *On the Road* and *Fugitive Pieces*, in addition to *Gross Misconduct*. Kash has had two Gemini nominations for best actor.

"From a cultural point of view, I grew up with volatile Jewish characters – including my father. It gave me a lot of emotional freedom without restraint," states Kash. "Also, the Jewish population is devoted to literature, philosophy and to seeking out knowledge, and that is a huge help to an actor. It makes sense."

Abena Malika plays Laela in *Cruel and Tender*. Rounding out the cast are Nigel Shawn Williams, Thomas Hauff, Jeff Lillico, Cara Ricketts, Brenda Robins, André Sills and Sarah Wilson.

Cruel and Tender runs until Feb. 18 at the Bluma Appel Theatre at Toronto's St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts. Tickets at www.canadianstage.com, 416-368-3110, or at the box office.

Daniel Kash, right, in rehearsal with director Atom Egoyan. ***(Bruce Zinger photo)***



Allied airmen and their ordeal in Buchenwald

Joseph Serge
Arts Editor

In the summer of 1944, a group of Allied airmen were captured in Paris after they bailed out of their burning planes. Treated as saboteurs by the Germans, they were sent to the Buchenwald concentration camp where only after the intervention of Luftwaffe officers were they transferred to a PoW camp.

Their story comes to light in the newly released documentary *Lost Airmen of Buchenwald*, now available on DVD.

Ed Carter-Edwards, a Canadian, is one of them. He was a wireless operator and gunner on a Halifax MKIII bomber.

Like the other downed airmen, he sought out members of the resistance to help hide him and spirit him out of the country.

The biggest risk for the airmen was not the Germans but other civilians who may turn them in. Carter-Edwards, and around 170 others, were betrayed by a Belgian double agent who turned them over to the Gestapo.

"Once you fall into the hands of the Gestapo or the SS, it's game over," Carter-Edwards says in the film. He is one of several survivors interviewed in this documentary.

Ed Carter-Edwards was a gunner on a Halifax MKIII bomber.

For some unknown reason, which the narrator says may have been deliberate or a clerical error, the airmen were not registered as regular prisoners of war but as saboteurs. Instead of being sent to a PoW camp, they were sent to a Gestapo-run prison outside Paris where they were tortured and kept in horrible conditions.

After D-Day, as the Allies approached Paris, they were crammed into box cars and transferred to Buchenwald over four to five hot August days. Although they were thrown in with other prisoners, mostly political undesirables or Russian PoWs, they continued to act like a military unit and followed military discipline

Under the orders of an officer among them from New Zealand who had the highest rank, the airmen defiantly refused to perform forced labour, insisting it was against the Geneva Conventions.

At Buchenwald they were starved and tortured. By chance, visiting Luftwaffe officers found out about them and insisted that they be transferred to a PoW camp.

They were finally transferred to Stalag Luft III, the site of an earlier breakout immortalized in the movie *The Great Escape*.

The difference between Buchenwald and the PoW camp was the difference between night and day. There, the airmen were allowed to receive and send letters home and eat Red Cross rations.

Theirs is an unusual story that deserves to be told, though it's not entirely unique. There is a documented case of about 350 American prisoners, mostly Jewish, who were sent to a labour camp.

It is unfortunate that *Lost Airmen of Buchenwald* hasn't been aired on television and is only available from the distributors at www.lostairmen.com.

Spiegelman wins Jewish Book Award

JTA

Author and illustrator Art Spiegelman and Israeli novelist Aharon Appelfeld are among the winners of the 2011 National Jewish Book Awards, an American presentation handed out annually by the Jewish Book Council.

Spiegelman's new book, *MetaMaus: A Look Inside a Modern Classic, Maus*, took the prize in the biography, autobiography and memoir category. The judges describe it "as brilliant and paradigm-shattering as...*Maus*... a work of genius."

Appelfeld won his third National Jewish Book Award in fiction for *Until the Dawn's Light*. Ned Beauman, the 26-year-old author of *Boxer, Beetle*, won in the outstanding debut fiction category.

Simon Sebag Montefiore was honoured with the Everett Family Foundation Jewish Book of the Year Award for his epic history, *Jerusalem: The Biography*.

This year, the Jewish Book Council will recognize the contributions of board member Myra H. Kraft, who died in July. The Myra H. Kraft Memorial Award in contemporary Jewish life and practice, endowed by her husband, Robert Kraft, and her family, has been established for her dedication to the world of Jewish literature. It will be presented to Rabbi David A. Teutsch for his book *A Guide to Jewish Practice: Everyday Living*.

Other winners include Hirsch Goodman in the history category for *The Anatomy of Israel's Survival*; Julie Chibbaro in the children's and young adult literature category for *Deadly*, and Dr. Tamara Cohn Eskenazi and Dr. Tikva Frymer-Kensky in the women's studies category for *The JPS Bible Commentary: Ruth*.

The awards will be presented March 14 in New York. A complete list of the winners can be seen at www.jewishbookcouncil.org . The Jewish Book Council has been giving out the National Jewish Book Awards since 1948.

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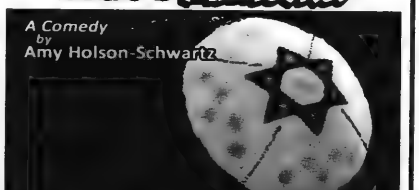

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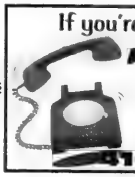
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Canadians earn medals at Pan Am Maccabi Games

Paul Lungen
Staff Reporter

The medal count was good – four silvers and two bronze – but they tell only half the story of the recently concluded Pan American Maccabi Games, says Maccabi Canada president Tom Bacher.

The best part of the recently concluded games in addition to the intense competition, was the camaraderie, the all-for-one-and-one-for–all attitude of the participants, and the pride in participating in a unique event that brought together Jews from around the world, he said.

Bacher was gushing as he recounted the Canadian team's experience in Sao Paulo, Brazil, where they joined 2,000 athletes from 16 countries at the games, held Dec. 26 to Jan. 2.

It started with the opening ceremonies in which the Canadian team was joined by family members, Maccabi officials and staff.

The march-in "creates pride in being Jewish, of being part of this worldwide organization," he said. "It was an amazing group of people who came together for the common good."

The Pan Am Maccabi is one of several regional games that take place every four years between Maccabiahs in Israel. The next Maccabiah is scheduled for the summer of 2013.

The smaller Pan Am Maccabi attracted athletes from Canada, Brazil, The United States, Australia, Israel, South Africa, Argentina, Venezuela, Chile, Panama and other countries.

Bacher, who was a member of past Canadian teams in Israel, was able to play a few innings for the silver-medal winning master's softball team in Sao Paulo. As president, however, his duties took him to various venues to cheer on the Canadian athletes, and one competition in particular has him effusive.

It was the basketball semifinal, one in which the 0-3 Canadians tipped off against Brazil. Despite the latter's home-court advantage, there were more than 100 Canadian spectators at the event, and they made lots of noise, Bacher recalled.

Down by 10 going into the fourth quarter, the boisterous Canadians helped rally the team, which mounted an improbable comeback to win by four points.

"The crowd was rocking," Bacher said. "They were screaming their heads off. It was the most fun I've ever had at a sporting event."

Canadian athletes and fans went from competition to competition to cheer their countrymen. Altogether, Maccabi Canada was represented by 90 coaches and athletes – four basketball teams (men's masters (over 35), men's open, under-19 and under-17), two softball teams (master's and open), one open soccer team and one table tennis player, Mitchell Billinkoff. The Winnipegger came home with one silver medal and two bronze medals.

The master's basketball team won silver, as did the open hoops squad, while the other two teams lost in the bronze medal games. The open softball team also finished second, while the soccer teams were competitive against soccer-mad countries, but came away with no medals.

Despite the lack of soccer medals, Bacher is optimistic that with a complete lineup of its best players, the team can challenge for a medal in Israel next year.

The same holds true for basketball. He's expected three or four top players who were unavailable in Brazil to bolster the Canadian team in Israel.

Preparations are already under way for the 2013 Games. Maccabi Canada is relying on its contacts in the sporting world to identify accomplished athletes, and in February, the organization will begin holding open tryouts for a variety of teams and sports.

One of the sports Canadians are expected to medal in is hockey. The sport was added to the 2013 Games for its first appearance since 1997, when Team Canada won gold. Teams from Canada, the United States, France and Israel are expected to compete. Russia may yet make it a five-country tournament, Bacher said.

Maccabiah organizers are considering three divisions – the open, which will bring together the best players of all ages, a master's division and an under-19 grouping.

It's not yet clear if the master's competition will be considered a medal sport or a demonstration event. If it's the latter, Canada might well send two teams, Bacher said.

Overall, Macçabi Canada might have as many as 450 athletes and staff at the 2013 Games. Plans are to bring the entire contingent to Israel for a five-day pre-competition mini-camp that will build team unity and allow for sightseeing as well as volunteer work.

Maccabi Canada sent Masters and Open softball teams to the Pan American Maccabi Games. The Open team won a silver medal. ***[Maccabi Canada photo]***

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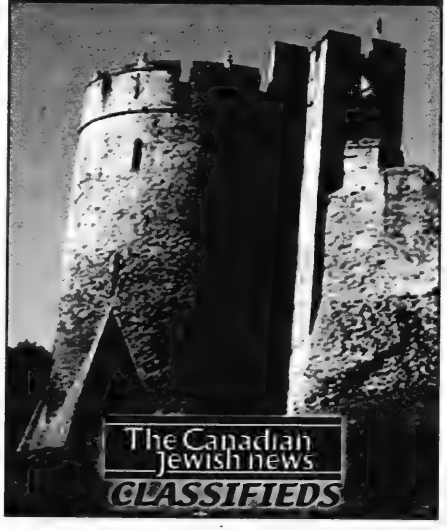

Israeli activists seek to help Bedouins

Myron Love
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Amal Elsana Alh'jooj and Vivian Silver come from radically different backgrounds.

Silver grew up in a Zionist home in Winnipeg's nurturing Jewish community, while as a girl growing up in a strongly patriarchal Bedouin community in the Negev and as an Arab living in Israel, Alh'jooj's early life was doubly disadvantaged.

But both have been a major force for change in their communities. *Ha'aretz* named Silver one of Israel's 10 most influential Anglo-Israelis, and Alh'jooj was nominated for a Nobel Peace prize in 2005. Working together as co-directors of the Negev Institute for Strategies of Peace and Development (NISPED), they're playing a vital role in improving the lives of Bedouins in southern Israel.

Vivian Silver, left, and Amal Elsana Alh'jooj *[Myron Love photo]*

On Jan. 17, Alh'jooj and Silver were in Winnipeg to take part in Gray Academy of Jewish Education's annual Raoul Wallenberg Day program. In the evening, they spoke about NISPED and its programs at Shaarey Zedek Synagogue in a joint Shaarey Zedek-Congregation Etz'Chayim program.

Alh'jooj and Silver co-founded NISPED in 1998 and its Arab-Jewish Center for Equality, Empowerment and Co-operation (AJEEC) in 2000.

"A democracy is measured by how the majority treats the minority," Silver said in her evening presentation. "Israel's Declaration of Independence guaranteed complete equality for all of its citizens, no matter their race or religion."

Silver stressed that she and Alh'jooj are focused on bettering the lives of Israeli Arabs. "We are not here to talk about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict," she said.

She noted that Arabs make up about 20 per cent of Israel's population, but the proportion in the Negev is higher – about 30 per cent, and largely Bedouin. "One can live one's life in Israel as a Jew without having any meaningful interaction with any Arabs," she said. "You can live with blinders on in regard to Israel's Arab population. Amal [Alh'jooj] helped me remove my blinders. She showed me what I was missing and has given me a slightly different view of Israeli Arabs."

Alh'jooj recalled growing up in Israel and never having any positive interactions with Israeli Jews. It wasn't until she came to Canada to attend McGill University in the late 1980s that she was befriended by a Jewish family. "That changed my view of Israel," she said.

Alh'jooj highlighted the uphill battle facing Negev Bedouins. "We tend to be invisible," she said.

Most Bedouins live in unrecognized villages whose houses can be torn down by the government on short notice, she said. Eighty per cent of children admitted to Soroka Hospital in Be'er Sheva are Bedouins, while just one per cent of students at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev are Bedouins. The unemployment rate among Bedouins is very high. And while there are schools in unrecognized villages for the burgeoning number of Bedouin children, there are few after-school programs to further their education and keep them off the street.

"For 22 years, I have been fighting for justice and equality for my people," Alh'jooj says. "Progress has been glacial. Although many Israelis view the Bedouin as a demographic and security threat, it is not so much discrimination as ignorance that we are dealing with. We find that government ministers are often willing to change policies and help us once we make them aware of our situation."

AJEEC's activities focus mainly on the Negev's Bedouin community – some 180,000 people – because its needs and challenges are more acute than other sectors of the Arab-Israeli population.

Alh'jooj outlined NISPED's and AJEEC's many programs, including the Arab-Bedouin Volunteer Tent, the Arab Jewish Volunteer Gap-Year Program, the Negev Belongs to Us All partnership program, and the Women and Infants Health Promotion Project.

"One of our flagship projects is the single women's catering kitchen in Hura, one of the seven recognized Bedouin villages in the Negev," Silver told *The CJN* in an interview. "This enterprise empowers and provides opportunities for Arab Bedouin single mothers [abandoned as a result of polygamous marriages] to support their families with dignity. It also meets the food security needs of Arab Bedouin school children in the village of Hura."

Thirteen women trained in large-scale cooking now produce 3,000 lunches a day for children in Hura as part of the government's hot lunch program, Silver said.

Silver and Alh'jooj were also slated to speak in Los Angeles, Washington and New York on a tour sponsored by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

Check out our blog @ heebonics.ca HEEBONICS

Power siblings work and play together

Michelle Bitran
Special to The CJN

For most siblings, the idea of working together can be a bit scary, but for Shane and Jessica Fenton, it's just another day at the office.

"I can admit that I love working with my brother," said Jessica.

"But she didn't love walking to high school with me when she was in Grade 11 and I was in Grade 9," Shane added with a laugh.

Shane, 28, and his older sister Jessica, 30, have taken their spots at the helm of their father's real estate development company, Reserve Properties. Shane is the vice-president, and Jessica is the senior manager of marketing and client relations.

The sibling duo were primed to make their mark on the family business since they could walk and talk. "We were at our first groundbreaking when I was four and Jessica was six," said Shane, adding that the development business has become "second nature" after so many years.

Shane joined Reserve Properties immediately after graduating from the University of Western Ontario's Richard Ivey School of Business six years ago. Jessica, who joined about a year ago, after completing an MBA at Ryerson University's Ted Rogers School of Management, said that although she didn't hop on board as quickly as her brother, she "always knew that [she] wanted to get into the business."

Their fourth condominium launch of 2011 was a complex that will be built near their childhood neighbourhood of Spadina Avenue and St. Clair Avenue West in Toronto. The Rise Condominium project, like most of those that they work on, is geared toward young urban professionals, a demographic that the Fenton siblings relate to well. Jessica explained that it's like building spaces where they and their friends would want to live.

When Shane and Jessica tackle a development project together, they are careful to play to their respective strengths, which helps them avoid any kind of sibling rivalry.

"Jessica is more the detail and I'm more the bigger picture," said Shane, explaining that Jessica, who has a background in fashion, will often help with interior decorating choices. "I love the creative aspect," said Jessica, adding that for the moment, her esthetic of choice is a "contemporary hotel" look.

"Just like fashion, the design element of real estate is always changing as well," she said.

In keeping with his "bigger picture" preference, Shane finds his passion in scouting out possible building sites. Often, he will ride his bike around the city, getting a feel for the best places to start new development projects.

"When you're driving around, you fly by too quick. When you're biking, you get a different sense," he said.

Understanding development on a human scale helps Shane build a connection with the project at hand. It's the connection to the work and the enthusiasm that help him and his sister overcome any blips in the construction process.

"You kind of have to get used to getting good news and bad news multiple times throughout the day and plug on," said Shane. "It's something that's a passion and a hobby more than just a career," he added, explaining that loving what you do makes the challenges more fun.

The Fentons found that they work through challenges together very well, and they carry over their working relationship into philanthropic endeavours and community involvement, which they are both passionate about.

Both siblings are actively involved with the Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee, as well as various UJA Federation of Greater Toronto initiatives in the young adult community. Jessica is also a co-chair of the Jewish National Fund's young leadership board called JNF Future. She especially enjoys the event planning aspects of Jewish community work and is part of the committee planning the UJA's Together party.

According to Jessica, her and Shane's parents encouraged them to reach out to the Jewish community from a very young age.

"The one thing that they always said was that they wanted us to give back to the community," said Jessica. Though her work schedule is hectic, she said she has no problem finding time for charity projects. "I enjoy it so much that I don't feel like I have to squeeze it in," she said.

Shane feels that the Jewish ethics and principles that their parents and grandparents instilled in them of tzedakah and community involvement don't just affect their philanthropic work, but also their day-to-day lives.

"A lot of who we are as people ties into what our values and traditions were through Judaism," he said.

Another important part of the siblings' Jewish upbringing was the emphasis on Israel.

"I'm incredibly passionate about Israel. Israel has always been important to my family," said Jessica. She added that she and her brother often take summer vacations to the Holy Land, where they especially enjoy soaking up the sun on Tel Aviv's beaches. "We love the culture and the people – just the vibe," she said.

Spending time together on vacation, at work and in their philanthropic projects, one might think the Fenton siblings would start to get sick of each other, but they're showing no signs of sibling rivalry.

Shane jokes that as kids, they were "enough for [their] parents to handle," but as adults, their close-knit relationship is one any parent would be proud of. "As we got older, we started to realize how much we have in common. Not only as brother and sister – we're great friends."

More news for young Jews on heebonics.ca

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אז אני צפונית

נינה שנהב
nina.shenhav@gmail.com

"אז מה את מאחלת לעצמך לשנה האזרחית החדשה?" מבררת טלי, בעודה מסמסת בזריזות טקסטים בלקברי המצועצע שלה. "אני מאחלת לעצמי חברה שמקשיבה לי, ולא מקלידה מאמרי מערכת מעמיקים תוך כדי הצגת שאלות מהותיות בחיי אדם." אני עונה. בתום כחצי שעה, טלי מפסיקה, לוגמת קפה ומביטה בי. אני: הרי את לא באמת שואלת אותי, כי מעניינים אותך מאווי ותיקוותי, את שואלת אותי כדי שתהנהני מבלי להקשיב, תחכי כבר שאסיים ואשאל אותך אותה שאלה, ואז תתחילי לדבר על עצמך.

טלי: הגזמת. דווקא את מאוד מעניינת אותי. תמיד. בטח האיחול הראשון שלך לעצמך זה להצליח השנה, לשם שינוי, בדיאטה.

אני: סליחה?!

טלי: לא, כי כל אשה מאחלת את זה לעצמה בינואר. כל אשה. גם דוגמנית.

אני: אז לידיעתך, אני לא כזו שיטחית. אני דווקא מאחלת לעצמי שהשיער סוף סוף יסתדר לי השנה, ואולי גם אלך על סילסול פרמננט, או על קצוץ שובבי ודי.

טלי: עמוק, ידידתי, עמוק. אני מאחלת לעצמי להפסיק לפחד. אני פוחדת באמת להתחיל לחיות. כאילו שכל מה שהיה עד עכשיו? זה רק חזרה כללית.

אני: עמוק, ידידתי, עמוק. אני פוחדת רק משלושה דברים: רוצחים, נחשים ואחותו של בעלי. לאו דווקא בסדר הזה.

טלי: אני פוחדת מאנסים, מעוני ומאורחים ששכחו את השעון שלהם בבית.

אני: מזדהה! אבל למה עוני? יש משהו שאת לא מספרת לי?

טלי: שום דבר. פשוט הייתי רוצה שהשנה יהיה לי סוף סוף קצת כסף מיותר. אין לי מושג איך להגשים את זה. שוברת את הראש. חידה.

אני: אולי, ככה סתם אני זורקת רעיון מהפכני לאוויר, אולי תחפשי עבודה?

טלי: השתגעת? אני בחיים לא מסתדרת עם בוסים. הבוס האחרון שהיה לי, יחסינו התבססו על המשפט 'כבדהו וחשדהו': הוא כיבד אותי, ואני חשדתי בו.

אני: כשאני מדמיינת אותך במשרד, אני רואה אותך יושבת רגל על רגל, ספל קפוצ'ינו ביד אחת ומגזין 'אין- טאי' בשנייה, בעוד הבוס שלך מביט בך בצער.

טלי: אז את טועה לחלוטין. אני קוראת מעכשיו רק את המגזין 'אין- סטיילי'...

אני: טוב, אני לעומתך, מאחלת לעצמי בדיוק את מה שיש לי כרגע, רק אולי שמאיר יפסיק לרדת עלי בנושא, איך נקרא לזה, תחזוקת הבית.

טלי: מה עכשיו? הוא מלמד אותך איך להיצמד למעקה כשאת עולה במדרגות כדי שלא תלכלכי את הקיר שמנגד?

אני: לא, עברנו את זה. כרגע אנחנו בשיאו של שיעור מאלף: מאיר מראה לי איך לפסוע בפיסוק רחב על שטיחי המסדרון, כדי שהחלק האמצעי לא יתבלה...

טלי: איך את חיה איתו, אני לא מבינה. מצד שני, הוא גבר נהדר. חולה עלייך.

אני: צודקת. הוא באמת חולה עלי. את יודעת, את תמיד בתכ'לס מבינה אותי. בניגוד לתחילת שיחתינו, לפחות חברה טובה וקשובה, זה כבר יש לי השנה.

טלי: מיי? תכירי לי אותה. אני גם מתה לחברה כזו. כן, זה מה שאני מאחלת לעצמי השנה: למצוא לי סוף סוף חברה טובה וקשובה...

SPICY TURKEY BURGERS

1 1/4 lbs lean ground turkey
1 c mild salsa, divided
1/2 c finely chopped shallots
1/4 c chopped fresh cilantro
4 tbls vegetable oil, divided
1 tblsp hot sauce
1 tsp ground cumin
1 tsp salt
1/2 tsp ground black pepper

Mix ground turkey, 1/2 c salsa, shallots, cilantro, 3 tblsps oil, hot sauce, cumin, salt, pepper in large bowl. If mixture is too loose, add bread crumbs until mixture is firm enough to shape into four 3 ½" patties.

Heat 1 tblsp oil in large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add burgers; cook until brown, about 3 min. per side. Reduce heat to low. Sauté until burgers are cooked through, about 4 min., turning occasionally.

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On cjnews.com

The CJN's French-language reporter in Montreal, Elias Levy, writes about:

Participants in Montreal-Be'er Sheva solidarity mission last fall recently who spoke about their experiences in Israel during an evening gathering at Congregation Petah Tikvah in Ville Saint-Laurent.

Exclusive to cjnews.com

Israeli agro-biotechnology company, Rosetta Green, has developed a new technology to develop plants that are better able to withstand prolonged periods of severe drought.

Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s relationship with the American Jewish community is well known. Jewish leaders and rabbis filled the ranks of Rev. King's closest advisors, collaborators, and confidantes. Rev. King's tenure as leader of the Civil Rights movement was marked as the heyday of black-Jewish relations. Then, shortly after his death, those relations cooled. Had Rev. King lived, experts say the picture might have been different today.

Exclusive to cjnews.com in Hebrew

International Holocaust Day: The State of Israel should do some soul-searching.

He was a shepherd

Kibur Asres died last month at 61 in Bahir Dar, Ethiopia, and was buried in Addis Ababa. Thousands cried for him, Jewish and non-Jewish. We, in Toronto, were honoured to have known him.

Kibur was born on May 12, 1950, in Dabat, Ethiopia, to Qes Asres Yayehe and Amarach Denku. He was known to his close family as Wondemalem, translated as "my dearest brother." According to his daughter, Beth, he was a wise, kind, generous, courageous and complex man.

Like many great leaders in training, Kibur spent his early years tending sheep. In the 1960s, he graduated, with honours, from Addis Ababa University with a degree in chemistry and mathematics and received his diploma from former Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie.

Kibur spent the next eight years working as a professor. While teaching at Bahir Dar University, he met the lovely and gentle Walelign Fanta. They had three children, Joseph, Eyassu and Bethlehem (Beth).

In 1983, following the Ethiopian revolution and with a bounty on his head, Kibur and family fled to Montreal with the help of JIAS. They were among the first Beta Israel families to leave Ethiopia and arrive in Canada. He completed a master's degree in social work at McGill University, while he continued working as a chemist and researcher for the Jewish General Hospital in Montreal, specializing in AIDS research.

Urban Writer

Avrum Rosensweig

Later, the family moved to Toronto and Kibur worked as a social worker with Jewish Family & Child. He was the president of the Toronto Ethiopian Association, and created a very successful parking-lot management enterprise called Globe Park Ltd. Kibur was also the dean of the Ottawa School of Business.

His true passion in life was community service. "Any person who had the opportunity to know him can attest to his genuine passion to improve the lives of all those he encountered," Beth said.

Kibur was the founder of Horn Refugee Foundation, which assisted more than 3,000 African refugee claimants. He established the Re-Med Foundation, which provided medical supplies to underprivileged people internationally. He also created the Addis Hope Foundation, which assisted in community development in Ethiopia.

Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "I submit to you that if a man has not discovered something that he will die for, he isn't fit to live." This was not the case with Kibur Asres. He helped dozens of Ethiopian Jews immigrate to Canada. He was an executive member of the Canadian Jewish Congress and served on its race relations committee. He travelled to Israel in 2000 on an exclusive trip for the national executive of the CJC. While there, he spoke with then-prime minister Ehud Barak about the plight of the Falash Mora.

Kibur was quoted saying, "Apart from the fact that not enough is being done to bring them to Israel, not enough is being done simply to keep them alive. They have so many relatives here [in Israel] and are going to come at some point, so why extend their pain and suffering."

He is survived by his grandchildren, Rebecca, Abigail and Matthew; his siblings, Etzuvdink, Sara, Kokobie, Mulualem, Mintiwab, Addisalem and Paulos, and many nieces, nephews, cousins and lots of people he saved.

Kibur was a kind of Ethiopian royalty, in his own unique way. More than 1,000 people came to his shivah in Israel, and hundreds more in Toronto. He died young and was very fit to live. *Zochreinu livrachah.*

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Defence Minister Ehud Barak said: "Again ... terror is spared with the world's leading ... and it will be won by a joint, ... that has yet to be final-

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"Justice has ... heartfelt addres... the nearly 3,000 p... the Sept. 11, 2001, at... Washington orchestra

In a statement issued ... ister's Office on Monday ... the U.S. operation a "resoun... justice, freedom, and the valu... all democratic countries fightin... to shoulder against terror."

... hours after the announcement ... den's death, U.S. Secretary of State ... Clinton said: "I want to offer my ... thoughts and prayers to thousands of families ... of those killed in terrorist attacks.

"These were not just attacks against

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Federation works with Vaughan on signs issue. *Page 6*

To Your Health

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Canadian cabinet ministers in Israel

Canadian Finance Minister John Flaherty, left, and Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird, second from left, are pictured with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, second from right, and Israeli Finance Minister Yuval Steinitz, right, during a visit to Israel this week for a series of high-level meetings with government officials and high-tech sector leaders. At an earlier meeting with Netanyahu, Baird reiterated his oft-stated position that Canada will not stay silent when the Jewish state is attacked for defending its territory or its people. ***The CJN will carry a full story on the trip next week.*** *[Flash90 photo]*

Turkey may give Hamas $300M in aid

© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

ISTANBUL — Turkey may provide Hamas with $300 million in annual aid, Turkish sources report. The aid would replace Iranian funding, which has been significantly reduced.

Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh reportedly received assurances about the proposed funding during his recent visit to Turkey.

Haniyeh was warmly received last month by Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and was cheered when he visited the Turkish parliament. Turkey supports reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas, and Turkish sources report that the Erdogan government has promised to aid the reconciliation process.

According to Turkish sources, Haniyeh laid out in detail for Erdogan the financial difficulties that Hamas is currently facing, after payments from Iran, which had totalled $250 to $300 million annually, did not arrive on time and were cut significantly. This led to Hamas not being able to pay its employees' salaries.

The same sources reported that Hamas chief Khaled Meshal has left Syria for good and is considering putting the organization's headquarters in Qatar or Jordan.

Hamas police officers display their skills during a graduation ceremony earlier this week. *[Flash90 photo]*

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TSO maestro will be guest conductor in Israel – please see page 3

CANADA

CIJA Starts Council

VANCOUVER — The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) and Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver have set up a local advocacy council as part of the national reorganization of Jewish advocacy groups last summer that saw CIJA replace Canadian Jewish Congress and other groups.

the organizations said last week. Paul Goldman and Stephen Schachter will co-chair the new council, which will represent the federation and CIJA on local and national advocacy issues and ensure that local perspectives are reflected in national decision-making. As well, CIJA announced that Darren Mackoff, a former American Israel Public Affairs Committee spokesperson, is its new Pacific region director.

Jews Meet Cardinal

TORONTO — A delegation from B'nai Brith Canada met last week with Cardinal-Elect Thomas Collins to congratulate him on his elevation by the Vatican and discuss issues of mutual concern to faith communities in Canada. The meeting with the current Archbishop of Toronto aimed to lay the groundwork for future meetings, express concern about the plight of Christians who face persecution and convey "our hope for religious tolerance for all people of faith," said B'nai Brith executive vice-president Frank Dimant.

WORLD

Plot Uncovered

BAKU — At least two citizens of Azerbaijan reportedly were arrested in connection with an alleged plot to kill two Jewish educators and the Israeli ambassador in Baku. The arrests last month were reported in local media in the Azerbaijani capital. Three men were charged with weapons smuggling as part of a plot to kill a teacher and a rabbi at the Chabad Or Avner Jewish school in Baku, as well as the Israeli ambassador to Azerbaijan, Michael Lotem. Two of those charged are reported to be in custody. One is still at large. It's alleged that Iranian intelligence agencies promised to pay the three men $150,000 to commit the murders. Approximately 6,400 Jews live in Azerbaijan. The Or Avner school opened in 2010. It has about 400 students.

Demjanjuk Seeks State Funds To Sue Paper

John Demjanjuk

BERLIN — Convicted Nazi war criminal John Demjanjuk has asked Germany to provide funds for his lawsuit against the online edition of the German tabloid newspaper *Bild*.

Demjanjuk wants some $33,000 to sue *Bild* for its allegedly "derogatory and prejudiced" reporting on his trial, which ended last May with his conviction as an accomplice in the murders of 28,060 in the Nazi death camp Sobibor during World War II.

According to the German news agency DPA, Demjanjuk, 91, is suing the tabloid over its use during the trial of such terms as "war criminal," "beast of the concentration camp" and "Nazi henchman." The implication is that Bild.de, the online version of Germany's most widely read daily paper, influenced the outcome of the trial.

The German Press Council reportedly chastised Bild.de over its reporting on the trial, but according to the Demjanjuk complaint as reported by DPA, the tabloid continued to use "lurid" language and failed to uphold the principle of innocence until proven guilty. Bild.de has maintained that its reporting was appropriate.

Demjanjuk, who is in an old-age home pending an appeal of his conviction and five-year jail sentence, reportedly has no money. His efforts to regain U.S. citizenship have been rebuffed by a Cleveland judge.

Population Stable

CLEVELAND — A new population study of the Cleveland area found the Jewish population has stayed relatively stable over the last 15 years. The study, the first since 1996, found 80,800 Jews living in the greater Cleveland area, down slightly from 81,500 in 1996.

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TSO maestro to guest conduct in Israel

Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf
Staff Reporter

The Israel Philharmonic Orchestra will add a Canadian twist later this month when Toronto Symphony Orchestra (TSO) musical director Peter Oundjian begins a two-week guest-conducting stint on Feb. 14.

Oundjian, 56, said he is "extremely excited" to work with the Israeli orchestra and that it will mark "a major moment" in his career. This will be his second visit to Israel. His last trip was in 1987 when he was principal violinist with the Tokyo String Quartet.

In an interview with *The CJN* at a Yorkville café late last month, an affable Oundjian spoke about numerous topics, including his great admiration for renowned Israel Philharmonic musical-director-for-life Zubin Mehta; being mentored by legendary soloist Itzhak Perlman while studying violin at Julliard; and his deep friendship with conductor Pinchas Zukerman, whom he refers to as his "big brother."

All these factors have made Oundjian eager to conduct the Israel Philharmonic, which he termed "one of the world's greatest and most passionate orchestras."

He's also looking forward to conducting in front of an Israeli crowd.

Oundjian said while he normally avoids making too grand a statement about any audience in any city or country, "there was something so extraordinary" about playing in Israel in 1987. "There was an intensity to the way people listened and an adoration of the music and a respectful commitment to it that was just inspiring."

With that in mind, he said he has decided on a play list for the Israel Philharmonic that he hopes will be more challenging for both the musicians and the audience in Israel.

There will be six pieces played under Oundjian's baton: Rachmaninov's *Piano Concerto No. 3* and *Symphonic Dances*; Ravel's *Alborada del gracioso*; Sibelius' *Finlandia*; Stravinsky's *Firebird Suite*; and Canadian composer Gary Kulesha's *Torque*. Oundjian said he chose pieces he felt passionate about, adding that *Symphonic Dances* is about the "journey of man from primal being. It's deeply felt and supremely spiritual in its final moments.

Continued on page 6

Peter Oundjian *[Cylla von Tiedemann photo]*

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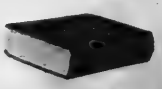

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Our call to arms

From the editor's desk...

As of this writing, it is not certain whether the Jordanian-mediated, low-level, preliminary talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA) will resume.

Palestinians say they will decide upon their course of action later this week. Israelis urge the Palestinians "to come their senses." The diplomats of the Quartet (European Union, United States, United Nations and Russia) plead for the sides to keep meeting.

Given the impossible preconditions that the PA has imposed on the Israelis for resuming negotiations, the Amman meetings seem to have simply been part of the elaborate plan by the PA to continue to strive to achieve indirectly – namely, through the intervention of the international community – what they do not wish to achieve directly – i.e., through face-to-face bargaining and compromise with Israel.

The Amman talks, therefore, were programmed for failure by the PA.

Indeed, failure in Amman will be the stepping stone for the next phase of the Palestinians' campaign against Israel.

The nature of that campaign was already spelled out at the start of the new year, by prominent PA member Nabil Sha'ath in a little-noticed story published by *Ha'aretz*, citing sources in Israel's foreign ministry.

The year 2012 "will be the start of an unprecedented diplomatic campaign on the part of the Palestinian leadership, and it will be a year of pressure on Israel that will put it under a real international siege. The campaign will be similar to the one waged against apartheid in South Africa," Sha'ath said.

According to the story, the campaign comprises a number of diplomatic-legal fronts, including:

• Asking the Security Council to condemn settlement construction and impose international sanctions on Israel.

• Bringing a request to the International Criminal Court in The Hague that it try Israel for war crimes arising from the 2009 war in Gaza.

• Encouraging individual Palestinians to seek war-related damages against Israel in western courts.

• Urging the Swiss government to convene a meeting of the signatories to the Geneva Convention to debate the applicability of the document to Israeli conduct in the West Bank.

• Pressuring the UN General Assembly or the UN Human Rights Council to send a fact-finding committee to the West Bank.

• Renewing efforts to secure full-membership status for Palestine, and

• Organizing mass rallies against Israel in the West Bank and Gaza and even possibly along Israel's border with its other neighbours.

The tripwire for the launch of the campaign will be the unhappy pronouncement by the PA delivered suitably in sombre tones of indignation and disappointment that the Quartet's Amman-based initiative is dead.

The PA spokesperson will look directly into the camera, an expertly rehearsed blend of pain and anger anchoring the sorrow of his expression, and remind reporters that PA President Mahmoud Abbas had expressly said at the start of the year that if the Quartet was incapable of bringing Israel to the table, "all options will be open."

And now we know what some of those options are.

Israel's security establishment too recently warned that the diplomatic-legal campaign against the Jewish state will soon be renewed and reinvigorated.

The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center last month reported that its analysts have concluded that the numerous networks around the world of anti-Israel, human rights, NGO, social activist, anti-imperialist, advocacy groups are planning a "number of propaganda events for the upcoming months."

The most prominent of the events will be the Global March to Jerusalem comprising a series of "marches originating in the Arab states bordering Israel and possibly also from the Palestinian Authority to be held on or around Israeli Arab 'Land Day' on March 30, a protest fly-in to Ben-Gurion International Airport April 15, a week after Easter, and the Israeli Apartheid Week activities in various western countries in February and March."

According to the report there are also new plans to try once again to reach the Gaza Strip by sea with a large flotilla or with individual boats to break Israel's naval blockade of the place.

In their scheme, the Palestinians constantly portray themselves as the single-most aggrieved community on earth, feign a desire to negotiate with the Jewish state and recoil with disgust at Israel's leaders failure to accede to Palestinian demands.

In most parts of the western world, their scheme, alas, has been successful. Israel is seen as the recalcitrant party and the Palestinians as the long-suffering oppressed and wounded.

As they readily gloat, the Palestinians are now primed to put Israel further under "international siege." But they will not be unopposed in this battle.

Their smug boasting is our own call to arms. And we must respond.

SeeJN

HABITAT BUILDERS

Temple Sinai and Beth Tzedec Congregation held a young adult build day Jan. 22 at the Scarborough build site of Habitat for Humanity. They spent the day painting and laying floor paneling. Twenty adults took part in the partnership between Temple Sinai Next Generation and Young Professionals@Beth Tzedec.

Rabbi leads Knesset's first egalitarian minyan

Frances Kraft
Staff Reporter

Last Tuesday, Rabbi Jennifer Gorman, executive director of Mercaz-Canada and the Canadian Foundation for Masorti Judaism, led what was described as the first mixed-gender prayer service in the chapel of the Knesset building in Jerusalem.

Rabbi Gorman was the only Canadian on a four-day mission of 21 Conservative and rabbinic and lay leaders from North America. Mercaz-Canada is the Conservative movement's Zionist organization, and the Canadian Foundation for Masorti Judaism supports the work of Israel's Masorti movement, which is affiliated with the Conservative movement.

The group, which was joined by counterparts from the Masorti movement in Israel, visited the Knesset to meet with Israeli lawmakers and discuss issues of religious pluralism and religious extremism in Israel. Following the meeting, the group held an afternoon service in the men's section of the Knesset synagogue, which traditionally holds only Orthodox worship services, according to Ynet.

The visitors were not "looking to make waves" with the prayer service, Rabbi Gorman told *The CJN* in a phone interview. Mission participants davened every day, and they asked if the chapel would be available during their Jan. 24 Knesset visit, she said.

Rabbi Jennifer Gorman, wearing a tam, led services in the chapel of Israel's Knesset last week.

The politicians "came out favourably in saying [the chapel] is a public space, even some from the far right," she said.

The group met with Dan Meridor, Israel's deputy prime minister, and MKs Uzi Landau (minister of energy and water resources), Yohanan Plesner, Isaac Herzog and Orit Zuaretz. Opposition leader Tzipi Livni, head of the Kadima party, spoke to participants at their opening dinner.

Rabbi Gorman is heartened that politicians want to speak to the Masorti group – "not just the Kadima party but from Labour and Likud and Yisrael Beitenu, so it's not just the people who agree with us.

"We want them to hear what we are looking for… We'd like to see the guarantees in law for pluralism, not just for Masorti. We'd like to see equal funding for different schools."

She's optimistic that change is on the way. "They're realizing Israelis want something more. Their constituents also want something that's a little different. There's a realization among many Israeli politicians that there needs to be more to Jewish identity than to live in Israel. As Orthodoxy moves further right, most Israelis aren't going there. That's significant."

She added: "We need people who identify as Israeli. If you move further right [religiously], you have people who don't identify as Israeli living in Israel."

Rabbi Gorman noted that the group was not suggesting that Masorti "is instead of Orthodoxy. We're saying this is in addition to Orthodoxy, so that your choice isn't [only] to send your child to an ultra-Orthodox school or a completely secular school.

"Many Israelis today don't know what it means to be Jewish. They just know what it means to be Israeli."

Rabbi Gorman, who was visiting Masorti sites for the first time since taking on her new position last year, said the movement has made "amazing strides" in Israel in recent years. In the past two years alone, she said, 10 new *kehillot* have been established

With files from JTA

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Federation works to solve Vaughan sign flap

Frances Kraft
Staff Reporter

UJA Federation of Greater Toronto and the city of Vaughan have been working together to address issues that arose over 48 UJA signs that violated city bylaws.

Vaughan and federation representatives met two weeks ago, and the federation is working to come up with a proposal for a new bylaw regarding temporary signage, Steven Shulman, the federation's campaign director and counsel, told *The CJN*.

The signs in question stated "Jewish Toronto Lives Here," and were also used in Toronto, where there has not been an issue about them, Shulman said.

He added that current talks represent the culmination of a "very positive" process that began several months ago.

Participants are taking into consideration "the need for community organizations and us in particular to get our message out, and at the same time take into consideration any concerns the city of Vaughan may have," Shulman said.

The city will not be charging federation for the signs, although according to a Nov. 19 article on yorkregion.com, Vaughan's bylaws specify that a $500 fee should be applied to each of the federation's 48 signs. If that were enforced, the federation would owe the city $24,000.

Shulman added that federation has changed the relevant signs so that they read, "Jewish Vaughan lives here" instead of "Jewish Toronto lives here."

Woodbridge West Coun. Tony Carella had taken exception to the wording of the signs, which Shulman said at the time referred to the GTA, not just the city of Toronto.

John Studdy, manager of customer service and administration for the city of Vaughan's building standards department, said concerns for the city include the number and location of signs, as well as public safety issues.

Vaughan council meets every three weeks. Federation's proposal is expected to be brought to council after it is completed some time this month, and once it has been vetted by the building standards department.

TSO maestro in Israel

Continued from page 3

"I suggested pieces I just love, that have a lot of contrast and would be, I thought, exciting to conduct with such a great orchestra. And I didn't want them to be something like Beethoven's *Symphony No. 5*, which they play all the time. I just didn't want to have [the musicians] say 'Oh no, not this again,'" he said.

Oundjian's Israel concert tour will be a gruelling one, with 10 concerts in a two-week schedule in Haifa, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Regardless, he said he's also very excited at the opportunity to conduct pianist Yuja Wang, a 24-year-old Chinese prodigy he described as "phenomenal."

Originally a violinist, Oundjian had to give up the violin at age 39, when a wrist injury forced him to abandon it. Thankfully, he had also simultaneously studied conducting, and decided to dive into that art full time.

He was born in Toronto but moved to England at age five, "where I picked up this pretentious accent," he quipped. Despite living and travelling abroad most of his life, Oundjian said he'd always kept touch with his Toronto roots through family here, and jumped at the chance to direct and revitalize the TSO when the job was offered to him in 2004.

"I was approached by the TSO and was very excited about it, despite knowing that the orchestra had gone through some difficult times and needed a lot of work. But for me, that was like a calling. It was the most exciting thing [a conductor] can imagine doing, to bring back a once-great orchestra to a state of good and fine artistic health. I was totally dedicated to making it happen," he said.

As evidenced by his work breathing musical life back into the TSO and attracting new fans to the genre, Oundjian is at ease in both his role as conductor and as the de facto face of the orchestra, mostly because he's so unassuming and comes off as a man of the people.

Some little-known facts about Oundjian: His cousin is comedian Eric Idle of Monty Python fame. He grew up idolizing England's Chelsea soccer team – "I wanted to play for Chelsea. Chelsea didn't want me to play for them," he said wryly – but has become an avid hockey fan since returning to Canada. His nephew is Chicago Blackhawks rookie right-winger Ben Smith.

Oundjian said he also likes to take a break from classical music from time to time to listen to jazz and rock music, and his son keeps him informed about the latter.

"So I've developed a strong interest in [rock music]. I also grew up a huge Beatles and Pink Floyd fan."

He declined to discuss the Israel-Palestine peace process, but said he believes that music promotes peace.

"A lot of music deals with conflict. It examines it, unravels it and usually finds a way out of it with a joyful feeling of peace at the end. That's why I'm a musician, because I love to deal with harmony," he said.

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Turkish diplomats saved Jews during Holocaust

Sheldon Kirshner
Staff Reporter

A little-known but uplifting and inspiring chapter in the annals of the Holocaust was unveiled last week with the screening of a film about the rescue of Jews in Nazi-occupied France by Turkish diplomats.

Turkish Passport, a 1-1/2 hour documentary with dramatic re-enactments, was presented by B'nai Brith Canada in conjunction with the Federation of Canadian Turkish Associations and the Turkish Society of Canada.

Gunes Celikcan

It was screened at B'nai Brith's national offices before a mixed Jewish-Turkish audience on Jan. 26, a day before International Holocaust Remembrance Day and the 67th anniversary of the Red Army's liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp.

Turkish Passport, already shown in 17 cities in Turkey and at the Cannes Film Festival, the Atlanta Jewish Film Festival and the Amsterdam Turkish Film Festival, among other festivals, turns on the efforts of Turkey's diplomats in occupied France to protect and save Sephardi Jews of Turkish origin or nationality.

The film, directed by Burak Arliel and produced by Gunes Celikcan, who personally introduced it, is based on historical data and on the testimonies of rescued Jews and the statements of the grown children of this brave band of diplomats.

"Turkish diplomacy saved my life," says one survivor, succinctly summing up the eternally grateful views of his fellow Jews to Turkey.

In feats of quiet and until recently unheralded heroism, Turkish diplomats stationed in France worked miracles.

They prevailed upon Nazi authorities to free Jews in the Drancy concentration camp. They plucked Jews from a train bound for a death camp. They persuaded the Nazis to exempt Jews from the panoply of antisemitic restrictions imposed upon the Jews of France.

Turkey, a neutral power that declared war on Nazi Germany late in World War II, also laid on eight special trains to transport some 2,000 Jews from Paris to Istanbul in 1944.

According to the late American researcher Arnold Beisman, Turkey saved a total of about 15,000 Jews in wartime France.

In comments prior to the screening, Turkey's consul general in Toronto, Ali Riza Guney, said *Turkish Passport* underscores the point that dark forces can be defeated by a combination of courage and humanity.

"Whoever saves one life, saves the entire world," he said, quoting the Talmud and the Qur'an.

The lengths to which Turkish diplomats went to help Jews was illustrative of "the historic bonds of friendship and solidarity between our peoples," he noted in an interview before last week's event.

Guney singled out two diplomats for praise.

"Necdet Kent, our consul in Marseille from 1941 to 1944, boarded a train full of Jews who were being sent to Auschwitz. He refused to leave unless they were released.

"Selahattin Ulkumen, our consul in Rhodes in 1943 and 1944, saved 42 Jewish families from deportation to concentration camps." In 1990, he added, Yad Vashem – the Holocaust memorial and museum in Jerusalem – declared him a Righteous Gentile.

Israel's consul general in Toronto, Amir Gissin, described the Turkish rescue effort as "a piece of history that's unknown."

Conveying a message from Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Mark Adler, member of Parliament for York Centre, called it "an untold story" and thanked the filmmaker for bringing it to the attention of Canadians.

Cenk Sayin, a member of the board of the Turkish Society of Canada, hailed *Turkish Passport* as a shining moment in Turkey's history of which Turks and 50,000 Turkish Canadians can be proud.

Celikcan, a filmmaker in his 30s, spent seven years researching and making the quasi-documentary movie, which was shot in France, Romania and Turkey and finished last year.

Celikcan said that Turkish diplomats, maintaining a self-effacing low profile, did not speak about their heroic deeds after the war. Kent, for example, claimed that humanitarian attitudes should not be rewarded.

Nonetheless, Turkish diplomats carved out a special niche for themselves during the Holocaust.

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No dialogue, just worry

The complicated general elections for a new parliament in Egypt have finally been completed. The hybrid proportional and direct election system has yielded a result in which Islamists of various bents and inclinations won about two-thirds of the seats.

We do not yet know exactly how, but we do know that life for the "average individual" in the Middle East's largest country is about to change. And likely quite radically. The Islamist parties are committed to installing sharia law as the governing constitutional ethos of modern Egypt. The result may not be the sort of revolution envisioned by the Internet-driven pursuit of greater government accountability, individual liberty and personal freedoms by so many of the country's youths who inspired the Tahrir Square demonstrations a year ago.

In an extension of a friendly hand to its large neighbour to the south, Israel last week sent a congratulatory note to the people of Egypt after the inauguration of its new parliament.

"On the occasion of the opening session of the Egyptian parliament, on Jan. 23, Israel extends its congratulations to the people of Egypt for its efforts to achieve freedom, democracy and economic development," Israel's Foreign Affairs Ministry said.

"We send the new parliament our wishes of constructive and fruitful work for the well-being of the Egyptian public. We trust Egypt will continue to uphold the importance of peace and stability in our region," the foreign ministry statement added. The hopeful gesture was spurned.

Moreover and more ominously, so, too, was the possibility of any let alone civil, mutually respectful bilateral relations.

According to a report in JTA, a spokesperson for the Muslim Brotherhood said that the government of Egypt would not hold any kind of dialogue with Israel.

"The [Muslim Brotherhood] group does not have any willingness to engage in dialogue with Israel," Mahmoud Ghazlan told the London-based Arabic newspaper *Asharq Alawsat* in an interview. "This decision has been taken and our position is consistent and clear, and is not currently open to discussion."

Ghazlan left little doubt that diplomatic relations with the Jewish state are in jeopardy. Recent equivocal assurances by Brotherhood spokespeople that the peace treaty between the two countries, signed in 1979, will not be reopened provide no comfort. As many commentators have noted, the strong showing by the Islamist forces has unleashed a veritable hurricane of publicly conveyed anti-Jewish, anti-Israel expression. Writing recently in the *Atlantic* magazine, Jeffrey Goldberg observed that "Cairo is rife with antisemitism."

Even as former Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak pleads with the new rulers that his life be spared, the rest of us watch and hope that peaceful relations, if not actual peace, will also be spared.

25 years ago in *The CJN*

The Ontario Court of Appeal overturned propagandist Ernst Zundel's conviction on charges of disseminating lies about the Holocaust because of errors during the trial and in charges to the jury, and ordered a new trial. But the court also ruled that the false news law Zundel was convicted under didn't violate freedom of expression guarantees in the Charter of Rights. The Crown said it might appeal.

Dry Bones
IN THE FIRST ELECTIONS OF THE NEW EGYPT!!!
ISLAMIST PARTIES WIN A LANDSLIDE VICTORY!!!
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Holocaust commemoration

Prime Minister Stephen Harper issued the following statement on Jan. 27 to mark the United Nations' annual International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust:

"On this solemn 67th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, the largest Nazi concentration camp, I join Canadians and the international community in commemorating the millions of men, women and children, who suffered, died and lost loved ones during one of the most heinous chapters in human history.

"Through indescribable atrocities, the fundamental and universal principles of freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law were desecrated during the Holocaust.

"As we mourn those who were murdered by the Nazis more than six decades ago and honour the legacy of those who survived, let us use the lessons of the past to remind us of the importance of tolerance, and inspire us to take a stand against hatred and discrimination, including antisemitism in all its forms.

"We must never allow the crimes of the past to be repeated or forgotten."

Stephen Harper
Prime Minister of Canada

* * *

Indigent survivors

I was terribly troubled by the article "The indigent survivor: a global emergency" (Jan. 12), by Dov Harris, regarding the state of Holocaust survivors, one-third of whom live in poverty. I wish to act to try to improve this situation. However, in his excellent article, the writer has not explored how we might act. I wasn't aware of the survivors' shortfall and the difficulty in meeting the needs of so many impoverished survivors. I would like to ask Harris for direction and guidance, and perhaps we can establish a small group of interested members of our community who can try to do something. I imagine there were many upset readers who would like to be part of the solution, but we can't act on our own.

Kathy Schneider
Toronto

* * *

LET THEM GO...

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz

Gov't funding cut in Israel

That was a nice photo of Henry and Julia Koschitzky being honoured for their contribution to the latest charity, sending food to hungry Israelis ("Koschitzkys honoured at Leket Israel benefit," Jan. 19). The poor and needy do indeed enable us to earn the reward of doing good deeds, as it is written that "charity redeems from death." Perhaps this is the key to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's program of cutting government funding – he is increasing the opportunities for North American Jewry to do good deeds, as it says in Pirkei Avot: "The Holy One, Blessed be He, wanted to make Jews meritorious, so he gave them more opportunities for doing mitzvot." North American Jewry already pays for Israel's ambulance service, universities and museums. Perhaps, next we will be asked to pay for other underfunded institutions, ranging from the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra to the Galilee Fire Department.

Charles Heller
Toronto

* * *

Filmmaker seeks uncle's friends

I'm a documentary filmmaker developing a film exploring the life of my great uncle, Sam (Shlomo) Stern, who immigrated to Palestine from Toronto in 1933 at age 21 and helped found Kibbutz Ginossar on the Kinneret.

Sam was born in 1912 in Lagov, a shtetl in the Kielce region of Russian Poland. He joined his siblings in Toronto when he was 12, studied accounting and was groomed to begin a career in his brother Moishe's dairy. Instead, he chose to help rehabilitate the Jewish homeland, where he died at age 27. When Sam left Toronto for the Yishuv, he was accompanied by five friends: David Weis, Saul Borkofsky, Joshua Wohlgelernter, Jay Helfand and Harry Goldstein. Sam died defending Ginossar during an attack in 1939, but what became of the others? I'd be thrilled to locate any of these men, who would now be in their 90s, or any of their relatives with memories and information. Anyone with information can contact me by leaving a message at 514-528-5615 or by e-mailing me at sheltep@gmail.com.

Shelley Tepperman
Montreal

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Why do some Jews think Obama is evil?

Uriel Heilman
JTA

When news outlets began reporting last month that the owner of the *Atlanta Jewish Times* had published an opinion column seemingly suggesting that Israel might be wise to assassinate U.S. President Barack Obama, the response from prominent American Jews was fast and furious.

Here was a Jewish newspaper publisher providing fodder for something the Anti-Defamation League regularly deplores as a pernicious antisemitic canard: that Jews are more loyal to Israel than the United States.

In his Jan. 13 column, Andrew Adler outlined what he said were three possible responses by Israel to Iran acquiring a nuclear weapon: a pre-emptive strike against Hamas and Hezbollah, a direct strike on Iran, or "three, give the go-ahead for U.S.-based Mossad agents to take out a president deemed unfriendly to Israel in order for the current vice president to take his place, and forcefully dictate that the United States policy includes its helping the Jewish state obliterate its enemies."

He continued, "Yes, you read 'three' correctly. Order a hit on a president in order to preserve Israel's existence. Think about it. If I have thought of this Tom Clancy-type scenario, don't you think that this almost unfathomable idea has been discussed in Israel's most inner circles?"

Condemnations rained from every corner, and Adler quickly apologized. By Jan. 23, the publisher had announced that he was resigning his position and putting up his newspaper for sale.

"I very much regret it. I wish I hadn't made reference to it at all," Adler told JTA on Jan. 20. On Jan. 23, he said he was "relinquishing all day-to-day activities effective immediately."

As wacky as Adler's column was, it was an extreme expression of a viewpoint that carries great currency among Obama's Jewish critics: that the president represents a serious danger to Jews and to Israel.

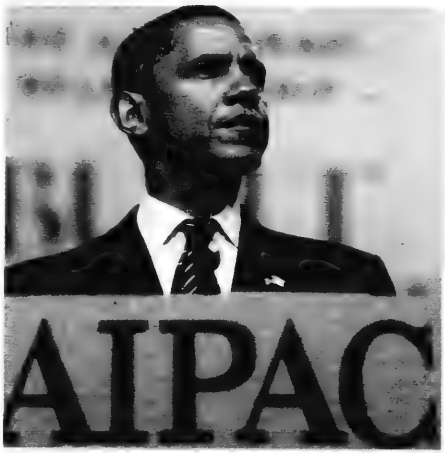
While few of those critics might go as far as Adler, it doesn't take much discussion in certain Jewish circles to find those who see something far more sinister in Obama than a president whose policies are bad for the Jews and Israel.

"I think Obama's overriding goal is to have Israel destroyed," said Randy Silver, a businessman from Glenview, Ill. "He puts steps in motion to bring about the destruction of the State of Israel."

One New Yorker who insisted on anonymity said, "He's not a Hitler in the sense that he's antisemitic and wants to put every Jew into a concentration camp – at least not as we see things right now."

He also said he believes that if Obama hangs on for a second term, he'll find a way to stay in the White House beyond that, even though the Constitution bars a president from serving a third term.

Noah, a physician from New York's Westchester County suburb who asked that his full name be withheld, told JTA: "I will admit to serious questions about whether he's a Muslim and whether he hates Jews. It's a possibility. I'm very uncomfortable with him."



U.S. President Barack Obama addresses an audience of mainly Jews at an AIPAC conference. *[RNS]*

To be sure, such views constitute a minority viewpoint even among Obama's Jewish detractors, and the American Jewish community has been – and largely remains – a stronghold of support for Obama. In 2008, Obama won an estimated 78 per cent of the Jewish vote, and even though his popularity in the Jewish community has dwindled during his Oval Office tenure, it has declined far less among Jews than among the general U.S. population. A Gallup poll released four months ago showed Obama with a 55 per cent approval rating among Jews, although an American Jewish Committee poll released at approximately the same time showed the president with a 45 per cent approval rating. Still, the AJC poll showed that Obama would win the Jewish vote against any hypothetical Republican candidate by at least 18 percentage points.

Obama is hardly the first president to be called an antisemite or hostile to Israel. In 1991, George H.W. Bush found himself the subject of withering Jewish criticism when he sought to delay $10 billion in loan guarantees for Israel unless Jerusalem agreed to a settlement freeze in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The national director of the Anti-Defamation League, Abraham Foxman, said he remembers holding a news conference to denounce Jewish characterizations of Bush as Satan and evil.

But the rhetoric and conspiracy theories against Obama seem to constitute an unprecedented level of vitriol, say many longtime observers of the Jewish political scene.

"I've never seen as much enmity toward a president by American Jews as I do toward Obama," said Morton Klein, national president of the Zionist Organization of America. "I've never heard people say, as they say to me, 'I hate him.'"

Klein, who called on the American Israel Public Affairs Committee to disinvite Obama from its annual policy conference last year and thinks AIPAC should bar Obama from this year's conference, lays the blame on the president.

"Among those who care about Israel, he surely is to blame for it," Klein said. "Every chance he gets, he blames Israel."

Foxman says that extreme hatred of Obama is not so much about the president's policies as it is about America's economic troubles, the sense that Israel faces greater existential threats today than at any time in the last 30 to 40 years, and the Internet, which amplifies and spreads radical voices and conspiracy theories.

"All of these add an anxiety element that intensifies fear and anxiety," Foxman told JTA. "Attitudes have intensified."

Then there's Obama himself – a black president with the middle name Hussein who has been accused even by some Jewish Democrats of not being able to show sympathy for Israel in his *kishkes*.

"Here's a president who doesn't show emotion on anything, and the Jewish community is used to emotion," Foxman said.

Democrats blame the Republicans for the vitriol. Republicans say Democrats are practising divisive politics.

Obama's most vehement Jewish critics are not the only ones who accuse Obama of being a secret Muslim, a socialist and a threat to America. Many Tea Party activists have sounded similar themes, with some going so far as to decry his administration as pursuing Nazi-like policies.

But Obama's most extreme Jewish critics also accuse him of seeking to erase the Jewish character of the Jewish state and plotting to wage war against Israel or the Jews. They see antisemitic overtones even in Obama's hiring of Jewish advisers.

"A Jacob Lew or a Rahm Emanuel is a danger to the Jewish people because they make treif look kosher," Silver, the Illinois businessman, said of the current and former Obama chiefs of staff. "I think these are anti-Jewish Jews. They make Obama look like he's not a threat, but he's a clear and present danger to Israel."

A Jewish New Yorker named Clive said of Lew's hire: "We know that Pharaoh hired Joseph because it suited him, but down the road, when it didn't suit him, he made his family slaves."

Pamela Geller, a Jewish writer whose blog, Atlas Shrugs, is a popular source of information for anti-Obama conspiracy theorists, says Obama is trying to stir up Muslim enmity toward Jews.

"The president of the United States is advancing jihad against the oath of office that he took," Geller wrote in April 2010. "If he is agitating Muslims against Jews, will he declare war on Israel?"

Obama administration officials repeatedly have denounced these sorts of accusations as patently false and waged a campaign in the Jewish community to highlight the president's record on issues of Jewish concern, ranging from domestic issues to Obama's pushes for Iran sanctions and endorsement of unprecedented U.S.-Israel military co-operation.

But ultimately, for that subset of the Jewish community that sees ominous signs in Obama's record, the concern isn't so much what Obama has done so far in his three years in office as it is what he might do in the future.

"He takes baby steps and is slowly putting things in play to do Israel damage in the long run," Silver said. "There's a strategy behind this."

Miriam Adelson gives $5 million to Gingrich

JTA

NEW YORK — Miriam Adelson, wife of casino and hotel magnate Sheldon Adelson, has donated $5 million to a group supporting Newt Gingrich for the Republican presidential nomination.

The donation matches one given earlier last month by her husband to Winning Our Future, an independent committee, or super PAC, that is run by former Gingrich associates, according to a report in the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, citing GOP sources. Major media outlets confirmed the report Jan. 23.

The funding came just days after Gingrich scored an upset in the South Carolina primary and ahead of a key primary in Florida on Jan. 31.

Super PACs can raise unlimited sums from corporations, unions and other groups, as well as individuals, and indirectly support a political candidate. They cannot by law coordinate with the candidate's official campaign.

Miriam Adelson, an Israeli by birth, runs two non-profit drug treatment and research centers in Nevada and Israel.

Sheldon Adelson, chairman and CEO of the Las Vegas Sands Corp., is worth more than $21 billion, according to *Forbes* magazine. He is a major giver to Birthright Israel, which provides free 10-day trips to Israel for Jews aged 18 to 26.

What we choose to make of memory

Within the span of a day in New York, I paid respects at two memory sites. They commemorated two different sets of events, separated by more than half a century, each murderous and horrifying. Each struggled with what it means to remember – that is, with the ethical obligation of the rememberer.

One, the *Face of the Ghetto*, an astonishing exhibition of photographs by Jewish photographers in the Lodz Ghetto, turned the United Nations Visitors Center into Jewish memory space. Organized by the German Topography of Terror Foundation – an organization that grew out of imperative to remember and account for atrocities perpetrated by the Nazi SS and Gestapo – the exhibition drew from thousands of archival photos uncovered by the organization's researchers and was first mounted earlier this year in Berlin. It opened at the UN as part of the UN's official Holocaust Remembrance Week events in January.

The Lodz Ghetto was the last to be "liquidated" during the Holocaust, when the remnants of its population – those that had not already succumbed to disease and starvation, or been shipped off to death camps – were transported to Auschwitz in the summer of 1944. Its relative longevity was due to the controversial policy of its leader, Chaim Rumkowski, to make the ghetto's labour force "indispensible" to the German economy. In the end, however, the ghetto was doomed, because the goal of the Nazis was the utter eradication of the Jews.

Rumkowski deployed a cadre of photographers to demonstrate to the Germans the ghetto's productivity. The photographers went well beyond this mandate, documenting the efforts of the ghetto Jews to normalize their lives under horrifyingly abnormal conditions, and their rapid deterioration despite their best efforts. The accompanying wall boards incorporated lengthy quotations from the *Lodz Ghetto Chronicle*, so that visitors to the exhibition could see what ghetto inhabitants saw and encounter their words.

But, as Lodz survivor Roman Kent reminded visitors, photographs can't capture the extreme cold or the stench of the ghetto, nor the pain of parents whose children were taken to their death, nor the courage of the musicians and artists whose insistence on maintaining culture against all odds gave others inspiration and comfort. He called them "messengers of life," something far more significant than the "gun-carrying messengers of death" bent on destroying them.

Turning the UN into Jewish memory space is significant, not only for what it says about the past, but what it points to in the present and the future. German Ambassador Peter Wittig pointed to the need to take account of a disturbing trend – that "antisemitism is still an issue in many European countries and beyond." He saw the potential of the photographs to educate young people about the dangers of antisemitism.

Sara R. Horowitz

in Toronto

The second memorial site I visited, the 9-11 memorial, located at Ground Zero in southern Manhattan, commemorates the victims of the 2001 act of terrorism that brought down the twin towers of the World Trade Center. Unlike the UN exhibition, which brought the memory of a European event to North America, the 9-11 memorial is located on the site of destruction. Rather than depict the events, the memorial uses a more abstract design to convey the tragic loss of human life, and the unspeakable bereavement in its aftermath.

Designed by Israeli architect Michael Arad, the memorial consists of two identical pools, each occupying almost an acre. Each pool is a perfect square, fed by thirty-foot waterfalls on all sides. In the centre is an even deeper pool into which the water disappears. From most vantage points, one can't see the bottom, giving the impression of an abyss, a void, or an open grave. I thought of the biblical Sheol, and of Jacob's anguished lament for his vanished son Joseph: "I shall go down to my son mourning unto Sheol."

As different as they were, both memorials emphasize the same thing: the need to commit to ending hatred. A video at the 9-11 Visitors Center reiterated the themes of unity, loss and building a future free of hate. At the opening of the *Face of the Ghetto* exhibit, Roman Kent expressed the same sentiment: that the presence of the photographs at the UN "symbolize that humanity all one people living on the planet."

Israel needs Holocaust education for haredim

Most available education about antisemitism in general and the Holocaust in particular aims at prevention. Although there's still plenty of antisemitism around, even in this country, we don't know how much more there would have been had not schools and other institutions – by no means all of them Jewish – made great efforts to open the eyes and minds of ordinary Canadians, especially the young.

The annual Holocaust Education Week in Toronto and elsewhere is making a monumental contribution in this endeavour.

Rabbi Harry Brechner of Victoria, B.C., wants to go further. He hopes to enlighten people about the evils of the Holocaust for remedial purposes. As reported in *The CJN* and other media, on New Year's Eve, tombstones were desecrated in his congregation's cemetery. Instead of the usual expressions of horror and calls that the culprits be swiftly brought to justice, Rabbi Brechner published an open letter in a local newspaper inviting the perpetrators to come forward not for retribution, but for education.

The rabbi wrote: "What I ask is that you take ownership and responsibility for your actions and make things right. I want to offer you an opportunity for soul repair... Come clean the grave sites, and when you are through take a tour with me around the cemetery and meet some of the people there who defied Nazism." A number of Holocaust survivors are said to be buried there.

I hope that Rabbi Brechner will get the response he wants, not only for the sake of the well-being of his own community but also as an example of how to bring sanity to haredim in Israel through this kind of Holocaust education.

Rabbi Dow Marmur

in Toronto

At a demonstration in Jerusalem around the same time as the incident in Victoria, many haredim came out to protest the widespread outrage against their treatment of women. Instead of showing solidarity with the victims, the demonstrators were there to hail the perpetrators.

There've been numerous incidents in Israel of haredi men attacking women, including an eight-year-old girl, for not dressing "modestly." They've defaced posters that depict women. They've verbally abused those who've refused to accept segregated seating in buses. In some neighbourhoods, haredim have even prohibited women from walking on the same sidewalks as men.

Like the culprits in Victoria, the demonstrators in Jerusalem have deployed Holocaust imagery to give vent to their hatred. They donned yellow stars of the kind Jews were compelled to wear by the Nazis. Some of their children were dressed in uniforms worn by concentration camp inmates. On a haredi website, a police chief was compared to Hitler.

The argument of the zealots is that Israel is a Nazi state. Compared to this calumny, the attack on the cemetery in Victoria seems rather benign. Is it possible that, like the Canadian vandals, these Jewish zealots didn't understand the implications of what they were doing? They may be kept so ignorant by their schools that they aren't aware of what the Nazis did to their forbears. Although ignorance shouldn't excuse their reprehensible acts, remedial education may bring them to their senses.

The proposed law in Israel to prohibit the use of Nazi imagery isn't likely to deter haredi fanatics from continuing to describe Israel as a Nazi state and hobnob with every enemy of Israel who expresses hostility to its very existence.

Perhaps education will do better than legislation. One of the many problems in the haredi school system is that secular studies are mostly banned, including Jewish history. That's why Israel must uphold the law that insists on basic Jewish instruction in all haredi schools beyond that which they regard as holy study. This must include Holocaust education.

But in view of the haredi propensity to defy Israeli legislation, an approach of the kind suggested by Rabbi Brechner might do better. Just by showing the zealous demonstrators how their forbears died at the hands of the Nazis may open their eyes, and perhaps even their hearts, to the implications of their actions. It may help them to recognize that their protests have horrible connotations that also threaten their own existence.

And the best people to impart such knowledge would be other Orthodox Jews. In the wake of recent events in Israel, many responsible leaders of Orthodoxy have distanced themselves from the haredi excesses and condemned their actions. They'd be the most effective teachers.

An icon of American literature

J.D. Salinger's quasi-autobiographical novel about teenage angst and adolescent alienation, *The Catcher in the Rye*, is a classic of American literature. Written as a series of short stories when he served as a soldier in the U.S. army during World War II, the book was published on July 16, 1951, to mixed reviews. Nonetheless, it took off, spending nearly a year on the *New York Times*' bestseller list.

Sixty-one years on, the novel remains astonishingly popular. By all accounts, 250,000 copies are sold each year in various languages. Still more astounding, world-wide sales have been 65 million.

In hindsight, any publisher would have been thrilled and honoured to have published *The Catcher in the Rye*. Yet when Salinger submitted the manuscript, the publisher requested a rewrite, and the editors of *The New Yorker*, which had published several of Salinger's short stories, saw fit not to print excerpts, claiming that its characters, including Holden Caulfield, were unbelievable and too precocious.

Fortunately, Salinger, possessing remarkable self-confidence and tenacity, did not despair. Another publisher scooped up the manuscript, and Salinger's stratospheric career was launched, with short stories and novellas – *Nine Stories*, *Franny and Zooey* and *Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters and Seymour: An Introduction* – flowing from his fecund pen.

The eccentric and reclusive man who has touched so many lives is the subject of a most thorough and satisfying biography. Kenneth Slawenski's *J.D. Salinger: A Life* (Random House) takes a reader from his formative years in Manhattan to his cloistered existence in the backwoods of rural America. Being the founder of a website dedicated to Salinger, DeadCaulfields.com, the author is tremendously well versed and writes with great authority.

Jerome David Salinger, known to his parents as Sonny, was a hybrid. His mother, Marie Jillich, was of German, Scottish and Irish descent. His father, Solomon, was Jewish, his Lithuanian grandfather having immigrated to the United States in 1881. Marie met Solomon in 1910, embraced Judaism and changed her name to Miriam.

Raising their children in a secular and humanistic home, they celebrated both Christmas and Passover, but eventually, abandoned all displays of religious affiliation. Salinger was close to his mother, who always believed in him and to whom he dedicated

Sheldon Kirshner

in Toronto

The Catcher in the Rye. His relationship with his father was strained.

Salinger grew up amid the affluence of the Upper East Side and attended a private school, where he earned passable grades. Salinger wanted to study acting, but his father insisted on a military boarding school. At Valley Forge Military Academy, Salinger observed, he became a writer. Slawenski claims he used Valley Forge as the basis of Holden Caulfield's prep school.

After dropping out of New York University, Salinger drifted. In an attempt to give him some direction, his father, the general manager of a European cheese and meat import company, sent him on a business trip to Austria and Poland. The relatives he met in Vienna were murdered during the Holocaust.

Upon returning, Salinger enrolled at Ursinus College, a German Reformed Church institution worlds away from New York. Joining the campus newspaper, he wrote his first published story. According to Slawenski, his desire to become a professional writer was hatched here.

In 1939, he enrolled at Columbia University, signing up for classes in short story writing and poetry. One of his instructors, Whit Burnett, the editor of *Story* magazine, accepted his first short story, *The Young Folks*, shortly before his 21st birthday, and would later urge him to write *The Catcher in the Rye*. In a burst of enthusiasm, Salinger submitted more stories to other magazines, but they were summarily rejected. Salinger, never allowing self-doubt to dilute his ambition, continued writing. His persistence paid off, with *Esquire* publishing *The Heart of a Broken Story* in 1941 and with *The New Yorker* accepting yet another one of his short stories shortly afterward. By then, he was represented by one of the most prestigious literary agencies in Manhattan.

Salinger was also busy chasing Oona O'Neill, the daughter of the famous playwright Eugene O'Neill. She broke his heart and left him for the actor Charlie Chaplin. Slawenski documents his liaison with O'Neill – which he describes as "the great romantic tragedy of [his] life" – at length.

Drafted by the army in 1942, Salinger was in the thick of combat during the war, landing in Normandy on D-Day in 1944. The horrors and agonies he witnessed would reverberate in his stories, some of which appeared in the mass-circulation *Saturday Evening Post*.

As a member of the 4th Infantry Division, he took part in the liberation of the Dachau concentration camp system. It was an event that shook him to his core. After the war ended, Salinger was attached to a counter-intelligence unit charged with the de-Nazification of occupied Germany. While in Germany, he married a German national, Sylvia Louise Welter, but the marriage was over within a year.

J.D. Salinger in 1950

By 1946 – the same year *The New Yorker* finally published his story *Slight Rebellion off Madison* – Salinger was studying Zen Buddhism and mystical Catholicism. Later, he embraced Christian Science. Slawenski offers no explanation why he was not drawn to his Jewish roots.

In 1948, *The New Yorker* not only published *A Perfect Day for Bananafish*, but put him on a retainer with an annual salary. From this point onward, he wrote exclusively for *The New Yorker*.

Having achieved recognition, he wrote *For Esme – with Love and Squalor*, one of his greatest stories. Basking in its glow, he devoted himself to finishing *The Catcher in the Rye*. He hated the celebrity it conferred on him and developed a fear of being recognized by admirers.

Craving normality, he moved to Cornish, New Hampshire, a village 240 miles north of New York City. There he converted a dilapidated barn, deep in the dense forest, into a livable home.

He lived in Cornish with his second wife, Claire Douglas, whom he divorced in 1967. In 1972, he became romantically involved with Joyce Maynard, a writer who was 35 years his junior. It would not be his last romantic relationship with a woman.

At Cornish, Salinger withdrew from the world. "His isolation was an insidious progression that slowly enveloped him," Slawenski says. Salinger's seclusion compounded the public fascination with him and burnished his legendary status.

Slawenski brusquely dismisses *Hapworth 16, 1924*, published in 1965 as his last piece, as "unreadable" and "completely indigestible."

Salinger died on Jan. 27, 2010, at the ripe old age of 91. His son, Matthew, wrote an eulogy that distilled his father's essence: "Salinger had remarked that he was in this world but not of it. His body is gone, but the family hopes that he is still with those he loves, whether they are religious or historical figures, personal friends or fictional characters."

His death redoubled interest in his formidable body of work, with Amazon.com depleting its stock of his most famous titles. Salinger is gone, but his stories live on.

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CIJA offers media training to community

Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf
Staff Reporter

A conversation with a reporter is unlike any other discussion.

That's one of Jordan Kerbel's first lessons in the media training seminars he gives as part of his duties with the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA).

For the past five years, Kerbel, CIJA's deputy director of communications and training, has been helping Canadian Jewish leaders and pro-Zionist campus groups articulate a clear message about Israel to the media.

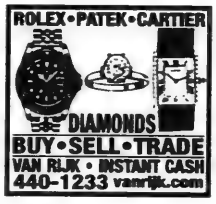
Initially an outreach program of Canadian Jewish Congress – which was replaced by CIJA last year – the seminars continue to be offered free of charge to organizations and individuals who speak to the media about the Jewish state.

"I help prepare our community spokespeople to be effective media communicators," Kerbel said. "It is [CIJA's] responsibility to the community to be able to offer value-added services, workshops and educational opportunities like this."

Giving the seminars isn't just a duty, it's a passion, he said.

A reporter by training, Kerbel worked for 10 years as a news and sports anchor at the CBC and conducted hundreds of interviews during that time.

"I was often surprised at what people shared with me," he said, adding that his interviewing style was never that of the hard-hitting, relentless interrogator. "That's not in my character, and it would have been false to have acted that way. I tried to be more friendly and have engaging, meaningful dialogue."



Kerbel believes anyone who could potentially speak to the media about Israel should learn how to speak in a way that bolsters the state's image, and the training shows how to deliver clear information about Israel.

"We work a lot on message development and deciding what story it is we want to tell. I look at media as a partnership. You're offering me an opportunity to help craft a story that you are going to be telling. So I have to know beforehand what it is I want to say and how I want to represent myself or my organization."

Kerbel said the training helps people feel more confident and comfortable in front of a microphone or camera.

As part of the process, participants are put through a series of mock interviews, from friendly to very hard-hitting.

"Generally people make mistakes at the beginning. A media interview is not a natural conversation. Someone putting a microphone in your face is not natural. But that's why this training is available," he said.

The seminars stemmed from a call by Jewish campus groups for help to fight the rise of "Israeli apartheid week" (IAW) on campuses around the world.

Kerbel said he's since done a lot of work with various Hillel groups, as well as the Canadian Federation of Jewish Students (CFJS) and unaffiliated students.

The campus groups were the first to take advantage of the training, he said, because they were on the front lines of the effort to counter IAW.

Former students of the course include Justine Apple, executive director of Kulanu Toronto; Esther Mendelsohn, treasurer of Israel on Campus at the University of Toronto, and Rebecca Cherniak, former vice-president, internal, of the CFJS.

They all praise Kerbel and the seminars.

"I use Jordan's tips to this day. I highly recommend his sessions to anyone, new or seasoned with the media, who plans to speak to the media," Apple said. "I love how Jordan is really warm, approachable, and professional, and his workshops are fun, educational, thought-provoking and very hands-on."

Mendelsohn said she also "benefited greatly" from the training.

"His training has made me more media savvy and confident. I simply would not be able to do what I do on campus were it not for his help," she said. "He really understands the challenges we face. Practising and getting feedback from a real journalist gives students the skills and confidence to do real interviews where there are no second takes."

Jordan Kerbel

Cherniak concurred, saying the training, which she first took in 2008, helped demystify the media. "Since then, I've listened to Jordan's presentation five times and I always learn something new. ... [he] helped empower me to deliver the same training to local student leaders, which helped them deliver powerful messages," she said.

Cherniak said Kerbel helped her learn how to not let others define her message and how to prepare for an interview.

Past trainees include federation leaders and presidents, and their spokespeople, he said.

Kerbel emphasized that he never tells people what to say.

"I let the participants come up with their own messaging. Sometimes they come up with wording that will blow your mind, and I love that. People have to be comfortable with their own words. It's not about regurgitating what [CIJA] wants them to say," he said.

He added that CIJA offers the seminars to any pro-Zionist group or individual – whether they're right wing or left wing isn't a consideration.

The training can also cover "citizen journalism," offering individuals instruction on how to write letters to the editor or to their political representatives. "This workshop is geared toward getting community members involved in the conversation, whatever it is. But whatever vehicle one chooses, the question to ask is always, 'What do you want to say and how do you want to represent yourself?'"

While the training is readily available, Kerbel said many people still aren't aware of it, and they often find out about his seminars via word of mouth.

"Hopefully, this story will help make our service more known. All community members need to do is e-mail me or call me. At the end of every session, I leave people with my card and I say, 'If you have an interview scheduled and you just want to practice, we can do a mock run.'"

For more information, contact Kerbel at jkerbel@cija.ca .

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Veteran journalist weaves conspiratorial tale

The brazen self-assurance of Tony Burman is something to behold. Burman is the former head of CBC News and most recently of Al Jazeera English. He's now back in Toronto as a journalism professor at Ryerson University and is a columnist with the *Toronto Star*. In his Jan. 21 column, he opened with the following bold prediction: "There will be a war in the Middle East within the next several months, triggered by an Israeli attack on Iran."

Words such as "likely" or "possibly" don't figure in Burman's vocabulary.

He went on to describe how the war will unfold. Implying a parallel between former U.S. president George W. Bush and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Burman wrote that, "Like the Iraq war, [Israel's attack] will be a fatal blend of political arrogance and near criminal risk-taking." Just as the American-led Iraq war has been seen by many as a fatally misconceived and tragically wasteful war of choice, not of necessity, Burman implicitly argues that like Bush, Netanyahu will lead Israel into the same sort of tragic and unjustified misadventure in Iran, spurred on by arrogance and aggression.

Having asserted that Israel "will" attack Iran, Burman contradicted himself by adding, in the same opening paragraph, "But we should also know that the time to prevent [Israel's attack] is running out." It apparently did not occur to him that if what you claim will happen can be prevented, and thus won't happen, you're admitting that you're not sure at all about your prediction. But let this pass. Why, after all, should a small matter of logic interfere with a gripping tale.

On the matter of Burman's account of Israel's aggression, he argued that the murder of four Iranian nuclear scientists in the last few years was "most certainly" the work of Israel's Mossad. He claims to know, as a matter of fact, things that others speculate about but for which hard evidence is entirely lacking. Yet he has no problem expressing doubt about something for which there is a growing abundance of reliable evidence: the pressing nature Iran's nuclear threat.

Mixing certainty about Israel's alleged hostile intent with doubt about Iran's, Burman wrote: "The fractious government of Benjamin Netanyahu is obsessed with the prospect of a nuclear Iran, even if the evidence is unclear how imminent that threat is."

In Burman's conspiratorially-based account, Iran is being victimized by western economic sanctions and is being reduced to a state of "desperation." Compounding this desperation is the Mossad's murderous operations, which are "humiliating" Iran and are designed by Israel to force Tehran to retaliate. This will conveniently give Netanyahu the pretext he's looking for to strike out against Iran in "self-defence."

Not only is Iran being entrapped by Netanyahu's machinations, so, it turns out, is the United States itself. How so? Well, as Burman construes matters, Netanyahu has calculated that President Barack Obama will be re-elected next fall but will be "politically cornered" just before the elections, including by the Republicans in Netanyahu's corner, not to look weak. Consequently, Burman implies, Obama will be forced to go along with, or at least not oppose, an Israeli attack on Iran during that time.

Tony Burman

It's yet another conspiracy in which the Israeli tail wags the American dog.

Reflecting on Burman's presumptions, Jim Lederman, a former CBC Radio news reporter (1967-1982) and the author of a highly acclaimed book on the media and Israel, said: "At this point, nobody, not even the Israeli leadership, can be certain that an attack will take place this year – as Burman asserts. The situation is simply too fluid, and everyone involved is playing a game of chicken on the brink."

Lederman, who finds Burman's cocksureness "frightening," added: "Burman's statement late in his piece that 'of course' we can't be certain that events will unfold as he predicts is nothing but a throw-away line of boilerplate in an otherwise one-sided harangue."

* * *

Next week: on Ronen Bergman's New York Times Magazine article, "Will Israel attack Iran?"

Paul Michaels is director of research and media relations for the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs.

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Charity helps kids who need drugs outside OHIP

Sheri Shefa
Staff Reporter

Aaron Maresky was only seven years old when he was diagnosed with the painful gastrointestinal (GI) disease called Crohn's.

"He couldn't eat, he couldn't drink, he had unbearable stomach pains," said Mandy Maresky, Aaron's mom.

Aaron, who had lost 30 pounds as a result of the chronic disease, spent the following three months in

Aaron, when he was diagnosed three years ago

and out of the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto while doctors tried to find a medication that would relieve his symptoms.

They found success with a class of drugs called biologics, which treat the symptoms of Crohn's and other diseases.

As soon as Aaron began receiving infusions of Remicade, a drug that is not covered by OHIP and costs about $4,000 a month, his condition improved immediately.

"It was amazing. We started to think that maybe they had misdiagnosed him," Maresky recalled.

Luckily, the Mareskys have insurance that covers the cost of the expensive drugs.

Maresky said her son, who went from being a "normal, very active" seven-year-old to a child who had to receive painful infusions each month, didn't waste time feeling sorry for himself.

During one of his frequent visits to SickKids, Aaron pulled some money from of his pocket – the allowance his mother had given him – handed it to a nurse, and asked her to give it to another family in need.

Giving money and gifts to other families in the GI clinic at SickKids during his monthly visits became a regular occurrence.

Maresky suspects Aaron had noticed the support he received from family and friends, as well as Chai Lifeline Canada, a non-profit organization that supports children with serious illness.

"Because Aaron saw what a difference this made to him, he wanted to give back and do the same for other children," Maresky said.

"One day, he said, 'Let's just start our own charity.' Basically, that's how Aaron's Apple was born."

Aaron's Apple, a registered Canadian charity under the auspices of Chai Lifeline Canada, was co-founded by Aaron – who is now a 10-year-old Grade 5 student at Associated Hebrew Schools Kimel campus – and his parents.

It collects funds to help Canadian families without insurance pay for drugs that OHIP doesn't cover.

Maresky explained that Ontario residents who don't have insurance and can't afford the high drug costs can apply for assistance from the Trillium Drug Program. But, she added, the process to get approval could take months.

"When a child is very sick and wasting away and in a lot of pain, and they can't go to school, they don't have time to wait for approval. So with Aaron's Apple, we raise money, and the money will be given directly to the families to bridge the gap," Maresky explained.

"As soon as Trillium takes over, that's when we step back. Sometimes they don't get assistance, so we pay."

To date, Aaron's Apple has raised more than $50,000 and helped three families that were referred to the organization by SickKids.

She hopes the first annual Caring to the Core Gala will help raise upward of $100,000 to help more families.

Citytv reporter Galit Solomon and Gemini Award-nominated producer and television host Marshall Jay Kaplan will host the Feb. 11 gala, which will be held at Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue.

The "adult-inspired" event will feature dinner, an open bar, entertainment, music and an auction, as well as a raffle to win a trip to the "Big Apple," New York.

Aaron, who is now at a healthy weight, but still experiences "flare-ups" said he was "very excited" about the upcoming gala.

Aaron last summer

Aaron said he hopes the event will raise "a lot of money because there are always going to be families that need help."

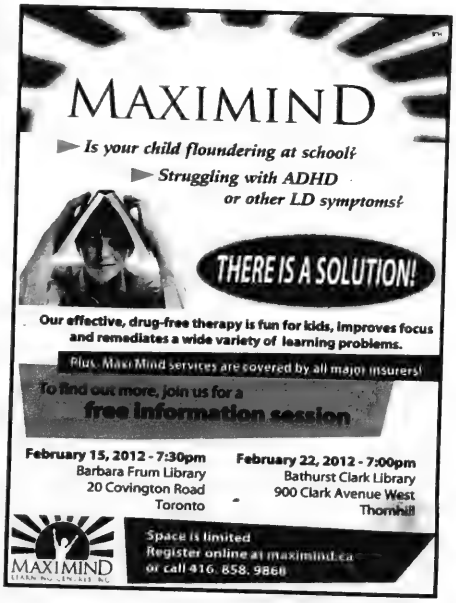
Maresky said Aaron's Apple offers help for children suffering from all kinds of chronic illnesses, not just Crohn's disease.

"We don't want to turn anyone down... No child should suffer and not have access to what they need."

Maresky said being a part of this charity helps her son and her family focus on something positive.

"He's very involved. He's an amazing kid. We're just so proud of him. He's so positive and he never complains."

Maresky said event sponsors are still welcome and more information about the organization can be found at www.aaronsapple.com.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Physician is part Jewish mystic, part gynecologist

Susan Ponting
Special to The CJN

In 1994, Dr. Alvin Pettle began to learn to disentangle himself from ego – no small feat for anyone, let alone a popular, in-demand physician.

He's part Jewish mystic, part gynecologist, and all soul.

Dr. Alvin Pettle

Alvie, as he's known to his many friends and patients, has a deep love and respect for women, and his life and career reflect that.

His personal journey shifted in 1994 when he began yearning for something more. At the time, he was chief of obstetrics and gynecology at Etobicoke General Hospital in Toronto, where he had delivered more than 10,000 babies.

But one day, he suddenly walked out of the busy office he ran with his wife, Carol, a nurse, saying, "I need to go for a walk."

He didn't come back for six months.

Carol and Alvin headed to Sherwood Forest, a Toronto park that has become a place of healing during certain times of their lives, "We just sat there. And I listened to the deepest part of my soul," he said.

Listening would be the key to his future. "When the student is ready, the teachers appear," he said, quoting the Buddhist proverb. And they did, in the form of people and every book he could get his hands on.

Pettle said he felt a sense of renewal after his awakening, and he knew it was time to break away from traditional medicine and move into a more holistic approach.

"I could sense being told, 'Now I'm going to show you how to really take care of women, and they will tell you what they need.'"

The fact that menopausal women were taking horse's urine through hormone replacement therapy (HRT) didn't make sense to him at all.

So the Canadian pioneer began to introduce bio-identical hormones to help women enter menopause. "Bio-ids" are made from botanical plants such as soy beans and yams. The human body can't convert soy or yams directly into natural hormones, so the natural plants are pharmaceutically processed in a transdermal cream.

His medical knowledge and his passion to understand hormones allowed him to help women in ways he hadn't been able to at the hospital. Now he's spends more time talking to his patients.

"Now I ask questions I never dreamed of asking before, like, 'Have you ever been abused?'" he said. "This is important information to gather for the well-being of my patients."

Pettle started to write prescriptions and figure things out. "I realized that some allopathic doctors are stubborn, educated by drug companies. Oh, God bless the drug companies, they do a lot of good, but they don't do [plant-based] hormones."

In the '90s, Pettle, as well as others in the medical community, said that "women must stop swallowing synthetic estrogen and stop taking synthetic hormones."

That was a risky move for the renegade doctor who was told to watch his back.

He recalled that fellow doctors contacted him, asking, "Alvie, what's wrong with you?"

To which he replied, "I'm trying to help women. We need to re-think this."

A young professor wrote him a note, asking, "How could you prescribe bio-identical progesterone to a woman without a uterus?"

Pettle replied, "You forgot she has breasts and organs that receive progesterone as well."

Although he doesn't take credit for it, Pettle's paradigm shift led to a sea change in the thinking of the medical community in which he was working. That took courage.

He has co-written two books with Lorna Vanderhaeghe, *A Smart Woman's Guide to Hormones* and *Sexy Hormones*. He's currently writing a book called *What Women Have Taught Me*.

"Women have taught me a lot, not the least of which is that it's time to turn our society from a patriarchal one to a matriarchal one," he said.

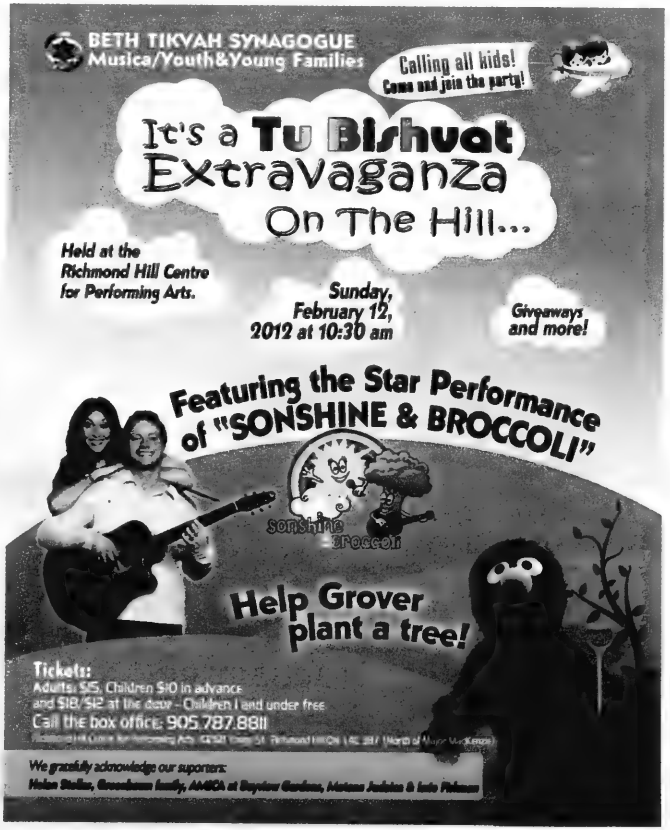
"Under our patriarchal society, there's too much testosterone. None of us would be here if weren't for women. It's time we begin looking into each other's eyes with a mutual respect.

"When people have respect for each other, magic happens."

At 66, Pettle said he feels better than he did at 35. Ever the philosopher, he muses, "Life is about seeking the truth in everything we do, and following your heart for the answers."

Pettle followed his heart all the way, as he puts it, from "self-destructing, moving too fast in the world of 24/7 medicine" to finding his place and peace among the women he clearly loves.

For more health-related stories and features, please see our To Your Health supplement.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Working up a sweat in Israel

If you have a love of the outdoors, want to experience Israel from a different perspective and don't particularly like riding around in tour buses with tinted windows, there's a tour waiting for you. Especially if you're not afraid of working up a sweat.

Even if you've never crossed a desert wadi or swam in a cool spring in the Galilee, you'd probably recognize the logo of the Society for the Protection of Israel, the country's oldest and largest environmental organization. The society organizes tours that will take you to places most comfy tourists wouldn't dream of visiting, like hiking through canyons in the Negev or tubing down rivers in the north. During the summer, a few tours are offered in English, but joining a tour at other times of the years is a great way to see the country and pick up some Hebrew at the same time. **[http://bit.ly/ecoisr8]**

"Migrating Birds Know No Boundaries." That's the slogan of Israel's International Center for the Study of Bird Migration in Latrun, Israel – located at the junction of three continents, Europe, Asia and Africa – has long been known as a birder's paradise. You can track the patterns of birds migrating through Israel, watch a video of lesser kestrels, and get details about the second International Hula Valley Bird Festival coming up in November. **[http://bit.ly/ecoisr11]** For more on where to perch yourself to get the best view, check out Birding In Israel. **[http://bit.ly/ecoisr12]**

Care to see Israel on two wheels? The Arava Institute and Hazon offer a weeklong ride. It includes orientation, five cycling days and a day off for Shabbat. Hazon (vision) is an organization that promotes outdoor physical challenge and creates programs that look at food from a Jewish and contemporary context. Now's the time to get in shape for the October 2012 ride. **[http://bit.ly/ecoisr13]** If you can't wait, you can ride along vicariously with Elahn Zetlin, who donned a helmet-cam last year and documented the thrilling and panoramic trek from Jerusalem on to Eilat. **[http://bit.ly/ecoisr14]**

Jewish & Digital

Mark Mietkiewicz

If you don't want to bother with a bike, there's always your own two feet. If those feet are connected to a body that's in good shape and is ready for a challenge, the Israel National Trail awaits. The trail "winds its way nearly 1,000 kilometres across Israel, from the Lebanese border in the north to the Red Sea in the south." If you are up to it, walking the entire trail should take about 30 to 45 days. The English language website is very good with plenty of practical information (don't hike the Negev in the summer!) and a lively discussion board for hikers considering setting foot. **[http://bit.ly/ecoisr15]**

As you bike, hike, wander and even slog your way around the country, you will eventually end up in some of the country's national parks. Israel has 296 national parks and nature reserves from the Galilee's Iyon Stream with its waterfalls and flour mills to Eilat's Coral Beach and underwater garden in the south. **[http://bit.ly/ecoisr16]**

And just when you thought you'd seen it all, VirtualTourist.com offers an incredible resource of hundreds of "Israel Off the Beaten Path" recommendations. **[http://bit.ly/ecoisr17]**

Happy Israeli trails to you.

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The failure to reach teens

I've worked with teens in camps, schools, youth movements, Israel trips, service learning and Shabbatons. The breadth of programs is astounding and the depth of Jewish experiences created by many of these programs is powerful.

Yet despite programmatic richness and the community's multi-million-dollar investment, we struggle to reach Jewish teens. The teens I work with represent the elite – the small percentage engaged in Jewish activities. What's more, I see the same faces in Jewish schools, summer camps and travel programs, while most of their peers have little contact with any ongoing Jewish experience.

A U.S. study conducted by Brandeis University in 2000 found that while 86 per cent of kids in Grade 7 are engaged in some form of Jewish activity, by Grade 12 the number drops to 56 per cent. For non-day school students, these numbers are generously estimated at 60 per cent in Grade 7 and 20 per cent in Grade 12. A recent study of New York teens indicates the numbers have dropped even lower in the last decade.

The statistics groan on. While approximately 50 per cent of American teens are active in a youth movement, among Jews, only 20 per cent are involved. Participation in Jewish camps drops to 13 per cent by Grade 12, and only a marginal number of teens visit Israel. The Union for Reform Judaism, which recently launched a teen engagement campaign, estimates that if current trends persist, 80 per cent of children who become bnai mitzvah will have no connection to their synagogue by the time they reach Grade 12.

Class Act

Daniel Held

Our system stymies engagement. Our focus on the bar/bat mitzvah has resulted in it serving as a graduation from, rather than gateway to, Jewish activity.

While day school enrolment and Israel trip participation are higher in Canada than America, a planned, systematic approach to teen engagement is sorely needed in our community.

Synagogues and bar and bat mitzvah educators must see their roles as transition co-ordinators, guiding students to the next Jewish experience. Parents, who, despite teens' protests, play a significant role in adolescent identity formation, must be empowered to shape their children's Jewish journey. As a community, we must recognize that one point of contact does not suffice. As powerful as day school or camp may be, the effect of these experiences is marginalized when it's the only point of ongoing Jewish contact.

Teens offer great potential. Outside Jewish contexts, they participate at high levels in extra-curricular activities – sports, arts, community service – and a wide range of resume-building activities. They're interested in shaping opportunities that speak to their interests and, when engaged, they're passionate, devoted and social. During high school, they question their assumptions of identity and relationships, and actively seek mentors and guides on this journey.

The answer to teen engagement doesn't necessarily lie in more programming. We already have a menu of activities rich in diversity and depth. Rather, we must rethink the ways we connect with teens. To do so, we must work collaboratively with educators, parents, community leaders and teens themselves to plan multilayered pathways of Jewish experiences that flow from bar and bat mitzvah celebrations to Hillel on campus.

New JF&CS president has bat mitzvah

Carolyn Blackman
Staff Reporter

Judy Winberg celebrated her 60th birthday last fall in a big way.

She had her bat mitzvah at Holy Blossom Temple, and she became president of Jewish Family and Child.

"Growing up, my brother had a bar mitzvah, but girls were not encouraged to study Hebrew. It's something I always regretted."

When she learned that Holy Blossom was offering a two-year b'nai mitzvah program, she signed up and began learning Hebrew. "I didn't really intend to participate in the service, but it was scheduled on the day of my 60th birthday. It seemed perfect."

The wife and mother of three children, Winberg, an educational consultant, said that becoming involved in JF&CS was a natural thing to do, because community service has always been part of her family.

"My mother Doodie Libman and I were co-chairs of the Hadassah bazaar, and now my children are actively involved in the community. They've followed our example."

As president of the JF&CS board of 24 members, she said, she sits on five committees and is the spokesperson for the agency to its three funders – UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, and the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

Judy Winberg

A teacher before she became an educational consultant, Winberg wanted to stay involved with children and their families, so she joined JF&CS's youth services committee.

"I wanted to help send out the message that child abuse exists in the Jewish community, and there are a number of Jewish children who live in poverty. There is still denial. I want to raise the profile of our agency, so people will become aware of the services we offer.

"Denial is not as strong as it used to be, but raising awareness is important. I think that many people do not understand that children's aid societies not only protect children, they also offer services for families. Too often, people find out about us only when they need us [in a crisis]."

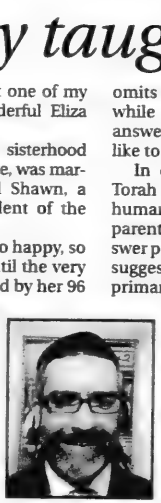
Among its many services, she said, JF&CS runs bereavement groups, groups for parenting and divorced parents, a chaplaincy service, and is a leader in its work in high-conflict divorce. "We are much more than a children's aid society, and we want people to know it."

Winberg said that times are tough everywhere, and JF&CS is doing what it can on a limited budget.

"Our needs have increased tremendously and our funding has not. There has been an increase in intake calls, and more children are involved in our programs."

The agency's major fundraiser, to be held May 14 at the TIFF Bell Lightbox, is Jewish Folks Telling Jewish Jokes, hosted by Harvey Atkin. "We're honouring amateur Jewish joke-tellers everywhere."

They taught a lesson to all



Sephardi Window

Rabbi Ilan Acoca

A few weeks ago I lost one of my teachers when the wonderful Eliza Shawn passed away.

This woman, the first sisterhood president of my synagogue, was married to the late Edward Shawn, a founder and first president of the kehila.

This *eshet chayil* was so happy, so positive and so active until the very end. All of us were blessed by her 96 years, and her enduring legacy will be cherished by many more than just her five children, 14 grandchildren, and 20 great-grandchildren.

I sometimes wonder how this woman became such an inspiration for so many. I believe the Torah has an answer in the beginning of the book of Shmot, where it states, "And a man went from the house of Levi and he took a daughter of Levi. And the woman conceived and gave birth to a son."

Later on, the Torah tells us that these two were none other than Amram and Yocheved, the parents of Moses.

We may ask why the text initially omits the names of Moses' parents, while revealing them later? Many answers are given, two of which I'd like to share with you here

In describing Moses' birth, the Torah emphasizes that Moses is a human being with flesh-and-blood parents, not an angel. Another answer points out that the Torah avoids suggesting that Moses' lineage was primarily responsible for his position and achievements.

Moshe became the greatest prophet of all time on his own merit, achieving his position of leadership and realizing his potential by talent and hard work. It was not an issue of *proteksia* (social connections).

Mrs. Shawn did not become an inspiration through shortcuts. She became the wonderful woman she was through labour, love and perseverance – and by example. She assumed leadership positions on behalf of the Jews of her communities in Japan and Canada, after leaving her native India.

Life was not always easy for her, as she experienced significant hardships. She lived in Japan during World War II and lost a daughter just a few years ago. Nevertheless, she continued to live a rich and fulfilling life, always expanding her potential.

My father, Meir Yaacov Acoca, who passed away 18 years ago and whose yahrtzeit we recently remembered, was also a great mentor to many. His last years, too, were not easy. He was on dialysis for a couple of years before he passed away, but he took every moment with a smile, endearing himself to fellow patients and staff alike with his good humour at the clinic.

I once asked him how it was possible for him to be so positive in such difficult moments. His answer was brief but profound: "Make the best of every moment."

Mrs. Shawn and my father knew how to live each day as the special gift from God that it is. In their humility, I don't think they knew how many people's lives they would touch so deeply.

Let us all strive to live our lives as robustly as did these two very special people.

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Business Operations Coordinator

UJA Federation has a vacancy within its Donor Services team. Working closely with the Finance and Campaign Departments, the Business Operations Coordinator will be responsible for a variety of customer service duties, with the primary function being the development and implementation of procedures related to pledge redemptions and stock transactions.

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Campus play funny, yet thought provoking

Sara Harowitz
Special to The CJN

Through jokes, props, costumes and videos, Ron Jones and Larry Jay Tish, creators of a show called *Black-Jew Dialogues*, aim at shedding light on the shared histories of American blacks and Jews.

"You don't lose part of your own heritage by learning more about another," says Jones. "I think a lot of people don't want to give themselves credit for the fact that the more you learn about other people and the way things work in the world, the more capable you are of dealing with things."

It's an idea close to Jones' heart, one that has, in fact, turned into so much more. Jones, along with his friend and fellow actor Tish, recently came to Canada to perform their show at Ryerson University and the University of Toronto.

"The title just flew into my head," says Tish, who came up with the initial idea that he then proposed to Jones.

"I always was curious about the relationship between the African-American community and the Jewish community here in the States. I knew it had been estranged for a while. I wanted to explore it through comedy and through going over my story."

Comedy is an important tool used in the show, which was performed for the first time at a Canadian university last week.

It is through comedy that some of the difficulties of being a cultural minority in a melting pot like the United States or Canada can be overcome. Tish and Jones are, essentially, laughing through the pain.

For example, in one of the skits, Jones and Tish dressed up as old ladies who are meeting with their families for a picnic.

At first they seem to be wary of each other – the Jewish grandma even complains that a young black kid robbed her grandson.

But the more the two women talk, the more they discover they have in common – their dedication to their families, their issues that come with aging. The skit ends with the women swapping picnic baskets, and, in doing so, embracing the food, and complexities, of each other's cultures.

"The way I like to say it is we deal with serious things in a funny way," says Jones. "The issues we talk about are definitely serious. But the relationship we portray on stage is irreverent and it's fun. We hope that by showing our relationship – two guys on stage talking about tough things – we can show people that these are not taboo conversations, that you can talk to people about race and ethnicity and culture without feeling like you're automatically going to move to being offensive or becoming defensive."

Tish agrees.

"To me, racism and prejudice and some of the intense hatred that we have for one another is so absurd that it's funny," he says. "Comedy has always been the best vehicle for me to express the truth about life in a way that I think really gets across to people."

The *Black-Jew Dialogues* is somehow lighthearted and heavy all at once. Part sketch comedy and part social analysis, it is able to bring to the table serious issues surrounding race, religion and ethnicity without making the audience feel uncomfortable as part of the conversation.

"This performance presents the dialogue in a really creative and funny way," says Tamar Berger, the project's co-ordinator at Hillel GTA who oversaw the performances at Ryerson and U of T.

Ron Jones, left and Larry Jay Tish

The Black Students Association, the West Indies Association and OACT (Oakham Amateur Campus Theatre), Ryerson's theatre group, also helped organize the Ryerson event.

"Sometimes it can be hard to talk about racism and prejudice. The show does it in such a light way that it really opens up the discussion."

And though the title of the show lends itself specifically to blacks and Jews, the conversation that spurs from it goes beyond those two cultural groups.

After the performance, Jones and Tish opened up the floor and led the audience in a participatory and insightful discussion.

Through an exploration of the most common racial stereotypes toward blacks and Jews, the audience was encouraged to address the issues some might be too scared to bring up.

"It would be my hope that people leave with a little more courage and take a little more action towards injustice and racism," says Tish.

"And, hopefully, they've laughed a little, too."

Wiesenthal Center objects to McMaster speaker

Sheri Shefa
Staff Reporter

Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies (FSWC) president and CEO Avi Benlolo says he's fed up with universities that continue to allow "hateful speakers" on campus.

"I've lost my patience with the universities. I think they're complicit in aiding and abetting these hate-mongers," Benlolo said, reacting to a lecture presented by pro-Iranian, anti-Israel speaker Zafar Bangash on McMaster University's campus last week.

The Jan. 26 lecture, titled "Iran in the Crosshairs," was sponsored by the Hamilton Coalition to Stop the War, Independent Jewish Voices, as well as the student groups Students for Justice in the Middle East, McMaster Muslims for Peace and Justice, and Students Resisting War and Occupation.

Benlolo wrote a letter to McMaster president Patrick Deane that challenged him to take a stand against a speaker who was quoted during last summer's Al Quds rally at Queen's Park as saying, "This black man in the White House, Barack Obama… he would rather have Americans starve to death but he cannot say no to the Zionist parasitical state… That is what makes them racists, that is what makes them inhuman, that is what makes them barbarians."

Bangash, president of the Islamic Society of York Region, who is known for advocating Iranian-style theocracy, has also said, "Inshallah [God-willing] I see that day when we, the Muslims, will march on Palestine and liberate Palestine… under Islamic law," and has advised Israelis to go "back where they came from: the U.S., Canada, Europe, Russia, whoever is willing to take them in."

Despite Benlolo's complaints, McMaster chose not to cancel the lecture, citing its "important role in maintaining freedom of speech."

McMaster spokesperson Gord Arbeau put the onus on the organizers of the event to ensure respectful dialogue on campus.

"Every event that is booked at McMaster follows the same protocols. Event organizers are responsible for ensuring a safe event and those protocols have been followed in this instance."

But Benlolo, who sends letters of complaint to university presidents each time he learns that an anti-Israel speaker has been invited to speak on a Canadian campus, said he is becoming tired of getting the "brush-off" from university administrators who he says hide behind the "freedom of speech" excuse.

"We're awaiting a response… I would expect the exact same response that I get from all the university presidents, which is what these universities hide behind. They say, 'We have to allow for freedom of speech and freedom of debate and the truth will prevail.'"

Benlolo added that the trend of having anti-Israel speakers lecturing on campus is "becoming intolerable," adding that "it's about time that the universities step up and draw a red line in the sand and say that speakers who are divisive and to an extent, antisemitic, should not be permitted on campus. Period."

McMaster's Jewish Student Association president Ariela Rozenek and McMaster's Israel on Campus president Jessica Lax-Vanek monitored the lecture.

Rozenek said that while Bangash mostly stayed on topic, there were "undertones of racism and bigotry" in his talk.

"I understand that McMaster wants to provide an environment that encourages discussion, that promotes freedom of speech, but the inflammatory language that was used by Bangash adds to a toxic, intolerant environment and stifles true dialogue."

She added that the students who attended the lecture as representatives of the Jewish community are working toward an inclusive environment, and lectures like the one delivered by Bangash go against that goal.

"We really try to host events that elevate the level of discourse on campus and this sets us back."

Benlolo said that if university presidents don't want to cancel these types of events, they should at least take a moral stand.

"There's a minimum and a maximum [response]. The minimum is that the president should denounce it, and the maximum is that the university property should not be made available for these speakers. It's public property and the university can define the rules and should not permit hateful speakers on their campus."

Montrealers, Israelis volunteer in Ethiopia

Compiled by CJN Staff

MONTREAL — Eight young Jewish Montrealers were transported out of their comfort zones into the harsh reality of poverty and disease in rural Ethiopia last month.

The group, aged 18 to 25, spent their winter break volunteering on non-sectarian humanitarian projects of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), joining 12 Israeli peers from Be'er Sheva/Bnei Shimon in the Negev.

"As we drove to the hotel [from the airport] and gazed out the windows, we all realized that this experience was going to be like no other," said Tamar Medalssy.

"Poverty struck you in the face," added Cedric Kessous. "I… wondered how one could live like that… All I could think to myself was 'where the hell am I?' But from that, I began to understand real poverty."

All of the participants describe the trip as having been life-changing.

During the mission, they assisted in the construction of a new schoolhouse, distributed nutritional bars to pregnant women, and helped hand out de-worming medication to children. They also spent time leading sports and educational activities with kids, who were delighted with the school supplies, toys and colouring items they brought along.

The participants' blogs and photos are at www.federationcja.org/ethiopia.

To read full story, go to cjnews.com

Montrealers Talia Bensoussan and Cedric Kessous work on an art project with Ethiopian children.

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Canadian Friends of Bar-Ilan University

Students asked to 'draw Jewish music' for art contest

Frances Kraft
Staff Reporter

Students in grades 1 through 12 are being asked to "draw Jewish music" for an art contest that is part of Jewish Music Week in Toronto: From Bible to Broadway.

The weeklong festival, now in its second year, will run from June 3 to 10. The contest deadline is March 15.

Young artists are being asked to draw what Jewish music means to them personally, what Jewish music makes them think of, or what Jewish music means to people everywhere, according to the event's website.

Entries will be judged on their originality, creativity and how they represent or have a connection with Jewish music, said Aliza Spiro, artistic director and founder of the festival.

Winning entries will be published online and in more than 20,000 brochures to be circulated in Toronto. As well, the winners will be part of an exhibit at the Gallery at the J, in the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, during Jewish Music Week. Organizers also plan to feature them in a student art calendar.

"It's so interesting, because music and art are so closely related," Spiro said. The contest is "a way to get kids thinking about music and art [and] to build the creative part of their brain."

Judy Jacobs, managing director of the festival, said, "The response last year was very positive, and we look forward to seeing the creativity in this year's submissions."

Art contest entries will be judged by Wendy Ng, coordinator for elementary school programs at the Art Gallery of Ontario; Sara Levine Petroff, owner and curator of the Petroff Gallery; artist Rochelle Rubinstein; Jeanette Kuvin-Oren, the Connecticut-based Judaica artist who created Holy Blossom Temple's Torah covers, and artist and educator Tiana Roebuck.

Spiro added that she expects many of the concerts and recitals during the week will appeal to kids. The Renanim Youth Singers and several choirs from Jewish schools are among the performers.

As well, the closing program is a music marathon featuring teenage bands at the Zareinu Moveathon Festival.

Other events include chassidic entertainer Martin Davidson in a Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach tribute concert, Jewish jazz with pianist and composer Ron Davis, and a Yiddish and African-American musical celebration concert.

For more information about the contest and Jewish Music Week, go to jewishmusicweek.com.

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The CJN encourages readers to direct any queries on events to the event's organizers.

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Overheard in Starbucks

Tammy Barrett
Special to The CJN

I was at the local Starbucks the other day. A mother was there with three kids. While she was ordering and paying, her youngest child picked up a sandwich. The mother's hands were full, and she didn't notice until she had finished paying and was walking away. She took the sandwich, smiled when she saw the tooth marks on the plastic, and turned to go to back to the cashier to pay for it. She didn't go to the end of the long line, of course. She had just paid.

I smiled at her, just as the cashier did, but then I heard someone say, "pushy Israeli."

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שישאר בינינו

גידי קורן וחברים

על הדרת נשים

זה שהחרדים מפלים לרעה נשים ומדירים אותן כאילו היו חיות נחותות כבר ידוע. אבל החודש נדמה לי שנשבר השיא: הם קיימו כנס על "גניקולוגיה והלכה" ולא הסכימו להרצאות של נשים בכלל, ואפילו לא של גניקולוגיות, שעושות את המלאכה יום ביומו. פרופ. ירון, שהתכונן להשתתף בכנס עד שגילה את עניין הדרת הנשים, שלח את המכתב הבא ששווה לקרוא בעיון:

"אני מודה לכם על ההזמנה להרצות בכנס פוע"ה אך לא אוכל להופיע בו מהטעמים הבאים:
1. כפי שכתבתם בתגובה לתקשורת: בהוראת הרבנים הכנס אמנם יהיה פתוח לגברים ולנשים, אולם הישיבה תהיה בנפרד, ויתר על כן, ובאופן מוצהר – שהמרצים בכנס זה יהיו גברים בלבד. בעת שהסכמתי לתת את הרצאתי לא הייתי מודע להוראה זו, שאם כן – הרי שמלכתחילה לא הייתי נותן את הסכמתי. הגישה שנשים מנועות בעיקרון מלהיות מרצות עומדת בסתירה מוחלטת לערכים עליהם התחנכתי. הקביעה שנשים אינן יכולות להיות מוזמנות כמרצות בכנס לרפואת נשים היא גם אבסורד מהבחינה המקצועית וגם הדרת נשים במלוא מובן המילה. וזאת דווקא בתחום שבו יש לעמיתותיי – רופאות הנשים והגנטיקאיות – הרבה מה לומר ולתרום, לא פחות מאשר לנו, הגברים.
2. בשיחה שקיימתי היום עם הרב בנימין דוד הוא מסר לי שרבני העדה החרדית קבעו שרופא שיבטל את השתתפותו בכנס "גמור מבחינתם". אינני יודע למה הכוונה, אך אטול את הסיכון ובלבד שאוכל להישיר מבט לעיניהן של אמי, של אשתי, של בתי, של עמיתותיי למקצוע, של קהל המטופלות ויותר מכול – שאוכל להסתכל בעצמי בראי.
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מדינת ישראל של 2012-ממש טהרן המערבית. אבל שישאר בינינו.

סרטים שכדאי-חלק ג'

ב"אשת הברזל" מגלמת מריל סטריפ את מרגרט תא'צ'ר, ראש ממשלת אנגליה ששינתה את פני המדינה שלה ללא הכר. הצד המרגש ביותר בסרט היא מרגרט ת'אצ'ר של עכשיו- אשה עם דמנציה מתקדמת, שמתמודדת עם הבדידות והשיכחה, שמדברת עם בעלה שנפטר לפני שנים רבות. לפני שבועיים זכתה מריל סטריפ על משחקה בסרט הזה בגלובוס הזהב. בעת היא מועמדת מאוד חזקה לפרס האוסקר, ואתם מועמדים לשעתיים מרגשות ומדהימות. תשע בסולם קורן.

More GIDI KOREN at www.gidikoren.com

GLEE CLUB: Members of the glee club at Leo Baeck Day School's south campus, located in Holy Blossom Temple, recently performed for seniors at L'Chaim Retirement Home. They sang their four songs so beautifully that there were tears in the seniors' eyes.

JUNIOR WINDOWS: After learning about the Chagall windows in Israel, the nursery children from Temple Sinai Nursery School tried their hand at creating their own windows. Holding up their finished creations are, from left, Zachary Lyons, Eli Rethazy and Simone Ballon.

BABY CARE: Grade 6 girls at Netivot HaTorah Day School recently took part in a Red Cross babysitting course led by instructor Stacey Lofsky.

Mazel Tov

מזל טוב

Happy 40th birthday Mommy, Orna Serruya. We all love you very much!

Mazel tov to beautiful Bertha Wolstat celebrating her 96th birthday! Love, Earl and Larry and their families and friends! Have a healthy and happy year!

Charles & Mercedes Benarroch and Marc & Miriam Warner are thrilled to announce the engagement of Esther & Daniel. Mazel tov from your entire family!

After an eight year courtship, we wish you both, Tara and Ami, a huge mazel tov on your engagement! Love, all your friends!

Mazel tov Danielle & Michael Plax on Ethan Tyler's birth. Grandparents, Bonny & Allen Halberstadt, Lilia & Alex Plax. Great-Grandparents, Dorothy Antflick, Chana & Grigory Plotkin.

Kyla Lily Lazarus, born Nov. 8. Welcomed by parents Nicole & Jeff, furry brother Keith, cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents and great-grandparents. We love you!

Email your digital photos to cblackman@thecjn.ca or go online to www.CJNews.com and click the "Family Moments"

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What's New

By LISA SARICK

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Deadline reminder: Feb. 6 is the deadline for the issue of Feb. 16. Feb. 13 is the deadline for the issue of Feb. 23. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; e-mail whatsnewcjn@gmail.com, or fax 416-391-0829.

Thursday, Feb. 2

ORGAN DONATION

National Council of Jewish Women presents a program on "Organ Donation: It's a Mitzvah," noon, 4700 Bathurst St. Speakers include **Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl** and liver recipient **Frank Bialystok**. RSVP 416-633-5100.

JEWISH THINKERS

Edward Breuer discusses "Moses Mendelssohn: A Traditional Jew Answers the Challenges of Modernity," 8:15 p.m., Or Chaim Yeshiva. 416-633-5770.

Friday, Feb. 3

SHABBAT SHIRAH

Temple Har Zion continues its 40th anniversary celebration with musician **Alan Goodis**, who will sing with the primary and junior choirs, tonight at Shabbat services, 7:30 p.m. Goodis will also sing at a coffee house Feb. 4, 8 p.m. 905-889-2252.

KOL AMI DEDICATION

Temple Kol Ami will dedicate its newly renovated sacred space, 36 Atkinson Ave., Thornhill, 7 p.m.

KABBALAT SHABBAT LIVE

Beth Radom Congregation holds a Kabbalat Shabbat Live service, North Thornhill Community Centre, 300 Pleasant Ridge Dr., Thornhill. Light refreshments at 6 p.m., services start at 6:30 p.m. RSVP info@bethradom.com or 416-636-3451.

Saturday, Feb. 4

KUMZITZ

Shaarei Shomayim Congregations holds a *kumzitz*, in honour of Shabbat Shirah, 7:30 p.m. ,with **Cantor Avraham Sultan.**

Sunday, Feb. 5

KIDSTOCK

Cassels Brock Lawyers present Kidstock, concert and activities for children featuring **Sonshine & Broccoli, Kayla** and **Marlowe & The Mix.** Shows at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., Breakout Studios, 1541 Bayview Ave.

Proceeds to Na'amat Canada – Toronto. Tickets at www.kidstock.ca.

TU B'SHVAT FUN

Pride of Israel Synagogue hosts an afternoon of Tu b'Shvat fun, 2 p.m. Pre-registration required, 416-226-0111, ext. 10.

WORLDWIDE WRAP

Learn the mitzvah of wrapping tfillin. Special program for children in grades 5 to 7, Shaar Shalom Synagogue, 8-10 a.m. **Dave**, 416-294-9494.

FOOD CONFERENCE

Shoresh Food Conference on Jewish tradition and contemporary food issues, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Miles Nadal JCC.

Aaron Gross, founder of Farm Forward, speaks about "Kosher Law, Animal Ethics and Jewish Identity," 7 p.m. Hart House, East Common Room, 7 Hart House Circle. www.shoresh.ca or 416-805-8382.

Monday, Feb. 6

ALLI'S JOURNEY

Alli's Journey, a charity that raises funds in support of young adults with cancer, is showing the movie *50/50*, at 7 p.m. Tickets at www.allisjourney.ca.

Continued on page 23

On the Slopes for Candy
The Candy Schaffel Black Snow Day
Wednesday, February 29, 2012 Alpine Ski Club, Collingwood
In support of The Canadian Shaare Zedek
Play in the Snow
• Lift Ticket
• Free ski and snowboarding lessons
• Sample new ski and snowboarding equipment
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• Fun races
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• Half-day afternoon health and wellness workshop provided by Newtopia
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Shabbat Shira Weekend
February 3 - 4
Cantors Spiro & Finkelstein, together at Beth Tzedec!

A Weekend of Music
Welcoming Back Special Guest
Cantor Meir Finkelstein
Join us for a weekend of festivities!
Friday, February 3 at 6:00 PM
Friday Night Live Service and Oneg Shabbat Dinner
Dinner $36 adults / $18 children. (Dinner reservations required.)
Shabbat, February 4 at 8:45 AM
Special Shabbat Shira Musical Service with fascinating Sermon-In-Song by Cantor Meir Finkelstein.
Saturday evening, February 4 at 7:30 PM
Annual Shabbat Shira Community Concert
An exciting evening with Cantors Simon Spiro and Meir Finkelstein performing onstage together with the Beth Tzedec Singers.
Tickets: $10 (includes dessert reception).
Beth Tzedec Congregation
1700 Bathurst Street, Toronto, Ontario M5P 3K3
Tel: 416.781.3511 Fax: 416.781.0150
email: info@beth-tzedec.org
בית צדק
Beth Tzedec Congregation

Continued from page 22

Tuesday, Feb. 7

I LOVE YOU ROSA

The film *I Love You Rosa* will be shown at the Lodzer Synagogue at 7 p.m. **Rabbi Moshe Meirovich** leads a discussion after the film. 416-636-6665.

BRIDE FLIGHT

The film *Bride Flight* will be shown at Beth Tikvah Synagogue at 2 p.m. as part of its Tuesdays with Larry movie series.

JEWS FOR JUDAISM

Jews For Judaism presents a 6-session counter-missionary seminar starting tonight. **Rabbi Michael Skobac** discusses "Understanding Today's Missionary Threat to the Jewish Community," 8 p.m., Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St. 416-789-0020 or toronto@jewsforjudaism.ca.

Thursday, Feb. 9

RADICAL VIEWS OF GOD

Rabbi Micah Streiffer presents a 3-part series on "The God Who Isn't: Radical Jewish Views of God," starting tonight, 7:30 p.m., Temple Kol Ami. www.templekolami.ca.

FREUD AND THE RABBIS

William Kolbrener discusses "Repetition and Creative Memory in Freud and the Rabbis," 4 p.m., Koffler House, 569 Spadina Ave. Presented by the Centre for Jewish Studies, University of Toronto. 416-978-1624.

Other News

YIDDISH WOMEN STARS

Sharon Power discusses "Great Women Stars of the American Yiddish Stage," Beth Tikvah Synagogue, Feb. 12, 2 p.m. RSVP by Feb. 9. **Sandy**, 416-458-1440 or 416-736-8073, or yiddish18@yahoo.ca.

DANI GALA

DANI (Developing and Nurturing Independence) hosts a gala dinner featuring musicians **Baruch Levine** and **Ethan Bortnick,** March 18, Terrace Banquet Centre. Sponsorships available. Visit www.dani-toronto.com, call 905-731-6606.

RAMAH OPEN HOUSE

Camp Ramah holds an open house Feb. 12, 2 p.m., at the First Narayever Congregation, 187 Brunswick Ave. RSVP **Michelle**, mbass@campramah.com or 416-789-2193.

WOMEN'S BEIT MIDRASH

Ora Shore Ziring will discuss "Man and Man: Man and God," Feb. 12, 9:30 a.m., Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. 416-633-5770 or 416-877-2050.

TU B'SHVAT CONCERT

Beth Tikvah Synagogue presents a children's concert for Tu b'Shvat, Feb. 12, 10:30 a.m. at Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts. Tickets $15 adults/$10 children in advance. Call 905-787-8811.

JF&CS GROUPS

Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or www.jfandcs.com. All programs require pre-registration. All programs are held at the Lipa Green Centre, unless otherwise noted.

Life Skills for Today's Woman: A 6-session group for women, starting Feb. 2, 7 p.m.

Effective Parenting: A 4-session group for parents of children ages 2-11, starting Feb. 7, 7 p.m.

Beyond the Chupah, Becoming a Couple: A 5-session marriage preparation course, starting Feb. 14, 7 p.m., Beth Tzedec Congregation.

Dating in Midlife: A workshop for men and women over 40 who have been single for more than 2 years. Feb. 15.

You're About to Separate, What to Tell The Kids: A workshop for parents, Feb. 16, 9:30 a.m., Promenade Mall, Suite 313.

High-Conflict Divorce: A workshop for parents, Feb. 22, 6:30 p.m.

FOR SENIORS

Haverim of Beth Tzedec presents **Bill Gladstone** discussing "The Jews of Old Toronto: From the Ward to Spadina Avenue," Feb. 6, 1:30 p.m. Call **Dorion Liebgott**, 416-781-3514, ext. 23, or museum@beth-tzedec.org.

Seniors Social Club meets once a month at Earl Bales Community Centre. **Warren Green** discusses "Jews as Capitalists, Merchant Princes and Pirates," Feb. 12, 7 p.m. Call **Sandy,** 416-736-8073, 416-458-1440.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park. (60+). **Valerie**, 416-395-7881. Hairdresser/barber, Feb. 2, 9 a.m. Casino Rama, March 14. Tuesdays, gentle exercise, 10 a.m.; Wednesdays, duplicate bridge, 12:30 p.m.; Thursdays, line dancing, 10 a.m.; social bridge, 12:30 p.m. For canasta and mah-jong, please call.

National Council of Jewish Women, Aviva branch, is looking for women over 70 for their group, which meets mid-day every other Tuesday. Call 416-633-5100.

LZA Seniors Cultural Club meets Tuesdays, 10 a.m., Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell. 416-630-9444.

New Horizons is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club that offers kosher food, casino trips. Romi and ulti card players welcome. 416-256-1892.

Adath Israel Congregation. Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub. Refreshments $2. Call **Pearl**, 416-635-6317, or **Sheila**, 416-665-3333.

Bernard Betel Centre 416-225-2112. Feb. 2, **Leah Sultan-Khan** discusses "Epilepsy and Seizures in Seniors," 1:30 p.m.; Feb. 7, free denture clinic, call ext. 126 for an appointment; Feb. 7, **Rabbi Yossi Sapirman** discusses "Judaism's Response to the Holocaust," 10 a.m.; Feb. 9, **Judy Weiss** discusses "Living – Beyond Past Experiences," 1:30 p.m.

Active Seniors, Miles Nadal JCC, 416-924-6211, ext.155. Feb. 9, **Jordan Klapman** gives a musical presentation on "Tin Pan Alley's Greatest Music Publishers and Their Hits," 1:30 p.m. Computer beginners course starts Feb. 14 for 8 weeks. Small class with personal attention.

PROSSERMAN JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com.

Sylvia Bashevkin discusses, "Political Power of the Boomer Generation," Feb. 7 at 7:30 p.m.

Spaces still available for preschool, nursery, junior and senior kindergarten for the 2012/13 school year. Call **Kailah Rubin**, ext. 4351.

The senior social art group is looking for a volunteer to assist participants, Mondays, 2-4 p.m. Call **Janet**, ext. 4259.

Spaces are still available in preschool Shabbat, music and sports programs. Call ext. 0.

To rent the JCC for a meeting, event or conference, call **Elizabeth Katchen,** ext. 4240.

MILES NADAL JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org.

Kevin Courrier discusses "Movies in the Carter Era," Feb. 6, 7 p.m. Call ext. 606.

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner teaches a course on "Icons of Spanish Jewry," Thursdays 8 p.m., starting Feb. 9. Ext. 154.

Elements, featuring music and multimedia performances by **Andrew Downing, Ben Dietchi** and **Patrick Reid,** Feb. 8, 8 p.m. at the Al Green Theatre.

Rabbi Rena Arshinoff discusses "Forgotten Mourners: Jewish Responses to Bereaved Children," Feb. 12, 11 a.m.

Tickets on sale now for pianist **Yitzhak Yedid**, March 1; **Lenka Lichtenberg** and **Roula Said**, March 5. Call ext. 0.

The adult daytime choir, conducted by **Gillian Steyck**, meets Tuesdays, 1 p.m. E-mail gillians@mnjcc.org.

Play in a klezmer ensemble with **Eric Stein**, Tuesdays 7:30 p.m. Call ext. 0.

Forest, an exhibit by **Anat Betzer**, is at the gallery until Feb. 29.

The Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services every Thursday at 7:15 a.m. and Sunday at 8 a.m. Call **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200.

SKYPING WITH LOVED ONES: Ralph Etigson, a resident of the Terraces of Baycrest, Skyped with his family in Israel on his 96th birthday last month. Etigson chatted with his great-grandchildren in Beit Shemesh from the computer lab at the Terraces/Wagman Centre. ***[Kelly Connelly/Baycrest photo]***

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 20

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BRIDAL REGISTRY

Fundraising lottery falls well short of goal

Myron Love
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — This city's main Jewish community centre could lose a significant amount of money on its first-ever fundraising lottery after it sold less than half the available tickets.

On Jan. 18, the Asper Jewish Community Campus held a noontime draw to choose 36 prize-winners in the government-approved lottery, and while the results may have made the winners very happy, it's unlikely campus board members are sharing that feeling.

That's because just 1,169 tickets were sold out of 3,500 that were available. At $100 each, that translates into $116,900 raised, well below the hoped-for $350,000 and just a little more than the $100,000 in prizes.

As well, most of the campus' tenants were involved in selling tickets, with each receiving $10 for each one it sold, for a total payout of $11,690, Asper Campus board president Barry McArton said.

Winnipeg's *Jewish Post & News* reported that expenses associated with the lottery were $80,000, and it predicted a loss "likely in the $80,000 range."

The paper said the campus is forbidden by law from running a deficit, so a budget shortfall would result in higher rent for tenants.

Jody Thomas, left, of St. James Audi and Asper Campus board president Barry McArton took part in the draw for a car as part of the Asper Campus lottery.
[Myron Love photo]

In a statement the day after the draw, campus executive director Louise Kollinger said that "an audit of the lottery after all expenses and invoices are received will be conducted for submission to the Manitoba Lotteries Commission, as per the licence, after first being presented to the campus board of directors [this week].

"Many of the expenses incurred with this lottery were fixed to the number of tickets sold, and consequently those expenses are yet to be finalized. The campus board of directors will receive this information prior to any release to the public."

So what went wrong?

"We didn't sell enough tickets," campus board president Barry McArton said succinctly.

"The bottom line with anything like this is if you don't sell enough tickets, you are not going to be successful. Maybe it was the time of year."

The 14-year-old Asper Campus – which houses the Rose & Max Rady Jewish Community Centre, Gray Academy of Jewish Education, the Berney Theatre and the offices of most major Jewish communal organizations in the city – kicked off ticket sales on Nov. 1. Many older Jewish Winnipeggers spend the winter months in Palm Springs or Florida, and they begin leaving as early as November.

The grand prize in the lottery was a choice between a new Audi or $50,000 cash. Other prizes included a home theatre system, a wine tour of Italy, watches, iPads and several smaller cash awards.

The idea for the lottery came from McArton and board member Louis Trepel. Both have many years of experience in community fundraising.

"We were considering a number of different fundraising ideas," said McArton, the son-in-law of former Winnipeg Jewish community president Marjorie Blankstein. "A lottery is something that our Jewish community has never done before. We thought we would give it a try."

McArton said some of the hoped-for lottery profits were intended to help pay down the Asper Campus' $1 million debt, which is left over from the its last round of renovations in 2008.

"Anything we can do to bring down our [debt] will free up operating funds both to help reduce the amount of rent our tenants pay and provide us with more money for maintenance and upgrades to our building," McArton said. "Over one million people pass through our building every year. That results in a lot of wear and tear. We had to replace our boilers last year and the freezers in our restaurant this year."

McArton said the board is "going to be analyzing our lottery to try to determine what we could have done differently."

Asked if the campus would consider trying a lottery again in the future, he responded: "Not likely."

Protest in Montreal

MONTREAL — Faced with growing outrage over anti-Israel statements that the Jewish community and others regard as antisemitic, TV host Stéphane Gendron made an on-air statement of regret Jan. 27. Later the same day, his employer, V Télévision, issued a joint statement with the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) and HonestReporting Canada saying that "these types of comments will no longer be tolerated on [its] airwaves."

Here demonstrators are seen picketing outside Huntingdon, Que., town hall to protest Gendron's views on Israel. [Ber Lazarus photo]

To read full story, go to cjnews.com

OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Letofsky, Rose	Jan. 13/12	Private
Ikka, Rachel	Jan. 13/12	1101 Steeles Ave. W
Getz, Woolf	Jan. 13/12	343 Clark Ave. W
Vinokurov, Shura	Jan. 14/12	6040 Bathurst St
Laiman, Sarah	Jan. 15/12	3000 Bathurst St
Hammerschlag, Leslie	Jan. 16/12	11 Woodvalley Cres
Hilf, Shirley	Jan. 17/12	63 Seaton Dr
Hoffman, Lilly	Jan. 17/12	866 Sheppard Ave. W
Litovitz, Louis	Jan. 18/12	191 Yorkview Dr
Epelbaum, Joseph	Jan. 17/12	3 Tokay Crt

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Bea Estrin-Freeman	Jan 12/12	55 Skymark Drive
Saul Fox	Jan 13/12	1939 Veterans Way
Rose Hillsberg	Jan 13/12	2 Rostrevor Road
Estelle Frankel	Jan 15/12	784 Centre Street
Helen Tokarz	Jan 16/12	41 Bryant Street
Cecilia Steirman	Jan 16/12	6360 16th Avenue
Stanley Clavir	Jan 15/12	1200 Don Mills Road
Helen Lewin	Jan 17/12	495 The West Mall
Pearl Braidberg	Jan 16/12	3600 Yonge Street
Allan Shona	Jan 16/12	500 Duplex Avenue
Sam Nichols	Jan 16/12	31 Tichester Road
Ester Bard	Jan 13/12	339 York Hill Blvd.
Rose Levin	Jan 18/12	8 Oak Knoll Drive
Tillie Goodman	Jan 18/12	3560 Bathurst Street
Eli Pont	Jan 20/12	19 Dersingham Crescent
Sol Serota	Jan 21/12	32 Clarissa Drive

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Ordinary ingredients — extraordinary meals!

By Norene Gilletz
Special to The CJN

Leah Schapira, author of *Fresh & Easy Kosher Cooking* (Artscroll), has an energetic passion for creating scrumptious, uncomplicated dishes for the kosher cook, using ordinary ingredients to create extraordinary meals. You'll find more than 170 creative recipes for every day or for special occasions that are sure to tantalize your taste buds. There are fabulous, full-colour photos throughout the cookbook that will inspire you to stop reading and get in the kitchen to start cooking!

Schapira's *Fresh & Easy Kosher Cooking* includes menu suggestions, side dish pairing suggestions for each recipe, and tips for food preparation, storage and freezing. She offers cooking suggestions for what's in season, advises the reader how to choose pots, pans and utensils – she even explains how to pick the right pasta shape for each type of sauce.

Her mouth-watering recipe selection includes: Squash Souffles, Onion Blossoms, Caramelized Onion Kishka, Asian Burgers, Chimichurri Skewered Steaks, Chicken Panini, Orange-Glazed Flanken, Caramelized French Roast, Flanken Egg Rolls, Sundried Tomato Salmon, Pistachio-Crusted Tilapia and Lazy Man's Cholent, complete with cholent-making tips. Sweets include Rainbow Cupcakes (perfect for the birthday child), Everything but the Kitchen Sink Cookies, Healthy Peanut Bars, a No-Mixer Brownie and even a pareve Hot Molten Chocolate Cake (see recipe below).

As a young child, Schapira was a very picky eater. Foods couldn't touch each other: chicken was on one side of the plate, fries on the other. If they touched, the meal was over! Her parents ignored, promised and pleaded, even took her to doctor.

Schapira writes: "Finally, when I was eight years old, my mother took me into the kitchen. She involved me in the preparations – if I saw everything that went into a dish, I wouldn't be scared to try it… I became obsessed with knowing how everything was prepared. Once I made dishes, I wanted to try them. As a teenager, I took cookbooks to bed and fell asleep reading recipes."

She continues: "To all mothers of picky eaters: Never force children to eat. Instead, teach them how to cook. Let them understand how food is prepared. Learn what appeals to them. There's a world of great flavours out there."

A self-taught cook and seasoned international traveller, Schapira has been the food editor for two popular Jewish weekly magazines. She shares her love of cooking through her articles, through her website www.cookkosher.com, and through cooking demonstrations and classes. She lives in New Jersey with her husband and children.

Schapira encourages her readers to have fun in the kitchen, get creative and add some spice to their everyday meals. This is a cookbook that definitely deserves a place in your kitchen – it will make a wonderful gift for both the new bride and seasoned cooks. Let the cooking begin!

LO-MEIN NOODLES (pareve)

Can't find Thai sweet chili sauce? In Israel it's called chili matok. You can also substitute La Choy sweet and sour sauce, or make your own (recipe follows).

My mother was not too happy when my sisters and I, dressed in cream gowns, stationed ourselves at the buffet at another sister's wedding. The attraction was this pasta, which was being made fresh. It was so addictive, it was worth the risk of a stain.

2 tbsp. olive oil
1 onion, halved and sliced into thin strips
1/2 red bell pepper, sliced into thin strips
1/2 yellow bell pepper, sliced into thin strips
1/2 cup mushrooms, sliced
1/2 cup bean sprouts
1/2 lb. spaghetti, cooked according to package directions
3 tbsp. soy sauce
3 tbsp. Thai sweet chili sauce (recipe follows)

Heat olive oil in a sauté pan over medium heat. Add onion and cook for 1–2 minutes. Add peppers, mushrooms and bean sprouts. Sauté for 4-5 minutes more until vegetables are slightly soft and lightly browned.

Add spaghetti, soy sauce and sweet chili sauce. Cook for 2–3 minutes, stirring constantly. Yield: 4-6 servings.

Thai sweet chili sauce (Pareve)

Thai sweet chili sauce is one of the greatest condiments that exists. While I buy a ready-made version all the time, it's really easy and quick to make yourself.

Sweet chili is a sweet and spicy dipping sauce. Most recipes call for red jalapeño or chili peppers. Since the red ones aren't available all year round where I live, I substitute a red bell pepper with some crushed red pepper flakes. I use the sweet chili as a dipping sauce for egg rolls and wontons, in stir fries and, surprisingly, it tastes amazing with pizza!

2 cloves garlic, peeled
1/2 cup sugar
3/4 cup water
1/4 cup vinegar
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 large red bell pepper, seeds and stems discarded
1 1/2-2 tsp. red pepper flakes
1 tbsp. cornstarch
2 tbsp. water
2 tbsp. honey, optional

Using a food processor, blend together garlic, sugar, 3/4 cup water, vinegar, salt, bell pepper and red pepper flakes until well combined. Transfer to a 2-quart pot and bring to a boil. Lower heat and simmer for 5 minutes.

Dissolve cornstarch in 2 tablespoons water and add to mixture. Stir well until sauce thickens slightly. Add 2 tablespoons honey, if desired. Taste and adjust seasonings. Yield: 1 cup.

ASIAN-INSPIRED CHICKEN STRIPS

Dipping the chicken into cornstarch and then egg whites makes for an exceptionally crunchy, succulent chicken. Topped with an Asian-inspired sauce, it's a delicious supper that's only good fresh out of the pan. Serve with Lo-Mein Noodles (see recipe) or over rice with a side of roasted vegetables.

oil, for frying
4 chicken cutlets, cut into strips
3 egg whites
cornstarch, for dredging
2 tbsp. mustard
6 tbsp. sugar
4 tbsp. soy sauce
3 tbsp. sesame oil
4 tbsp. vinegar

Heat the oil in a frying pan over medium-high heat.

Place the egg whites into a small bowl. With a hand whisk or two forks, beat the egg whites until frothy.

Coat the chicken strips with cornstarch. Dip into the beaten egg whites and fry on both sides until crispy and golden. Transfer to a plate lined with paper towels. You will need to re-beat the egg whites often as you work.

Pour off the remaining oil in the pan. To the pan, add the mustard, sugar, soy sauce, sesame oil and vinegar. Cook for 1-2 minutes until the sauce is smooth. Return the chicken strips to the pan and stir gently until they are well coated and sauce clings to chicken. Serve immediately. Yield: 4 servings.

HOT CHOCOLATE MOLTEN CAKE

Some desserts leave me speechless.

On Pesach, substitute potato starch for the flour for fabulous results. I also like to exchange the sugar for confectioner's sugar.

4 oz. good quality bittersweet chocolate
1/2 cup oil
1 cup sugar
2 eggs
2 egg yolks
6 tbsp. flour

Preheat oven to 425. Thoroughly grease 4 individual glass oven-safe cups or a muffin pan.

In a double boiler, melt the chocolate with the oil. Remove from heat. Cool slightly.

With a fork or a whisk, stir in the sugar until well blended. Beat the eggs and egg yolks with a fork; quickly add to the double boiler. Add the flour, stirring constantly. Pour into the prepared cups and bake for 13-15 minutes.

Remove from the oven. Let stand for 1 minute. Invert onto a plate. Yield: 4 servings.

Norene Gilletz is a food writer, consultant, cooking instructor, lecturer and editor. For more information, visit her website at www.gourmania.com or e-mail her at goodfood@gourmania.com.

Firm focuses on doing social good through PR

Paul Lungen
Staff Reporter

Deborah Weinstein admits she knew almost nothing about mundane stuff like balance sheets and income statements when she and her sister, Judy Lewis, went into business 29 years ago.

After all, how many "refugees from journalism" do?

What she did know was public relations and marketing and what she did have were contacts in the media and in a number of high-profile businesses that were willing to turn their campaigns over to their upstart company.

Since then, Strategic Objectives has become a market leader, with a focus on representing clients that practise "corporate social responsibility (CSR)." With its 40 employees and annual revenues north of $8 million, it's considered a fairly large player in the field and was recently named to the Top Ten CSR A-List 2012 by *PR News*. Among its many other honours, it was named PR Agency of the Year 2011 at the IABC/Toronto (International Association of Business Communicators) OVATION Awards. And *Profit Magazine* has named Strategic Objectives one of Canada's top 100 women-run businesses.

"Strategic Objectives is committed to using the power of PR to create social good and to help make a positive difference by advancing awareness of important social causes," said Lewis.

"PR with heart is fundamental to everything we do at Strategic Objectives," added Weinstein.

Casual consumers of advertising would recognize Strategic Objectives' clients in a heartbeat. The company's first "big client" was British clothing retailer Marks & Spencer. Although the company had had a presence in Canada for 11 years when they signed on with the sister act, they hadn't registered a profit.

Through word-of-mouth, the company turned to the sisters to handle their PR. Weinstein and Lewis had already developed a reputation for leveraging news items and feature stories in the media to promote corporate brands. They worked at virtually all the big Canadian TV networks and, at the end, produced *Thrill of a Lifetime*, a make-your-dreams-come-true reality series, making it Canada's top-rated show with a "$0 budget." They learned the hard way how to make the show news and get publicity.

When they took on the Marks and Spencer account, they were not much more than "two women with one desk and a typewriter," with Weinstein maxing out her Visa card to make sure they could pay their bills. They conceived of a campaign that would stress the company's adherence to quality merchandise.

"We got the products out to people who would write about them," Weinstein said.

"Kismet" and referrals from other journalists led them to their long-standing client, the Body Shop.

Strategic Objectives and Body Shop collaborated on a campaign that stressed the company's CSR – "doing good in their community," said Weinstein.

Associating a client with CSR "engages a brand with a cause," she explained. By consulting with clients, consumers, employees and other stakeholders, a cause is selected "that fits its corporate mentality."

Consumers appreciate it and that builds trust, relevance and loyalty to the brand. It's a win-win situation all around: the charity benefits from increased awareness and contributions, while the business enhances its reputation, she said.

The Body Shop has championed such issues as saving the elephants, community trade (avoiding low-wage jurisdictions) and stopping violence against women.

In the 1990s when Strategic Objectives brought the question of CSR to the table, it was something that was largely ignored in marketing campaigns, Weinstein said.

But the anti-violence "campaign we did was hugely successful and women got with the story because it was meaningful and new," she said.

The United Nations recognized Strategic Objectives' role in the effort by granting the firm its Grand Award for Outstanding Actions in PR.

Later, the Body Shop adopted Strategic Objectives' campaign to "Stop S*X Trafficking of Children and Young People."

Other familiar CSR campaigns spearheaded by Strategic Objectives are its "fashion with compassion" effort, in which Cashmere bathroom tissue raised awareness for the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation, and the 2011 Koodonation launch for Koodo Mobile, which promotes change through the social web by activating volunteerism.

Fashion with Compassion: Strategic Objectives' high profile campaign combined bathroom tissue with breast cancer awareness.

Pfizer (Paralympics) and M & M Meat Shops (Crohn's and colitis) are two other established clients.

Asked how one would measure the success of a CSR campaign, Weinstein said you would see how many outlets picked it up, how wide an audience it reached and you'd value that reach by considering how much you'd have to pay to attain the same results through ads.

As far as Weinstein is concerned, CSR is here to stay. "It's not nice to have – it's a need to have," she said.

Surveys show consumers favour companies that practise CSR. Seventy-five per cent said they were likely to purchase products from the company when they agree with its stand and 13 per cent have actually done so, she said.

What's more, 70 per cent said they would pay a premium for products from brands that practice CSR.

Although they are an industry leader, Strategic Objectives is not content to rest on its laurels. There are lots of new entrants in the area, small shops nipping at their heels.

But Strategic Objectives has over the years generated goodwill that brings it constant referrals. Weinstein expects that to continue.

But looking into the future, she believes "the media environment is becoming fragmented. You have to be everywhere with your brand."

More focus will have to be given to social media, such as Facebook and Twitter. Or, to adapt what she said in another context, doing social good on social media – that's "PR with heart."

Judy Lewis, left, and Deborah Weinstein

Israeli firm supplies Canadian Air Force

Compiled by CJN Staff

TEL AVIV — Orbit Communications Systems, an Israeli leader in the field of mobile satellite tracking and communications technologies, has won a two-million-shekel ($533,000, all figures Cdn.) order from the Royal Canadian Air Force for its airborne telemetry and monitoring systems.

The technology will be installed in planes operating out of the Cold Lake Air Force Base in Alberta, according to a report in Globes online, an Israeli business news site.

The system will monitor objects flying in Canadian air space.

Orbit president and CEO Avi Cohen said he expects to expand business in Canada for telemetry and monitoring as well as other applications.

Orbit's share price rose 1.1 per cent following the announcement, to 14 shekels ($3.73), giving it a market value of 126 million shekels ($33.6 million).

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Jordan-mediated peace talks at an impasse

Avi Issacharoff
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JERUSALEM — Peace prospects with the Palestinians are looking poor, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Sunday after exploratory talks aimed at re-launching negotiations ended in deadlock.

"As things stand now, according to what happened over the past few days – when the Palestinians refused even to discuss Israel's security needs with us – the signs are not particularly good," he told his cabinet in public remarks.

Netanyahu's comments came after Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas told reporters in Ramallah on Saturday that Israel was to blame for the failure of the recent round of meetings to re-launch direct talks. Abbas claimed that during talks mediated by Jordan in recent weeks, Israel had presented an unclear position on security matters and on the question of borders between Israel and a future Palestinian state. Palestinian sources said Israel's border proposal would have prevented the establishment a Palestinian state.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas *[Flash90 photo]*

Palestinian officials said last week that an Israeli negotiator's verbal presentation on Jan. 25 of ideas for borders and security arrangements for a future Palestinian state was a non-starter, as it envisaged a fenced-off territory of cantons that would preserve most Jewish settlements.

Netanyahu said he still hopes the Palestinians will "come to their senses and continue the talks so that we can move on to real negotiations."

Israeli and Palestinian negotiators held five rounds of exploratory talks in Jordan, part of a push by international mediators to revive negotiations suspended in 2010 in a dispute over Jewish settlement-building in the occupied West Bank.

A Palestinian source said no more meetings were scheduled. Abbas has said he wants to consult Arab League states on the next move.

An Israeli official said Israel's approach to territorial compromise in the West Bank, captured in the 1967 Middle East war, includes the principle that "most Israelis will be under Israeli sovereignty and, obviously, most Palestinians will be under Palestinian sovereignty."

The official said Netanyahu had acknowledged, in a speech to the U.S. Congress last May, that not all Jewish settlements "will be on our side of the border" with a future Palestinian state.

The Palestinians want a state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip with east Jerusalem as its capital. They say Israeli settlements could deny them a viable and contiguous country.

Last week, a bitter confrontation broke out between the head of the Israeli negotiating team, Isaac Molho, and chief Palestinian negotiator, Saeb Erekat, during their meeting in Jordan, after Erekat refused to let a senior Israeli officer present the Israeli position on security arrangements. An Israeli official familiar with the content of the talks said that, by all accounts, Erekat and Molho exchanged harsh words in front of their stunned Jordanian hosts, with the argument reaching its peak when Netanyahu's envoy asked to present Israel's position on security arrangements.

The executive committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is expected to rule whether or not to continue the Jordan-mediated peace talks with Israel in the next few days, Palestinian officials said on Saturday.

Speaking on Friday, Wasel Abu Yousef, a top PLO official, said the Palestinian leadership will decide on the future of the fledgling peace talks in the coming days, following what he called their "failure."

The time frame that the Palestinians have allowed for talks with Israel in Amman under Jordanian auspices expired last Thursday, as sources associated with the Middle East Quartet – the United States, United Nations, European Union and Russia – said last-minute efforts are underway to head off the collapse of the talks.

On Wednesday, Molho met with Erekat in the Jordanian capital for a fifth time, but at this point, no formula has been reached that would enable the talks to continue.

Erekat made it clear that because Israel has not presented its position on the issue of borders with a Palestinian state, from the Palestinians' standpoint, the talks have ended.

Abu Yousef said the PA is considering the possibility of accelerating reconciliation talks with Hamas, adding that "all necessary measure will be weighed in order to strengthen our people's resolve against the racist and fascist occupation and to increase popular resistance in all Palestinian lands."

The PLO indicated that it plans to bring its decision to the Arab League ahead of its planned Feb. 4 meeting.

Mubarak pleads for his life

© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

CAIRO — Deposed Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak sent letters to nine world leaders with whom he had friendly relations, requesting help for him and his family, the Egyptian *Al-Yusuf* newspaper reported on Saturday.

Mubarak asked for help in preventing Egyptian authorities from executing him, as well as aid in getting his wife and sons out of Egypt.

Such letters were sent to the leaders of the United States, France, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Italy and Lebanon.

In the letters, Mubarak said that his family members were not connected to the crimes he has been accused of.

Meanwhile, Mubarak's wife, Suzanne, went to authorities in Cairo and asked to depart the country to Switzerland in order to receive medical checks and clarify the situation of her family's financial accounts in Europe, which were frozen after the revolution in Egypt last year.

Mubarak is currently on trial in Cairo. The prosecution is seeking the death penalty for the former president, who has been charged with responsibility for the deaths of more than 850 protesters during the revolution that ousted the Mubarak regime a year ago.

The defence has rejected these claims, and a few days ago argued that Mubarak is still technically president of Egypt and therefore should enjoy immunity from prosecution..

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Iran one year from the bomb, Panetta says

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WASHINGTON — U.S. Defence Secretary Leon Panetta says Iran is only one year away from producing a nuclear weapon.

In an interview Sunday on the CBS show *60 Minutes*, Panetta said that "the consensus is that, if they decided to do it, it would probably take them about a year to be able to produce a bomb and then possibly another one to two years in order to put it on a deliverable vehicle of some sort in order to deliver that weapon."

During the interview, Panetta reiterated U.S. President Barack Obama's opposition to Iran's nuclear program and said that the United States shares common goals with Israel in its opposition to the program.

"The United States, and the president's made this clear, does not want Iran to develop a nuclear weapon. That's a red line for us. And it's a red line obviously for the Israelis, so we share a common goal here," he told CBS.

"If they proceed and we get intelligence that they're proceeding with developing a nuclear weapon then we will take whatever steps are necessary to stop it," he added.

Meanwhile, a six-member delegation of inspectors from the United Nations' nuclear watchdog arrived in Tehran on Sunday, Iranian state television reported.

The team of senior officials and experts, headed by International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief inspector Herman Nackaerts, was greeted by several Iranian students protesting the IAEA's Iran policies, Press TV reported.

The students held posters with photographs of Iranian nuclear scientists that Iran claims were assassinated by Israel and the United States, as well as banners reading "Nuclear energy is our right," and "Stop Israel making atomic bomb."

Prior to the team's departure from Vienna, the IAEA's Nackaerts said that the delegation was looking forward to beginning "a dialogue that is overdue."

"In particular, we hope that Iran will engage with us on our concerns regarding the possible military dimensions of Iran's nuclear program," added Nackaerts, who headed the team along with Rafael Grossi, a top adviser to IAEA director Yukiya Amano.

Iran had said it would co-operate with the IAEA team during their three-day visit, but indicated it would not give up uranium enrichment, which it considers a sovereign right.

"We have always been open with regards to our nuclear issues and the IAEA team coming to Iran can make the necessary inspections," Ali-Akbar Velayati, adviser to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, told the ISNA news agency.

"We will however not withdraw from our nuclear rights, as we have constantly acted within international regulations and in line with the laws of the non-proliferation treaty," Velayati said.

U.S. Defence Secretary Leon Panetta

There had been speculation in Iran that the IAEA team might be allowed to visit the Fordo uranium enrichment facility south of the capital Tehran, which will become operational next month.

However, sources close to the Vienna-based IAEA said the visit would not involve inspections of nuclear facilities, but would focus on resuming talks on Iran's disputed nuclear program, which the West suspects has a military dimension.

Iran has since 2008 declined to fully co-operate with the IAEA and denies it is seeking a nuclear bomb.

The visit could pave the way for the resumption of the talks between Iran and world powers Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the United States. The last round of talks in January 2011 ended without a breakthrough.

Referring to the possibility of a military strike by western powers geared at forcibly halting Iran's nuclear program, U.S. officials told the *Wall Street Journal* on Jan. 27 that the United States does not possess conventional weapons powerful enough to completely destroy Iran's nuclear facilities.

Bulgaria deported Greek Jews

JTA

ATHENS — A Greek-Jewish umbrella group asked a UN body to clarify Bulgaria's role in the genocide of Greek Jews when the UN commemorated Bulgaria's rescue of its Jews as part of International Day of Commemoration of victims of the Holocaust on Jan. 27.

"Bulgarians saved their country's Jews in exchange for the Jews of the other territories under their control," said a letter sent Jan. 26 from the Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece to the UN Department of Public Information/Non-Governmental Organizations. "In the name of the historical memory of our brothers, victims of the Bulgarian atrocities in our country during the Holocaust, we ask you to include this small and 'untold' part of history in your briefing."

The Greek-Jewish group was writing a day ahead of the UN International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust, which included focusing "on the little-known role of the Bulgarian people in saving Bulgarian Jews during this tragic time in our history."

Bulgarian occupiers of northeastern Greece handed over some 4,000 Greek Jews to the Nazis for extermination.

The Bulgarian government of the time, which collaborated with the Nazis, took steps to protect its own Jewish minority.

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Haredi army exemption to be reconsidered

Jonathan Lis
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — Head of the Israel Defence Forces' personnel directorate Maj.-Gen. Orna Barbibai said on Monday that the IDF should enlist every Israeli "into meaningful service."

Barbibai was speaking at a meeting of the Knesset's foreign affairs and defence committee to discuss the "Tal law," which allows full-time yeshiva students to defer military service.

"There is no dispute that the challenging security reality demands that we enlist everyone into meaningful service," Barbibai said.

According to Barbibai, one out of every four Israeli men and almost half of Israeli women are not drafted into military or national service. "These statistics indicate a need to conduct a thorough re-evaluation of the universal requirement to serve and equal distribution of the burden [of service]."

National Economic Council head Eugene Kandel, who represented the government in the discussion, took issue with Barbibai's statements, claiming the IDF would have difficulty absorbing additional haredi conscripts.

According to official IDF statistics presented by Kandel, the number of haredi conscripts to the IDF rose from 288 in 2007 to 1,282 in 2011, which he said exceeded goals set by the government.

Committee chairman Shaul Mofaz (Kadima) criticized the law and called to abandon it in its present form. According to Mofaz, only half of the young people of draft age in Israel are actually drafted into service, and the number is expected to fall to 40 per cent by 2020.

"We cannot accept the norm that the peoples' army will become the army of half the people and, in eight years, the army of the minority of the people," he said.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told a Likud faction meeting Monday that the Tal law, which allows haredi citizens to defer military service, will not be extended by the government but rather go to a vote in the Knesset.

According to Netanyahu, the Knesset has approximately half a year to find a "just solution that will not divide the country."

Canadians compete in Israeli Scrabble Open

Viva Press
CJN Israel Bureau

TEL AVIV — Pick a day during any month of any calendar year and no doubt you'll come across a Scrabble tournament taking place somewhere around the world. So it's not surprising that more than 40 players are expected at the upcoming Fourth Israeli Open Scrabble Tournament in Netanya, set to run Feb. 10 to 12.

"They're coming because they love Scrabble," says Evan Cohen, organizer of the tourney. He adds that many of the foreign players are coming "because they want to visit Israel and this is a good excuse."

There are those like Estelle Matthews – one of two Canadian players – who mesh the tournament with a family visit.

"I have been playing Scrabble for over 30 years," Matthews told *The CJN* from her Calgary home. "I much prefer tournament Scrabble to living-room Scrabble. This [tournament] gives me an opportunity to see my four grandchildren in Israel as well as enjoy a good tournament."

Others taking part in the internationally rated World English-language Scrabble Players' Association (WESPA) rules tournament come because Israeli players are so friendly.

"I've found the Israeli Scrabble contingent to be amongst the most welcoming and friendliest anywhere, with the same smattering of Scrabbling eccentrics that are found around the globe," Britain's Scrabble champion Mikki Nicholson said. "I can't wait to catch up with everybody and hopefully beat them all!"

Nicholson is one of 18 foreign players coming to Israel for the tournament. Along with Israel, Canada and Britian, the United States, Norway, Malta, Australia, Scotland and Germany will be represented.

The weather, of course, is another reason to attend. Israel boasts great weather in February, and the Netanya venue for the event looks out onto the Mediterranean Sea.

"The Israeli Open offers the perfect opportunity to escape the bleakness of a European winter and play international Scrabble in one of the finest settings of anywhere it is played in the world," says Nicholson, who played in the Israeli Open of 2010.

The game is a social one. And addictive, too.

It was conceived in 1931 by an out-of-work American architect named Alfred Mosher Butts. Today, the game exists in 29 languages, including Hebrew, German, Italian, Spanish, French and Braille. English is the language used by serious players and in tournaments.

"The game itself is very easy to learn. The more time you put in, the better you get. Some games you reach a limit and that's it. In Scrabble, you can always get better," says Cohen.

Evan Cohen, left, getting an award at the German Open

A linguistics lecturer at Tel Aviv University by day, Cohen is Israel's best-known Scrabble player. He's the Israel national Scrabble champion, he runs the Tel Aviv Scrabble Club (www.scrabble.org.il/), and he is one of nine committee members of WESPA, which represents the interests of international competitors and national Scrabble bodies worldwide. Cohen is ranked among the top 100 players in the world.

He plays regularly at international tournaments, and through his friendships, he has been able to give Israel's tournament prominence.

"We've become a lot more international. We started with five or six foreign players in the first Israeli Open. Now we have 18 people," Cohen says. "We're well recognized on the international calendar. We've had former world champions, we get top players."

On Jan. 1, the official club and tournament word list used by competitive Scrabble players outside of North America changed. Some of the new words include "guqin," "qin," "grrrl," "soz" and "voip."

The best Scrabble players learn words by heart. Cohen tries to find time every day to do just that. He says his best word is "the one that wins me the game. I don't have a specific great word."

But he does have a message that he hopes to get out regarding the Israel Open.

"I hope we get as many players as we can to our tournament. We show another side of Israel," he said. "It's a good image that we're projecting."

Israel congratulates Egypt

Israel congratulated Egypt on the inauguration of its new parliament, the first in the post-Mubarak era. "Israel extends its congratulations to the people of Egypt for its efforts to achieve freedom, democracy and economic development," Israel's Foreign Affairs Ministry said in a Jan. 25 statement. "We send the new parliament our wishes of constructive and fruitful work for the well-being of the Egyptian public," the statement said. "We trust Egypt will continue to uphold the importance of peace and stability in our region." A spokesman for the Muslim Brotherhood, which garnered nearly half the seats in the newly elected parliament, said Jan. 25 that the government would not hold any kind of dialogue with Israel.

Police investigate mufti

Israel's attorney general has ordered police to launch an investigation of Jerusalem's top Muslim cleric after the mufti quoted a traditional text that called for killing Jews. On Jan. 24, Attorney General Yehuda Weinstein asked Israeli police to open a criminal investigation into a speech the previous week by Mohammed Hussein at an event celebrating the 47th anniversary of Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah movement. The mufti will be investigated on suspicion of incitement to violence and racism. In his speech, the mufti cited a traditional text attributed to the Prophet Muhammad that says, "The hour of judgment will not come until you fight the Jews. The Jew will hide behind the stone and behind the tree. The stone and the tree will cry, 'Oh Muslim, Oh Servant of God, this is a Jew behind me, come and kill him.'" No Palestinian leader has condemned his words.

Haredi men arrested

Three haredi men were arrested for assaulting a woman in Beit Shemesh. The woman was hanging posters for Israel's national lottery on Jan. 24 when the men reportedly surrounded her car, slashed her tires and stole her car keys. A stone thrown at the car hit the woman in the head. Police helped the woman and arrested three suspects, Ynet reported. Other attackers reportedly fled the scene and are being sought by police. The woman filed a complaint with the police. Beit Shemesh has been the scene of tension between haredim and city residents, as well as visitors, over the exclusion of women in the public sphere. The posters didn't contain any photos of women.

Files from JTA

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Spiritual journey of a Jewish-born Muslim ideologue

Sheldon Kirshner
Staff Reporter

Maryam Jameelah is renowned as well as revered in conservative and radical Muslim circles. A fierce critic of U.S. foreign policy, she hates Israel, rejects secularism and modernism and believes that western civilization and Islamic civilization are implacably irreconcilable.

A prolific author, she has written provocatively titled books such as *Western Materialism Menaces Muslims* and *Islam Versus the West.*

Long a resident of Lahore, Pakistan, she is the second wife of Muhammad Yusuf Khan, a leader of Jamaat-e-Islami, the progenitor of jihadi organizations. She regards practices like polygamy, veiling and gender segregation as ordained by the Qur'an. By all accounts, she spends her days thinking and writing, an intellectual who defends and promotes traditional Islamic values and culture.

"This lady is a true Muslim who came to Pakistan to join a true Islamic society," observed her mentor and adopted father, Mawlana Abul Ala Mawdudi, a founder and key figure in Jamaat-e-Islami, an organization dedicated to advancing the cause of an Islamic rebirth and the establishment of a pan-Islamic state.

Jameelah, however, was originally not a Muslim, her birth name having been Margaret (Peggy) Marcus. A secular American Jew from Mamaroneck, N.Y., she was born in 1934, converted to Islam before the age of 30 and settled in Pakistan to "escape the awful destiny that awaited me if I remained in America."

The astonishing odyssey of her transition from Judaism to Islam is the subject of Deborah Baker's uncommonly fascinating book, *The Convert: A Tale of Exile and Extremism* (Graywolf Press).

Baker, a finalist for a Pulitzer Prize in non-fiction, pieced together her story after discovering a trove of her letters in the New York Public Library. She began writing them to her parents, Herbert and Myra Marcus, from Lahore in 1962. The correspondence ended in 1996 when Herbert, 101, died in a Florida nursing home.

According to Baker, Marcus was a bright, nervous, high-strung child from an assimilated family.

"I was nine years old before I learned anything about Judaism, but once I began reading about the tragic history of the Jews, I was unable to stop," she writes in a letter. "My parents always tried to pretend we were no different from the Christians, but the Christians didn't see it that way. For a time, I'd rather have been born an Orthodox Jew. They, at least, never apologized for being Jews."

A person of faith, she explored Reform and Orthodox Judaism before attending meetings of the Ethical Culture Society, but found them unsatisfactory.

The prospect of a new Jewish state in the Middle East excited her. She was convinced that, with Israel's creation, Jews and Arabs would usher in a golden age of amity and cooperation.

But due to the Palestinian refugee problem, she soured on Zionism.

"What possible justification can there be to deprive an entire people of their homeland and rights as human beings?" she wrote. In a reference to the Holocaust, she added, "Hadn't the Jews just suffered such a crime based on equally specious propaganda?"

To Marcus, Jews had no historical connection to Israel. "And what was Palestine to them? Moses received his revelation in Egypt."

Having concluded that Israel's creation was an "injustice, plain and simple," she compared the Israelis to Nazis, disassociated herself from Judaism and wrote an unpublished novel about Palestinian refugees.

Spending more of her time in the New York Public Library, she discovered the works of Mohammad Asad, the Jewish convert to Islam who settled in Pakistan. She was particularly impressed with his book *The Road to Mecca* and was certain that Islam is a vehicle for social justice, equality and communal harmony.

She made these discoveries while struggling to maintain her emotional equilibrium. As a university student, Marcus had psychiatric problems and suffered a nervous breakdown. Dropping out of New York University before graduation, she was hospitalized for schizophrenia.

Marcus initiated a correspondence with Mawdudi in 1960, sending him a letter outlining the challenges Islam faced and clippings of her articles about that religion. "Margaret's remedies for the political challenges facing the Muslim world were uncannily similar to those proposed by Mawdudi's writings and speeches," observes Baker.

Highly impressed by her ideas and intellect, Mawdudi invited her to spend the Ramadan holiday with him and his family in Pakistan. He added, "When I was reading your articles, I felt as if I were reading my own mind."

With his encouragement, she converted to Islam, taking her vows at the Islamic Mission of America in Brooklyn and changing her name on May 24, 1961. She proceeded to immigrate to Pakistan as Mawdudi's guest. Upon her arrival, she wrote her parents, "I wanted to reassure you that for the first time in my life I feel I have finally arrived at a place I can call home."

Prior to her departure, Herbert and Myra Marcus had joined the Unitarian Church.

Though Mawdudi admired her as a gifted thinker and writer and related to her as a daughter, he developed doubts about her sanity. Ultimately, he committed her to an asylum in Lahore.

She, in turn, recoiled from his cold, authoritarian personality. Baker claims the suffering she endured during this period strengthened rather than weakened her beliefs.

Marcus had five children with Khan, one of whom died in infancy. She was not a conventional mother. As a result of a nervous condition, she did not nurse her children. And because she never learned to cook, the other women in Khan's household had to do the cooking. A recluse who never left the house except to keep doctor's appointments, she was interested only in writing books.

With Mawdudi's death, Marcus, hoping to be his ideological heir, churned out a series of pamphlets glorifying famed Muslim freedom fighters. Baker suggests that these pamphlets, published after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, condoned violence. Marcus insists that she wrote "only on a philosophical plane," and that Islam must be compassionate and merciful

Marcus' two sons, members of Jamaat- e-Islami's student wing, must have been influenced by her writings, having joined the ranks of Muslim fighters in Afghanistan. One wonders how many other young Muslim men imbued with Islamic fervour have fallen under her spell.

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They should not exceed 2,000 words. Selected submissions will appear in the Passover Supplement of The CJN on April 5, 2012, in either our Montreal or our Toronto edition, or both. If you have a preference, please state it on your submission. Not all submissions can be published. We look for originality.

E-mail submissions to:
cjnliterarysupplement@gmail.com

Deadline for submissions is March 9, 2012.
We can only accept e-mail submissions.

Israeli singer dedicated to keeping Ladino alive

Sheldon Kirshner
Staff Reporter

Israeli songstress Yasmin Levy is dedicated to keeping Ladino alive.

"It's my life mission," she said in an interview from her home in Israel last week.

Levy, an international star who promotes Ladino through her concerts, will perform in Toronto on Saturday, Feb. 11, at 8 p.m. at the Royal Conservatory of Music's Koerner Hall.

In her only appearance here, she will share the stage with Omar Faruk Tekbilek, a musician from Turkey and one of the world's foremost exponents of Middle Eastern music.

This will be the 36-year-old singer's third concert in Canada since 2007, when she sang in Calgary and received a rapturous reception.

"It was just amazing," she recalled. "I'll never forget it."

Levy, who has made five albums since turning professional, was born and raised in a Ladino household in Jerusalem's Bakaa district.

Her father, Yitzhak, a Turkish-born composer and cantor who died in 1977, worked tirelessly to preserve Ladino. He was head of the Ladino department at Israel's state radio, and during his lifetime, he published books about Ladino.

Levy's mother, Kochava, a singer with Turkish roots who has performed in Ladino, is immersed in this dying language as well.

Known as Judeo-Spanish and Spaniolit, and sometimes referred to as the Sephardi equivalent of Yiddish, Ladino was spoken by Jews expelled from Spain and Portugal.

Their descendants enriched Ladino with words borrowed from languages such as Hebrew, Turkish, Greek, Bulgarian and French.

Yasmin Levy

Ladino was struck a near-death blow when tens of thousands of its native speakers in the Balkans were murdered by the Nazis during the Holocaust.

Survivors perpetuated the language in Israel – the country with the largest number of Ladino speakers today – and elsewhere.

By all accounts, about 200,000 Jews have a working knowledge of Ladino today. Levy said she did not know how many Ladino speakers live in Canada.

Although Levy fully shares her late father's love for Ladino, she is not fluent in it. "But the day will come when I'll dedicate myself to learning it," said Levy, who was featured in a 2010 documentary, *Music Mon Amour*, a German/French co-production.

Levy's musical interests were formed in childhood. From the age of six onward, she studied piano. At 20, she gave her first concert, which took place in Jerusalem.

Two years later, she made her foreign debut in Essen, Germany.

Recording her first album, *Romance and Yasmin*, in Ladino, Levy began singing in Spanish after studying flamenco in Seville, Spain, on a scholarship.

Since then, she has released two albums, *La Juderia* and *Sentir*, both of which have been in Ladino and Spanish.

She is currently working on her fifth album, which still remains nameless. "I'll know the name at the end of the process," she said.

It will first be available in stores in Europe in September.

Levy composes her own songs, drawing inspiration from Sephardi traditions, Spanish flamenco, Portuguese fado and even the lyrics of Canadian Leonard Cohen.

The themes of her songs turn on love and romance, the longing for Jerusalem and her own personal experiences.

Since her breakout concert in Germany a decade ago, Levy has performed mostly abroad, in countries ranging from Turkey and Spain to Poland and Sweden.

She toured the United States in 2009 and again last year.

Levy travels with her husband, Yishay, a member of her band. They have been married for eight years. Seven months ago, she gave birth to their first child.

When she is not on tour, she and her husband live in Mevaseret Zion, an affluent town high in the mountains about 10 kilometres from Jerusalem.

Though Ladino is an integral component of her repertoire, Levy is less than sanguine about its long-range durability.

"It won't survive. Ladino speakers are old, and my generation doesn't speak it. You find it in songs, books and archives today."

UNESCO, a United Nations agency, recently recognized Ladino as an endangered language.

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Canadian screenwriter's film is an Oscar contender

Sheldon Kirshner
Staff Reporter

The most glittering event in Hollywood's crowded calendar, the annual Academy Awards ceremony, takes place on Feb. 26 at the Kodak Theater in Los Angeles. David Shamoon, a Canadian screenwriter, is likely to be in the audience as the Oscars, the golden statuettes presented by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, are handed out by a procession of movie stars.

One of the Oscar contenders is *In Darkness*, a feature film conceived by Shamoon. A Canada/Poland/Germany co-production, it is scheduled to open in Canadian theatres on Feb. 17.

In Darkness, Poland's official entry for best foreign language film of 2011, is competing with four other movies: *Monsieur Lazhar* from Canada, *Footnote* from Israel, *A Separation* from Iran and *Bullhead* from Belgium.

"I have no idea who will win," said Shamoon in an interview last week. "The academy is very unpredictable. But I'm relieved and grateful we were chosen as one of the finalists."

Directed by Poland's Agnieszka Holland and produced by Canada's Eric Jordan and Paul Stephens, *In Darkness* is set in the Nazi-occupied Polish city of Lvov. It tells the true story of an antisemitic sewer-worker-cum-thief who saves a group of Jewish men, women and children.

Based on a book by Robert Marshall and nominated for three Genie Awards, it opened to favourable reviews in New York last December and has already broken box-office records in Poland.

Still more amazing, this was the first script Shamoon – a 64-year-old former advertising art director – has managed to turn into a film.

Shamoon embarked on his quest after reading a 2003 *Toronto Star* article about a book by Sir Martin Gilbert on Righteous Gentiles. The article mentioned Leopold Socha, who hid Jews in exchange for payment. Eventually, he refused to be paid as humanity triumphed over opportunism.

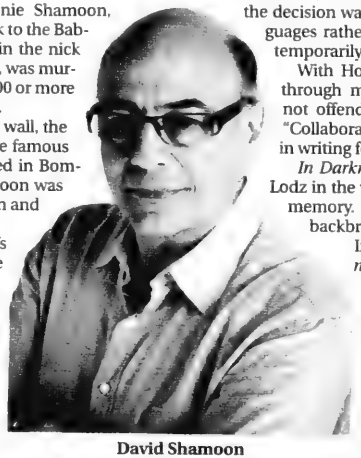
"I immediately wanted to know more about this person," explained Shamoon. "I was intrigued by the idea that a petty criminal, or anyone else for that matter, would risk his life and his family's to help complete strangers. It seemed so unlikely."

Shamoon's next step was to read Marshall's *In the Sewers of Lvov*, which electrified him. Brimming with drama, it had all the ingredients of a compelling story: a flawed hero, suspense, romance and tragedy.

And as the son of Iraqi Jews who had survived a 1941 pogrom in Baghdad known as the Farhud, he was deeply touched by Marshall's tale.

"My parents, Joseph and Leonie Shamoon, who could trace their ancestry back to the Babylonian captivity, were saved just in the nick of time." His father's aunt, however, was murdered in her bathtub. Altogether, 200 or more Jews were killed during the Farhud.

Reading the handwriting on the wall, the Shamoons, who were related to the famous Sassoon clan, left Iraq and resettled in Bombay (Mumbai), India, where Shamoon was born. He arrived in Toronto, via Iran and the United States, in 1970.



David Shamoon

Deeply impressed by Marshall's account, Shamoon optioned the film rights to his book, researched the period and, in a risky move, wrote a script on spec.

The screenplay emphasized the universal human drama rather than the Holocaust itself. "I asked myself, 'What makes someone, like Socha, do the right thing?'"

Wary of being saddled with a maudlin script, Shamoon decided not to sugar-coat any of the Jewish characters, some of whom had been con artists and black marketers. He also limited the portrayal of atrocities, assuming that audiences were inured to wanton Nazi violence.

In 2005, he presented the first draft to Jordan and Stephens of The Film Works in Toronto.

Believing it could be transformed into a powerful film, they worked on it with Shamoon for two years, polishing and refining the script. Then they showed it to Holland, who had directed *Europa, Europa*, a film that unfolded during the Holocaust, and whom Shamoon admired as an accomplished cinematic storyteller.

Holland agreed to direct only if *In Darkness* was told in the original languages: Polish, German, Yiddish and Ukrainian. "I really wanted it to be in English," recalled Shamoon. "But she was right. Her commitment to authenticity was unwavering."

Until then, Telefilm had provided funding. But once the decision was made to shoot in four foreign languages rather than English, Telefilm pulled out, temporarily imperilling the entire project.

With Holland at the helm, the script went through many more rewrites. Shamoon was not offended by her demands. As he put it, "Collaborating with her was like getting a PhD in writing for the movies."

In Darkness was shot in Berlin, Leipzig and Lodz in the winter of 2010, one of the coldest in memory. "It was incredibly hard, sometimes backbreaking work," he noted.

In retrospect, the making of *In Darkness* was extremely difficult on every possible level, from acquiring financing to shooting it on location under taxing conditions, he observed

Definitely a shoestring production, it cost $6 to $7 million, a pittance by Hollywood standards. "Holland had to use every trick in her playbook to make it as terrific as it is," said Shamoon, whose next movie, *Taking Off*, a comedy about a duelling couple on a road trip, is due to be shot in Los Angeles in the early autumn.

For now, though, Shamoon is focusing on *In Darkness*.

"My main hope is that Socha's example will inspire others as much as it has inspired me. He was no saint, but an ordinary man who made some crucial decisions that led to extraordinary deeds."

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EYE ON ARTS

By BILL GLADSTONE

FAMED LONDON AUCTION HOUSE PREPARING FOR SALE OF ISRAELI ART

Bonhams, the large London-based auction house that was founded in 1793, is preparing for its second sale of Israeli art with a collection of works made by new arrivals to Israel from Europe.

Leading the sale is *Les Oliviers*, an oil painting by **Reuven Rubin** (Israeli, 1893-1974), the Romanian émigré who became Israel's first ambassador to Romania. It is expected to fetch between 75,000 and 100,000 pounds.

Another item for sale is the watercolour *The Approach to Mount Sinai* by British painter **David Roberts** (1796-1864). The piece, which is dated and inscribed "Mount Sinai, Feb. 17th 1839," is estimated to sell for between 25,000 and 35,000 pounds.

The sale takes place on Feb. 29. For details, visit the website www.bonhams.com.

* * *

The Yiddish Stage: Friends of Yiddish presents **Sharon Power** speaking on "Great Women Stars of the American Yiddish Stage." Beth Tikvah Synagogue, 3080 Bayview Ave. Sunday, Feb. 12, 2 p.m. $5, includes refreshments; FOY members free. RSVP by Feb. 9 to Sandy, 416-458-1440, yiddish18@yahoo.ca.

* * *

***Zero Hour* Returns:** *Zero Hour*, the hit show written by and starring **Jim Brochu**, returns to Toronto, producers **Lia** and **Dana Matthow** announced last week. The heart of the show, which has won top awards from New York to Los Angeles, is Brochu's extraordinary impersonation of actor **Zero Mostel** as he tells the backstory of Mostel's life.

"After a while, you stop caring whether a particular line is Brochu's or Mostel's; all you know is that you've been privy to the work of a great comedian," *The New Yorker* commented. Bathurst Street Theatre, Feb. 8 to March 11. www.Ticketmaster.ca, 1-855-985- 2787.

* * *

Media Mondays at the Movies: Author-critic **Kevin Courrier** continues his series of Media Monday lectures with film clips, Reflections in the Hall of Mirrors: American Movies and the Politics of Idealism. His upcoming talk is on "The Carter Era: *Coming Home, The Deer Hunter, Taxi Driver, Nashville, Star Wars* and more." Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, Feb. 6, 7 to 9 p.m. $12 at the door; students $6. 416-924-6211, ext. 606, film@mnjcc.org

* * *

Micah Barnes

Arts in Brief

• Amicus Productions presents *The Tale of the Allergist's Wife*, the award-winning Broadway comedy by **Charles Busch** about the life crisis of **Marjorie Taub**, wife of a philanthropic allergist. Fairview Library Theatre, Feb. 2 to 11. $20, $18. 416-860-6176, www.amicusproductions.ca

• Dancap Productions presents *In the Heights*, a Tony- and Grammy-award winning musical from Broadway set in a hip Latino neighbourhood in the Washington Heights section of New York. "It's about a community of hardworking immigrants seeking a better life and making a new home in their new country, just like so many new Canadians in Toronto," said Dancap president **Aubrey Dan**. Toronto Centre for the Arts, Feb. 7 to 19. $51 to $165. 416-644-3665, www.DancapTickets.com

• *Elements*, a musical multimedia show, features works and performances from **Andrew Downing**, **Ben Dietchi** and **Patrick Reid**. Presented by Spectrum Composers and the Al Green Theatre, the show attempts to enchant through an exploration of our relationship with nature. Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre. Thursday, Feb. 8, 8 p.m. $20, students and seniors $15. 416-924-6211, ext. 0, www.algreentheatre.ca

• Hugh's Room presents **Micah Barnes** and **Jackie Richardson** performing a "Jazz Valentine" of romantic jazz love songs. Saturday, Feb. 11, 8:30 p.m. $25 in advance, $27.50 at the door. Reservations recommended. hughsroom.com

* * *

At the Galleries: Artist **Anat Betzer** of Tel Aviv paints images of ancient deciduous trees and dense forest. Her exhibition, *Forest*, presented with the Julie M Gallery, is on view in the Miles Nadal JCC Gallery, Feb. 3 to 29.

• Toronto artist **Mark Gleberzon** recently opened his own art gallery, the MJG Gallery, in Cabbagetown "as an alternative and supplement to having to tote my work from show to show and across the border," he said. MJG is at 555 Parliament St. www.markgleberzon.com.

Israeli movie and Holocaust film up for Oscar award

Joseph Serge
Arts Editor

Two Jewish-themed movies were nominated for the foreign-language Oscar award last week.

Israel's *Footnote* and Poland's *In Darkness*, which both screened at last September's Toronto International Film Festival, will be in tough competition against Iran's Golden Globe-winning, *A Separation*, which is considered the favourite.

Joseph Cedar's *Footnote* received strong critical acclaim at last September's festival and won best screenplay award at the Cannes film festival.

Taking place mostly at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, *Footnote* turns on Eliezer Shkolnik, stoically played by Shlomo Bar Aba, a Talmud scholar and his son, Uriel, who has followed in his footsteps.

Footnote, *The CJN* reported last September, is everything a movie of superior quality should be. The dialogue sparkles, and the actors perform with energy, grace and precision.

Cedar has made four feature films, and all were chosen as Israel's entries in the Oscar competitions. In 2007, *Beaufort* was among the five Academy Award finalists.

Agnieszka Holland's *In Darkness* is a raw, visceral, unsettling descent into the dark maw of the Holocaust.

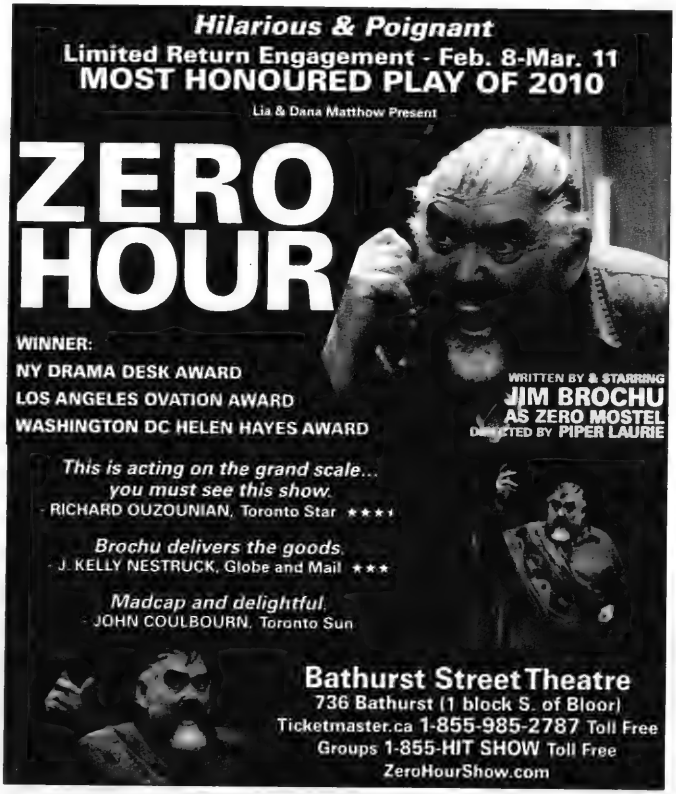
Based on a true story, and adapted by David Shamoon from Robert Marshall's book *In the Sewers of Lvov*, *In Darkness* takes place over a 14-month period in Nazi-occupied Lvov, a city in Poland inhabited by Poles, Ukrainians and Jews.

As the Nazis impose their reign of terror, a Polish sewer worker stumbles upon a small group of Jews who've descended into the subterranean depths to save themselves in advance of the liquidation of the city's ghetto.

In Darkness is scheduled to open in cinemas on Feb. 17.

Along with Asghar Farhadi's *A Separation*, *Footnote* and *In Darkness*, the other movies nominated in the foreign-language category are Canada's *Monsieur Lazhar*, from director Philippe Falardeau, and Belgium's *Bullhead*, from director Michael Roskam. The awards ceremony takes place Feb. 26.

***Footnote*, starring Lior Ashkenazi, left, and Shlomo Bar Abais nominated for an award.**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Singer of new Yiddish music reaps rewards

Dorothy Lichtblau
Special to The CJN

Last year was very rewarding for Toronto singer-songwriter Lenka Lichtenberg.

Her song *Peace Is the Only Way*, won an Ontario Council of Folk Festivals Award, and her latest CD, *Fray (Free)*, received the Canadian Porcupine Musique de la Monde Award. She was also nominated for a Canadian Folk Music Award (CFMA) in the category of World Music Solo Artist for her CD *Fray*.

The recognition gives me "a warm fuzzy feeling because it tells me that I'm not just writing for myself but for others as well," Lichtenberg says. "Being a singer-songwriter of new Yiddish music places me in an unusual category. My work is not an easy sell."

The awards not only affirm her musicianship but also her decision to create songs that unite Yiddish words with melodies rooted in the Middle East and India. She sees her mission to contribute to the continuation of Yiddish culture, partly to commemorate the family that she never knew but mostly to make Yiddish a vital element of the 21st century. "I'm not the only one or the first doing this kind of work, but there aren't many of us," says Lichtenberg.

Lichtenberg's passion for Yiddish did not develop until she was well into adulthood. Born in Prague, in Communist Czechoslovakia, she did not learn she was Jewish until she was about eight years old. Her mother, a child survivor of the concentration camp at Theresienstadt, lost nearly all of her family during the Holocaust and most of her ties to Judaism.

On the other hand, music has been part of Lichtenberg's life from her early years. "My mother says I always sang," Lichtenberg says.

From about nine years of age until she grew too tall for the role, Lichtenberg starred at Prague's renowned musical theatre, Semafor, opposite Czech icon Jiri Suchy. In her teens, she studied at the Prague Music Conservatory. Shortly after she left Czechoslovakia "to find a country where I could feel free."

Licthenberg settled in Canada, initially in British Columbia where she worked as a lounge singer at clubs and on cruise lines, had a stint as a vocalist with a rock band and completed her undergraduate degree at the University of British Columbia.

She also embarked on closer explorations of Judaism, which she says brought her to a more profound understanding of what occurred during the Holocaust. However, it was during her 1987 trip to Israel that she

Lenka Lichtenberg

was inspired to commit to performing and writing Yiddish music.

Back in Canada, she immersed herself in academic and musical studies of the songs and styles of the tradition, completing a thesis on Yiddish music of the Holocaust to earn a master's degree in ethnomusicology at York University in 1993.

In the mid-1990s, married and the mother of young children, Lichtenberg dedicated most of her time to her family. Yet, the petite dynamo squeezed in as many local gigs as her responsibilities allowed. "I think I played in almost every Jewish community building in Toronto," she recounts.

As her three children became more independent, she reconnected with the world of Yiddish music, and since the late 1990s, her creative output has been in full gear.

Her early CDs reflected a mixture of folk and world-music traditions. But it was her 2006 CD, *Pashtes (Simplicity)*, Lichtenberg's third, which marked a clear turn to new Yiddish compositions. Influenced by the work of Israeli singer Chava Alberstein and graced with an opportunity to work with Toronto Yiddish poet Simcha Simchovitch, she began weaving modern Yiddish poetry into innovative interpretations of global music.

Around 2004, she began a relationship with Yiddish swing music. Urged by vocalist Isabel Fryszberg to partner in the creation of a playful update of 1940s-50s girl groups such as the Barry Sisters, Lichtenberg became the co-founder of the Sisters of Sheynville. In the ensuing years, the all-women band garnered a strong following and a CFMA award.

Last year, Lichtenberg amicably parted with the Sisters of Sheynville to gain time to develop Yiddish-global compositions.

Giving in to her longtime attraction to the sounds of the Middle East, Lichtenberg conceptualized her next venture.

"I wondered what Yiddish lyrics would sound like when paired with the beat of the dumbek or the tones of the oud." After hearing a performance by Tasa, one of this country's foremost Indo-Canadian global-jazz groups, she knew she had to work with these skilled artists. And, thus Fray, her new band, was conceived. Lichtenberg co-directed and co-produced the band's CD with Alan Hetherington. "An incredible adviser for our project," she says.

Lichtenberg's other great love – cantorial music – connected her with a personally significant project. A longtime student of liturgical music, she regularly complements Shabbat and High Holiday services at Toronto's Congregation Darchei Noam.

In 2009, while performing concerts in synagogues in the Czech Republic, she felt that the walls of the buildings were resonating with the music. This experience inspired her project Songs for the Breathing Walls, a recording tour of several synagogues in the region of the Czech Republic during which she sang traditional and original Hebrew liturgy. Renowned Israeli oudist and violinist Yair Dalal was among the international musicians with whom she collaborated.

Along with the CD *Songs for the Breathing Walls*, she has produced a limited-edition booklet that she will distribute among the communities that hosted the project. The publication includes photos of each location and brief histories of the synagogues' pre-World War II congregations.

And, the seemingly indefatigable Lichtenberg is not pausing to rest yet. Her next dream is to create a songbook of her work for schools and community organizations. The reward for these efforts? Lichtenberg says, "I've decided that I feel best doing what to me is meaningful."

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Maccabi Canada, JCC Chai Sports to partner

Paul Lungen
Staff Reporter

JCC Chai Sports and Maccabi Canada have entered a partnership that will expose young athletes to top-level competition competing under the Maccabi banner.

The partnership will begin in the spring with a soccer program that will expand JCC Chai Sports' house league into an academy that will offer a suite of activities, including house league, rep teams and enhanced training for those in between, said Alex Voihanski, managing director of JCC Chai Sports.

The rep team will be open to players aged six to 12 who will be selected after a tryout process. Successful candidates will receive elite training under the supervision of a new technical director, Deesh Bhattal, with input from Maccabi Canada alumni. Similar to a hockey select program, the young soccer players will be exposed to top-level competition in their age group.

Plans are to field three teams in the under-10, under-nine and under-eight age categories. The core of the under-10 team has been playing high-level soccer for a while and has hardly lost a game in the Soccer Academy Alliance of Canada in more than a year, Voihanski said. Coached by Jason Mausberg, the team will hold tryouts in mid- to late February and will play its first games in May.

The strategic goal embraced by JCC Chai Sports is to offer kids in the community the opportunity to compete in sports from the recreational house league level to an elite level, "and give them what they want," Voihanski said.

"We have a lot of kids at the house league level and we have a lot of kids ready to make the next step," he said.

Kids who compete for JCC Chai Sports teams may have a leg up on others vying for places on Maccabi Canada teams – but only insofar as they receive top-level training and competition, said Maccabi Canada president Tom Bacher.

Teams operated by JCC Chai Sports will carry the "Team Maccabi" banner. "They want to be affiliated with us, because Maccabi Canada is considered the elite Jewish sports organization in Canada," he said.

Bacher said Maccabi Canada "wants to get more involved in the community." The organization will ask its alumni to run clinics and help develop the young athletes to their full potential.

"We're there to make sure these kids become the best they can be," he said.

Maccabi Canada selects the athletes who compete in the Maccabiah Games in Israel every four years, as well as in regional games, such as the Pan American Maccabi Games. JCC Chai Sports selects the team that represents Toronto at the summer JCC Maccabi (youth) Games.

"If you want to be part of these teams, you have to come to these organizations," Voihanski said. "We are the sole providers for the delegations at [these events]."

JCC Chai Sports has in a few short years become a popular destination for parents who want their children exposed to sports while competing with Jewish teammates. More than 400 youngsters took part in the soccer program last season and JCC Chai Sports expects to add another 250 in its house league and academy. JCC Chai Sports started with 35.

The organization currently offers a learn-to-play hockey program for 250 youngsters at the Pavilion, double the figure from just a year ago. The program is so popular that there's a waiting list of more than 50 kids.

Other sports are also popular: 200 kids play basketball; 50 compete in floor hockey; 50 play flag football, and another 100 play T-ball or baseball.

Voihanski, who also serves as general manager of hockey operations for International Scouting Services (ISS), said JCC Chai Sports is planning to develop hockey players in the same way select systems do and compete in leagues in North York and Vaughan. Jewish kids will play as the Stars of David – the same name as the gold medal team at the Canadian Multicultural Hockey Championship – until fully transitioned to the Team Maccabi brand. They will compete in tournaments, travel to events, and play against private schools.

Ultimately, Voihanski hopes, the players will be able to show their skills at a JCC Maccabi Winter Games or perhaps a North American Jewish hockey tournament, though there is no specific date for either at this time.

Soccer players will get enhanced training and competition as a result of a partnership between JCC Chai Sports and Maccabi Canada .

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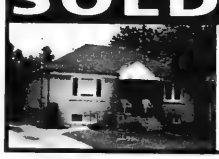

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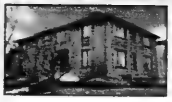

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Student points his lens at photojournalism in Israel

Michelle Bitran
Special to The CJN

Ruben Salvadori started taking photographs about four years ago as a way to understand culture and human behaviour. Now, the 22-year-old Italian Jewish student is an award-winning photographer.

After finishing high school, Salvadori moved from Italy to Israel, to attend the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where he majored in international relations and anthropology.

For Ruben, Jerusalem was a natural choice. "I wanted to be somewhere interesting and in a good university. I was mainly curious about human behaviour, and Israel is the perfect place to observe it, due to its very diverse society," he said.

Salvadori's studies deepened his desire to understand society and the people around him, and after his first year at university, he began to explore new ways to observe and connect with people.

"I grabbed a crappy camera and started shooting. I guess at the beginning it was out of the naive need to look for some sort of universal language since I was struggling with learning Hebrew," he said.

When his first experiments with photography yielded positive results, Salvadori began to take it more seriously.

He found himself especially drawn to documentary projects, although he said they are more difficult than many other types of photography.

Salvadori, the director of photography for a 2011 documentary called *Inside Jerusalem*, said that documentaries offer "deeper research into a specific issue, that forces you to [gain] a better understanding of what you're facing, as well as creating a stronger relationship between the photographer and the subject."

Salvadori is best known for his Photojournalism Behind the Scenes series, a set of photographs documenting how media images are produced and showing the quest for drama in photojournalism.

He did this by going to conflict areas in Israel and taking a dramatic shot of the scene first, using angles and a frame selection that would create an image of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that you might see in any newspaper.

He then also shot the same situation with a wider frame that included the horde of photojournalists who were present at the scene.

In the first picture set of the series, the viewers see a young Palestinian man with rags covering his face, except for his eyes. The man stands in front of a pile of flaming cardboard and rocks. He looks to be in the middle of a big battle. In the next shot, a wider frame, the viewer sees six photojournalists taking a photograph of the man, who is revealed to be standing alone in a mostly empty street.

The intensely dramatic, and esthetically pleasing, shot of the Palestinian man in battle is really just a posed moment that seems to have been intended to attract the media.

Salvadori explained that putting these images side by side shows the ability that photojournalists have to manipulate a situation with only a camera lens. He added that the public is accustomed to seeing these distorted photographs in the news and that less-dramatic shots showing the reality of the situation are considered boring.

This demand for drama leaves many photojournalists in a bind, forcing them to choose between selling dramatic photos that distort the truth and taking pictures of reality, which won't sell.

Though compromising one's ethics to get a foot in the door of the photojournalism business may be a tempting offer to some, Salvadori said shooting the Behind the Scenes series cemented his belief in the importance of thinking before taking a photo.

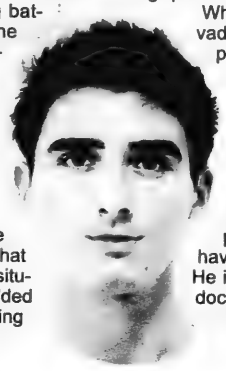
"The project definitely helped me understand more about what I want to be and what I do not want to be," he said.

Behind the Scenes earned Salvadori the Forma Foundation's Photodreaming Contest prize in Italy, and a video showing his presentation of the project received up to 20,000 hits per day when it was posted online.

Although many people praised him for his brave and revealing work, Salvadori found that some of his colleagues took the project as unfair criticism.

"Some photojournalists, especially the ones that do not conceive the fact that our presence has an influence on the events, took it as a personal offence," he said.

Behind the Scenes' popularity and the importance of its message made it one of Salvadori's favourite projects to work on, but the range of subjects he has covered includes everything from Tibetans living in China to Jerusalem's drag queens.



Ruben Salvadori
[Ruben Salvadori photo]

When asked about his influences, Salvadori said that there's not one specific photographer that stands out.

"I like to get 'contaminated' by different styles and photographers, and see what I can do to improve my work by mixing it with new ways to do photography," he explained.

Right now, Salvadori is taking a break from his studies and is in Italy working with two other photographers on a project about Italians who have found motivation in the recession. He is also putting together a multimedia documentary about a religious ritual of self-flagellation in a small town in Southern Italy.

For Salvadori, a picture is good if it has meaning and visual appeal for the audience, no matter what the subject is. "It has to reach the public. I don't like those pieces that only the author understands or feels."

Salvadori is planning to tour Canadian universities in Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa later this month to speak about his Behind the Scenes project. Updates will be posted on his website, www.rubensalvadori.com.

Check out a video of Salvadori talking about his Photojournalism Behind the Scenes series at http://tinyurl.com/77qua7t.

More news for young Jews on heebonics.ca

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Faith communities protect Earth

It has been a challenge lately to stay positive on the topic of the environment and sustainability.

On the economics versus the environment front, there are ongoing legal battles around pipelines proposed to carry oil from the Alberta Oil Sands to termination points in the United States and Canada. For both the Keystone XL and the Northern Gateway pipelines, arguments being made pit the potential of creating new jobs against potential environmental damage.

From Canada's perspective, changes in government policy specific to the Kyoto accord has effectively taken a somewhat faulty and less than global, greenhouse-gas (GHG) reduction effort off the table.

Sustainable Jew

Fred Winegust

In a Jan. 20 comment in the *National Post*, Canada's Environment Minister Peter Kent confirmed our current goal for 2020 is 607 megatons of GHG emissions, a 17 per cent reduction from 2005 levels.

Kent has also stated that the approach in Canada is to focus on a sector-by-sector basis, starting with the transportation and electricity-generation sectors.

Perhaps one way to bring some personal meaning to all of this is to focus on what each of us can do, either individually, as part of a larger Jewish community, or as part of a larger inter-denominational community around us, to reduce our consumption of energy, whether in the combustion engines of our cars or the electricity we consume, as individuals or as a community.

Faith & the Common Good is an interfaith network of religious communities who understand the Earth is a sacred gift. The common thread among participating faith communities is that each believes that their faith tradition is a key source of wisdom in a great spiritual quest, that of protecting and healing the planet.

Greening Sacred Spaces (GSS) is a program developed by Faith & the Common Good to assist faith communities in taking concrete actions to create more sustainable and energy-efficient places of worship and to educate members of the community about ecological issues. GSS helps people of faith live out the call to protect the Earth within their own context. It also provides an opportunity to save money, help save the planet and engage in meaningful conversations about the spirituality of eco-sustainability.

From time to time, there have been synagogues in the Toronto community that have participated in meetings sponsored by Faith & the Common Good. Some of these synagogues have taken advantage of the resources created by the GSS team that can help organizations become more sustainable and cost efficient. Any faith group that chooses to participate in the effort can also take advantage of networking opportunities offered by Faith & the Common Good to learn about sustainability practices of other faith communities and what motivates their actions.

It is important to recognize that we in the Jewish community who believe in sustainable living and sustainable operations of our religious institutions can plug into a larger community and gain value through dialogue and action.

Winegust@gmail.com

RIBOLLITA (a hearty winter soup)

2 10 oz. tins white beans (liquid reserved)
Kosher salt
1/4 c olive oil
2 onions, chopped
3 carrots, chopped
3 stalks celery, chopped
6 garlic cloves, chopped
1 tsp ground black pepper
1/4 tsp crushed red pepper flakes
1 28 oz. tin plum tomatoes, diced
4 c shredded cabbage
4 c coarsely chopped kale
1/2 c chopped basil leaves
6 c parve soup stock
4 c sourdough bread cubes, crusts removed
1/2 c freshly grated Parmesan, for serving

Drain beans, reserving liquid. Set aside. Heat oil in large stockpot. Add onions; saute over medium-low heat 7-10 min. until translucent. Add carrots, celery, garlic, salt, pepper, red pepper flakes. Cook over medium-low heat 7-10 min. until vegetables are tender. Add tomatoes with puree, cabbage, kale, basil ; cook over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally another 7-10 min. In food processor with steel blade, puree half of the beans with a little of their liquid. Add bean puree to stockpot along with remaining whole beans. Pour remaining bean liquid into large measuring cup; add enough chicken stock to make 8 c. Add to soup and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer over low heat 20 min. Add bread to the soup;simmer 10 more min. Taste for seasoning and serve hot in large bowls sprinkled with Parmesan and drizzled with olive oil.

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On cjnews.com

The CJN's French-language reporter in Montreal, Elias Levy, writes about:

Mémoires & Dialogue, an organization started by Jewish and Muslim Montrealers of Moroccan heritage, works in various ways to promote tolerance and dialogue between the two religious communities.

Exclusive to cjnews.com

Former Wall Street Journal bureau chief Daniel Pearl, left, — killed by Al-Qaeda 10 years ago — is remembered in Judaism, music, education, and journalism.

Hundreds of beers from around the world were recently on display at the "Beers 2012" exhibition in Tel Aviv.

Florida's sizable and active Jewish electorate could play an important role in the closely contested race for the U.S. Republican presidential nomination on Jan. 31.

Eight young Jewish Montrealers were transported out of their comfort zones into the harsh reality of poverty and disease in rural Ethiopia last month.

Exclusive in Hebrew

Fearing those who fear God

'Isn't that special?'

I mentioned to my friend Menachem that I always figured I would do something special with my life. He replied that everyone feels that way. I didn't know if he was right, so I started asking around.

I relayed my conversation with Menachem to a 30ish Russian waitress at a local restaurant. I asked her if she had always felt she would do something singularly unique with her life. She said "yes" and, in fact, had already "done two special things. I have made two immigrations," she added, in reference to her move from Russia to Israel and then to Canada.

Urban Writer

Avrum Rosensweig

I considered what her "special" meant. Initially, I thought "special" meant an action that was "big to the world." The waitress challenged me on that definition, and I then understood what the philosopher Nietzsche said on the topic: "At bottom, every man knows well enough that he is a unique being, only once on this Earth, and by no extraordinary chance will such a marvellously picturesque piece of diversity in unity as he is ever be put together a second time."

With the knowledge that "special" may never be seen by most of the world, I asked other people the same question: Here are some of the responses.

"When I look at my children and grandchildren, I know that no matter how bad everything else was, how difficult the struggle was, I did something very special. There was purpose to my life. I guess I discovered the meaning of life and why I was put here."

My niece, Devora, who lives in Efrat, Israel, stated: "I think the main problem is that people aren't sure what is considered special. Is it special if you win awards? Is it special because it's specifically something you can do, or is it special because it makes you or someone else feel good?"

Devora began her life on a very particular (career) road and a certainty she would make the difference she desired. Her path changed. Today, she is raising five children and said with glee: "They are my life. I love them dearly. Every time I listen to them talk about their day and guide them, or every time I hug and kiss them, I am doing something special." She concluded: "I know every generation that comes after them and goes out into the world and does good, I had a part in. Now isn't that special?"

I also discovered that "special" can be defined according to one's background. Here is another response: "I went to CHAT [Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto] and success was expected. It hurts to be a 'failure' in those terms. Also the burden of being the daughter of survivors [means] guilt also plays a role in making me feel like I have to accomplish something 'special,' noble, noteworthy.

"Which is not to belittle the good things I have accomplished, the kindness I hopefully have shown to people, the love and guidance I give to my children."

I think that special can be "big" and have a grand effect on the world, however, it can also be local, very quiet, and still play an equally important role in our existence. "Special" can be seen by the world or only by you.

Did you always figure you'd do something special?

"My great mistake, the fault for which I can't forgive myself, is that one day I ceased my obstinate pursuit of my own individuality." – Oscar Wilde

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Clinical Pilates for rehab and more

Jennifer M. MacLeod
Special to the CJN

By now, you've probably heard of Pilates. Perhaps you associate it with mats, balls and weights, but that's not the whole picture, says certified instructor Barbie Dukes.

Pilates is more than a way to exercise, she says. "In the hands of a qualified practitioner, it's an excellent form of rehab after injury or surgery."

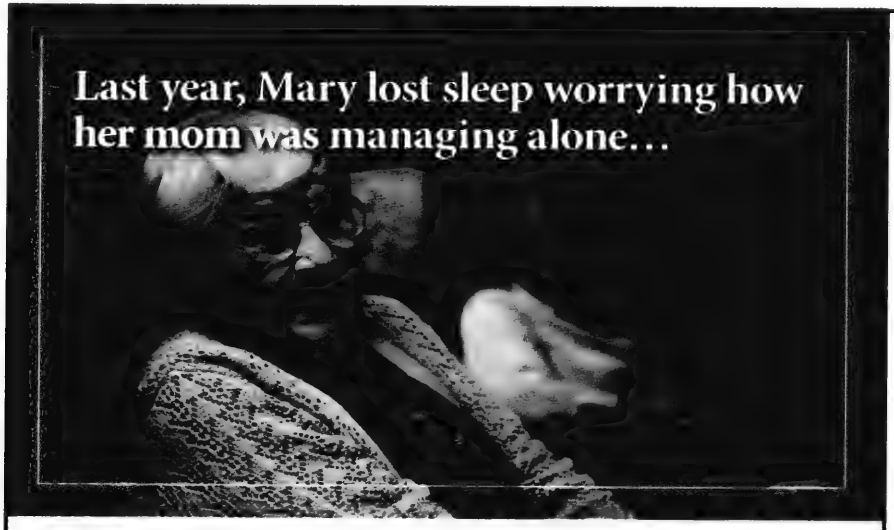
"Pilates actually began as a form of rehabilitation," Dukes says. It was developed in Germany in the early 20th century by Joseph Pilates, a trained gymnast who worked with injured patients in hospital beds during World War I. "He began to understand to get these people strong and well, they needed to strengthen their bodies." Yet most were bedridden. How could they accomplish that? His solution: equipment that could work "in the horizontal plane," while patients were lying down.

Dukes, who trained at the National Ballet School, Royal Winnipeg Ballet and with teachers from Juilliard and the New York City Ballet before studying with the internationally recognized Stott Pilates organization, brings her interest and experience in dance and movement to her current practice. "I have been teaching movement education and neuromuscular re-patterning for 20 years," she says.

From her work with professional dancers, she's moved toward applying what she calls "clinical Pilates" principles to a general population suffering from chronic injuries, postural dysfunctions like scoliosis, joint health issues, osteoporosis and arthritis, sciatica and balance issues following hip replacement. Along the way, she took specialized Pilates qualifications in post-rehabilitation and athletic conditioning.

These days, her business, The Center of Movement (905-764-5791), gets referrals not only by word-of-mouth – though a "satisfied customer is always a great resource" – but also from professionals: physiotherapists, registered massage therapists, chiropractors and physicians. "There's a whole professional network," recognizing the value of clinical Pilates. "Orthopedic surgeons are really recognizing that the principles... are the same used in rehabilitation of orthopedic conditions."

Continued on page B2



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More to a strong core than you think

Continued from page B1

In her home studio, equipped with professional-grade commercial Pilates equipment, Dukes first meets with clients and assesses their needs. "I will do a series of postural and gait analyses... mobilization tests and assessments." She and the client "decide from there what their goals are, and set up a detailed program which is suited specifically to their needs."

As Pilates himself discovered almost a century ago, people heal faster when they are moving and strengthening themselves, and Dukes says the equipment is key, especially the reformer, which looks a cross between a large coffee table and a rowing machine. "It really supports the body as it heals, still allows you to build important and critical core stabilization and neutral alignment which helps to balance out the muscles around the joints to decrease pain."

By attaching and detaching specific pieces to the reformer, Dukes can support injured areas while strengthening others. And because the workout is extremely low impact, it can be highly efficient and precise. "Those who have better core strength have better dynamic control of their movement and are less likely to sustain injuries."

For seniors, she calls Pilates "essential training for fall prevention." Some results have shown that it can actually help increase bone density, effectively reversing osteoporosis. Some of her clients have said that technicians at the lab where they have had their bone-density scans told them they should be doing Pilates. "These professionals know... clinical Pilates will actually increase their bone density, and that it is reversible," Dukes says.

Another surprise is its potential to help in breathing dysfunctions by increasing lung capacity and improving postural positioning. Pilates emphasizes breath control and breath flow, "the most efficient way to breathe while you're maintaining your core stabilization," and Dukes has actually helped clients increase lung capacity.

"I've had clients [with] asthma, they cough a lot. Their posture is just horrible, lots of tension in their upper body. I'm able to bring their spine and posture back to neutral. It takes away their pain and postural dysfunction while increasing their lung capacity."

Barbie Dukes guides a client through specialized rehab exercises with the reformer.

But you won't get most of these benefits just perching on an exercise ball. Dukes says she's "not talking about Pilates classes in the gym." What she does is personalized, with specialized equipment. "I'm applying the rehabilitation and therapeutic principles inherent in Stott Pilates to restoring optimal function and dynamic control through a clinical Pilates rehab program."

While you might think the goal of rehab is to get back where you were before the injury or operation, Dukes aims higher. Clinical Pilates can actually "help people recover stronger than they were before the incident... and it significantly reduces re-injuries as well... While working the whole body to keep it in shape, we progressively rebuild strength and mobility in the injured areas."

For more information about clinical Pilates, visit www.thecenterofmovement.com.

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Emerging from closet of mental illness

Lauren Kramer
Special to The CJN

As Mental Health Week celebrates its 60th anniversary this year, Barry Shainbaum is trying to do his share to reduce the stigma and shame associated with mental illness. The 59-year-old from Hamilton moved to Toronto in 1975 and was diagnosed with bipolar disorder a few years later. The disorder caused hallucinations and delusions, followed by breakdowns and depression.

"In 1974, en route to visit my psychiatrist, I had delusions that I was a police officer," he recalls. "I even pulled a car over." Once Shainbaum was diagnosed, medication and psychotherapy brought him some peace.

But his mental illness wreaked havoc with his life, causing him at one point to abandon his successful photography business, to consider suicide and to break the law.

Today it's been 22 years since he last required medication or therapy, a journey Shainbaum describes as one of psychological and spiritual enlightenment. "I do a lot of volunteer work now, as well as music, a radio show, photography and public speaking," he says. "Through my work, I try to bring some hope, joy and inspiration to people, and to remind them that through life's challenges, there are ways to reconnect with ourselves, understand ourselves and become mentally healthy."

Medication can be a crucial aid on the road to positive mental health, and Shainbaum says he is cautious to deliver "a message of responsibility. I try to tell people that while they can sometimes get rid of medication, it has to be done carefully," he says. "One problem people encounter is when they go off their meds and get into trouble."

His own personal journey taught Shainbaum that in a mere heartbeat, the best of times can turn into the darkest of times. "I also learned that life is typically full of joy, but also full of suffering," he reflects. "Health issues, both mental and physical, are part of life. The question is how we handle them. Do we overcome them, become stronger and even thrive? I have built four creative businesses, all of which emerged from my mental health transformation."

Before he could do so, however, Shainbaum learned first-hand about the stigma and fear of mental health issues that traverses all communities, the Jewish community included. "There can be shame and embarrassment, and the family member who suffers from mental illness can become the family secret," he says.

"A major hurdle I had to face when I became well again was how I viewed myself," he recalls. "At first I was ashamed and embarrassed, but then I decided, 'This is my life, and I'm not going to let anything stop me.'"

Since he's emerged from the closet of his mental illness, Shainbaum says he's received incredible support and encouragement. "Any time I'm in the paper or on the radio talking about what I've been through, people are appreciative," he says. "They come up to me and tell me their stories. They want to bring mental illness out of the shadows and see it as just another thing that happens to people.

"One in five people will have a mental health illness. The more people talk about it, the more the stigma associated with mental illness is reduced."

Barry Shainbaum

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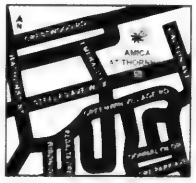

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The busy life of working moms

Marni Brinder Byk
Special to The CJN

I love to work. I have always found a rush in producing. Whether in school or as a professional, I've always felt energized and capable of doing more when I am busy. However, being busy takes on an entirely new meaning when you have a child. Just being a parent is a full-time job – sleepless nights, temper tantrums, and making sure your child is fed, clothed, safe and healthy is a full-time job.

While on maternity leave with my son, Ryan, I was in a constant frenzied state – he wouldn't take a bottle, wouldn't commit to any type of sleep schedule, was a poor eater and hated large crowds of people. Even baby music classes were filled with me singing while Ryan buried his head in my neck, a pleasure I actually paid for week after week for more than six months.

At the end of my leave, I decided to apply for a new job. I always knew I was going back to work, and when an opportunity to join a new organization emerged, I jumped at it. I remember calling my boss for the first time and finding myself sharing details about myself completely outside the realm of anything I ever considered "professional."

Had I lost my edge? As a professional fundraiser, my job is largely about relating to people. Would it be possible to have a conversation that didn't include diapers, bibs and sippy cups? Was I ready for two full-time jobs?

Starting my new job was actually far better than I expected. My boss, a mother of three grown children, understood and supported my transition and didn't make me choose between being a mom and being a development manager.

I put Ryan into daycare and jumped into my new position. As a fundraiser for Weizmann Canada, the Canadian fundraising chapter that supports the Weizmann Institute of Science in Israel, I knew early on that there would be an opportunity for me to accompany friends of the organization to Weizmann's international board meetings, held on campus every November.

My family and I discussed and planned for this event early in my new position and we knew how we would make sure my brief absence (and wonderful opportunity to visit this incredible institution) wouldn't affect my son or his routine too drastically for the nine days I planned to be away. I planned and I planned, but what I didn't expect was to find out I was pregnant a mere eight weeks before leaving.

Being in my early 30s, married, with one small child, I always hoped my family would grow – eventually. In all of my planning, I had not considered that I might get pregnant again so quickly. We definitely did not try to have two children who would only be 23 months apart.

Nonetheless, the news of my second pregnancy was celebrated by all: family, friends and colleagues. I just wasn't sure about travelling to Israel. But after my doctor gave me the green light, I knew I could proceed with the plan as scheduled, and in the end, it was a wonderful experience. It didn't hurt to know that while on campus in Rehovot, I would be surrounded by some of the greatest scientific minds in the world – researchers exploring every challenge, from cancer to the world food crisis – and my passion to stay busy kept me on my feet for the entire trip.

Marni Brinder Byk with her son Ryan

Once I returned to Toronto, I realized how lucky I truly am. I have a wonderful husband and son, not to mention an amazing mother who was at my house daily to make sure everything was running smoothly.

I don't think there are any tricks to being a working mother of young children; I just think that the more support and understanding you have from your family, friends and colleagues, the greater you feel about both full-time jobs.

And for all of you moms and dads out there – good luck! Whether you are gainfully employed or working daily at being a parent, I hope you feel supported, respected, and admired for all that you are, and all that you do. I also wish you a good night's sleep.

For more information about Weizmann Canada, please visit www.weizmann.ca .

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Teacher puts Jewish focus on yoga

Frances Kraft
Staff Reporter

"It's very hard for girls who want to keep Shabbat or be observant to go to regular yoga training," says Kinneret Dubowitz, who instituted a yoga teachers' training course for observant Jewish women about five years ago.

In addition to classes that may fall on Shabbat or Jewish holidays, there are religious aspects to yoga, related to its Hindu roots, that are emphasized more in classes for teachers than they are in regular classes, she said.

Dubowitz – who teaches private yoga classes as well as classes for children at three Jewish schools – trained as a yoga teacher in the 1990s when she was less religiously observant.

While some people would argue that much of yoga is spiritual rather than religious, Dubowitz points out that there is a distinction between Jewish and Hindu spiritual paths. "The goal of Judaism is not enlightenment. It's [keeping] the laws and commandments of God."

In her classes, she focuses on aspects of yoga that are "more pareve, yet add a more Jewish spiritual angle."

At the same time, she brings in Jewish ideas. "There are lots of Jewish sources for understanding of breath," she said. "Breath is so essential in yoga."

She started teaching prospective yoga teachers five years ago in a class with seven students. Since then, 57 women have taken her courses. The first two courses were in Toronto, but Dubowitz noted that most of her students were from out of the country. Since then, she has expanded to New York and Israel, and there have been two courses in each location. She now has employees in both places. Sarede Switzer, a former Montrealer, runs the New York program.

"There's a big need for this in Israel," Dubowitz said. Her class there was started after she met someone from Toronto who had made aliyah. "She asked me if I would do a program there, so I asked her to help me organize it. We had 15 women."

In the Orthodox community, there has recently been increased interest in exercise and movement

Kinneret Dubowitz
[Frances Kraft photo]

A reintegration of body and mind

The class took place in Katamon, where Dubowitz rented a martial arts studio used mostly by secular Israelis.

Her 1999 master's thesis was on the integration of movement and Judaism. "I've been looking at the idea of why Jews are so cerebral," she said. In Temple times, she noted, "we praised God with timbrels and drums."

When Jews were sent into exile after the fall of the Second Temple, dancing was banned because they were mourning, she said.

Dubowitz said her work brings together like-minded women who are interested in the idea of the body and Judaism.

In the Orthodox community, there has recently been increased interest in exercise and movement, she said.

Historically – with the exception of the chassidic movement and its emphasis on physical expression of spirituality – the opposite was often the case. The Greeks and other cultures used to emphasize the body while "Judaism wanted to focus on the soul."

Now, she believes, "I think we're in the next stage" – a reintegration of body and mind.

For more information, go to kinneretyoga.com.

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Family physicians making a difference

— 'The unsung medical heroes slugging away' —

Barbara Silverstein
Special to The CJN

Dr. Sandy Buchman, a leading expert in palliative and primary care cancer management, says caring for dying patients is "not a job. It's a calling."

He describes end-of-life care as "a journey" with the patient. "The relationship is profoundly meaningful for us and the family members."

The Toronto-based doctor was recently installed as president of the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC).

Buchman says many family physicians are dealing with the complex problems of chronic diseases of aging patients. "Family doctors are the unsung medical heroes slugging away."

At the CFPC installation, he honoured Dr. Joe Greenberg, an older physician he calls his role model. "Dr. Joe, as most people know him, inspired me to go into medicine.

"I knew him as a child when he looked after my ailing grandmother. He made house calls to her and just about everyone else in town."

'It is important as Jews that we are seen to be contributing to the world in a positive way... This is our obligation. This is our commandment.'

Buchman, a graduate of McMaster University medical school, had a busy family practice in Mississauga for 22 years before turning to full-time palliative care. He began working at the in-patient palliative care unit at Baycrest, although he is currently on a leave of absence.

He also provides home-based palliative care with the Temmy Latner Centre for Palliative Care at Mount Sinai Hospital, where he serves as education lead, and he is the primary care lead at Sunnybrook and Princess Margaret hospitals for the Toronto Regional Cancer Care Program at Cancer Care Ontario.

Buchman's journey into palliative care began almost by chance. In 1984, he was looking after his first HIV patient, who was too sick to be referred to an AIDS clinic. "A family doctor does not abandon his patients. In the early days, AIDS was a palliative diagnosis. We had to learn by doing."

He began getting more referrals for HIV and AIDS patients and developed an expertise in this area of practice.

Buchman works on a multi-disciplinary team of professionals providing home-based palliative care. Patients range in age from the frail elderly to children, he says, noting that there's a "tsunami" of people in their 50s who are dying from terminal illnesses.

When he is on call, Buchman provides 24/7 service to patients at home. "They could be having a respiratory problem in the middle of the night."

He says working in palliative care helps him deal with his own health and mortality. "The work is challenging, intellectually and emotionally, but it's incredibly rewarding. It imbues my life with meaning and relevance... It provides a frame of reverence. Time is limited.

"You improve your concept of self-care and you focus on what's important. You cherish what you have and you're appreciative of every day."

Family life is a priority for Buchman. "I organize my life around my marriage and my children."

His wife of 32 years is Gail Baker, co-founder, principal and head of the Toronto Heschel School. They have three "wonderful" sons, two of whom are engaged.

Buchman is committed to the concept of tikkun olam, the obligation in Judaism to repair the world.

Through his long involvement with Ve'ahavta, the Canadian humanitarian and relief organization, he has worked with the homeless in Toronto and participated in humanitarian trips to South America and Africa.

When each of his sons turned 21, they accompanied him on a Ve'ahavta medical mission. His oldest and youngest accompanied him to Guyana, while his middle son went to Zimbabwe.

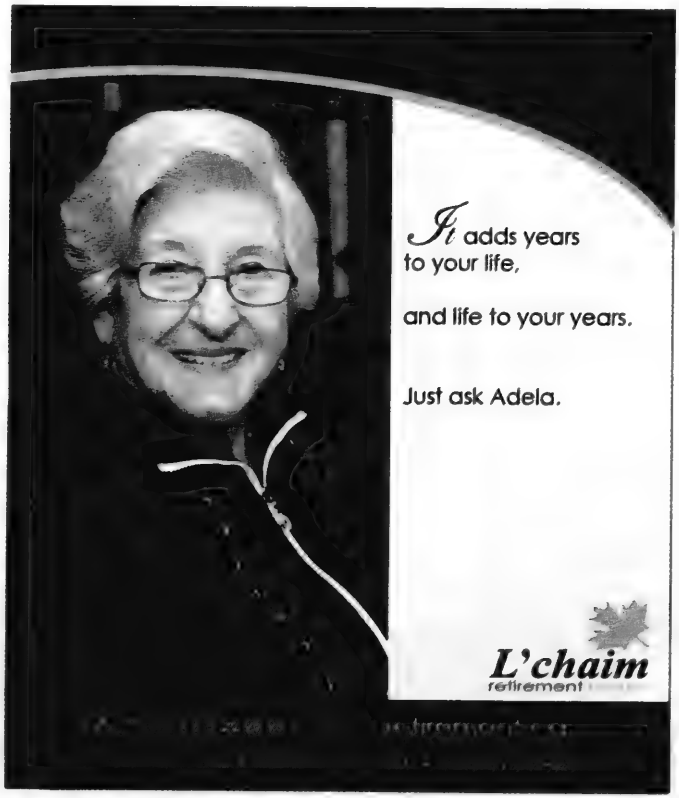
He has also participated in a mission to Malawi sponsored by the Canadian Medical Foundation.

"It is important as Jews that we are seen to be contributing to the world in a positive way... This is our obligation. This is our commandment."

Buchman says he's not the only Jewish family physician making a tremendous difference. Others, he says, include Dr. Cheryl Levitt, a provincial leader in primary care cancer management, Dr. Val Rachlis – "he transformed North York General Hospital" – and Dr. David Tannenbaum, chief of family medicine at Mt. Sinai Hospital and now president of the College of Family Physicians of Ontario.

"They are part and parcel of a group of incredible colleagues who are leading the way in improving hospital and community care. I am immensely proud of them."

Dr. Sandy Buchman



Women's 'Frumba' fitness program takes off

Vicky Tobianah
Special to The CJN

When Bette Barmherzig approached Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue with the idea of starting a women's fitness class, she did not know that in just three years, she would have more than 600 women participating in her classes at four different synagogues across the city.

Barmherzig has been working in the fitness industry for over 20 years, as a wellness coach to help people put fitness into their lifestyle, as a fitness instructor and in recipe development. Drawing on this diverse experience, she created the "Frumba" fitness program, a Jewish women's wellness program that combines cardio, strength, toning, stretches, balance development and bone-building resistance training.

"I saw that a lot of people wanted to get healthier and wanted to exercise but didn't have the motivation or familiarity to do so. This program helps make fitness fun and takes the work out of workout, so women can look forward to the class instead of finding reasons to put off exercise," said Barmherzig.

She learned about the need for a program like this firsthand. In 2003, she fell off a ladder and her ankle was completely rebuilt. She had a hard time getting back into shape, but found that whenever music was on, she could push herself further. "A lot of the moves come from my own journey with rehabilitation. Music seems to almost block out pain," she said.

The class incorporates moves from zumba, salsa, yoga and classic dance techniques, against a background of

Bette Barmherzig

Jewish music – anything from *Fiddler on the Roof* to Israeli hip hop. It is only run for women, and it is designed to respect Jewish values.

What makes the program unique is the open, inclusive environment of the class. "A lot of friendships are created. Women from every spectrum of observance come to the classes and feel connected to one another because of the openness and friendliness created by dancing," she said.

"Our lives today are so full of responsibilities that often taking care of yourself takes a back side. This program allows women to socialize, network and recharge in one place.

She calls the program the "sisterhood of the travelling *tantz*," which means dance in Yiddish.

Participants range from ages seven to 70. "I thought it would be interesting to develop a fitness program which you can do with your daughter, mother or grandmother."

Barmherzig never thought it would take off so quickly and is thankful she can give women a chance to feel renewed. "It's so motivating when people tell me that I made them feel young and beautiful again," she said. "I tell everyone to leave their troubles at the door and I make sure they feel like they're on top of the world when they leave."

One way she does this is by selecting music and movements that are respectful of women and not degrading or demeaning. "We're working on strengthening our physical selves through the movements and our emotional selves by working together as women and using music that empowers us," she said.

She hopes to expand the program to more synagogues across the city and train more staff to offer additional classes, including a summer Frumba Splash program.

"It's more than just a fitness class – it's a sisterhood."

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Living a gluten-free life

Shayla Gunter-Goldstein
Special to The CJN

When Lisa Cantkier was a toddler, her parents were devastated to be told by her doctors that she was dying of cancer. But today, she's looking pretty good, and feels great too, living gluten-free since she was only 18 months old.

In 1977, Lisa was hospitalized for nearly eight weeks, and doctors were unable to figure out the problem. Her symptoms: chronic diarrhea, malnourishment, hair loss, severe fatigue and failure to thrive. Doctors at the Hospital for Sick Children diagnosed terminal cancer. Then, someone gave her a banana.

A keen-eyed nurse documented how well the young girl tolerated the banana. Her problem must be digestive, doctors surmised, and ordered a biopsy. When the results indicated that little Lisa had celiac disease, her whole family breathed a sigh of relief – kind of.

Lisa's celiac was severe, and in the late 1970s, celiac was not a common diagnosis, nor in the public eye. Only one in 4,000 Canadians were thought to have it and there was much to be learned.

In the '60s and '70s, children were dying, diagnosed with cancer, as Lisa had been. Experts now believe that in many of those cases, the true diagnosis should have been celiac disease.

According to the Canadian Celiac Association (CCA), celiac disease is a "medical condition in which the absorptive surface of the small intestine is damaged by a substance called gluten." Gluten is a protein found in wheat and related grains that gives bread its structure and elasticity.

In celiac disease, according to the CCA, the damaged small intestine "is unable to absorb nutrients: protein, fat, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals, which are necessary for good health."

About one in 133 people in Canada are now affected by celiac disease. In addition, up to 15 per cent of the population has some sort of intolerance or sensitivity to gluten or wheat. That number is expected to rise. There is no cure, but celiac disease is controlled by following a gluten-free diet.

Lisa Cantkier

Living a gluten-free life today can still be a challenge, but it's a far cry from Lisa's experience growing up in Toronto in the late 1970s and early '80s. Her parents, founding volunteers and members of the CCA, helped initiate the first celiac support group in Toronto. They were responsible for the introduction of the first gluten-free breads here. They used rice flours and made all of Lisa's meals and baked goods from scratch.

Despite being teased on occasion for her "weird bread," Lisa didn't realize how difficult it was to grow up gluten-free. It was all she knew, and her parents made sure she had a normal childhood. Still, there was no pizza, and no birthday cake for her at friends' parties. Lisa had to forgo overnight camp and certain school programs, as none would accommodate her special needs. It was almost like having a disability, Lisa explains.

Before marrying, Cantkier worked for over 10 years in education, mostly as an Ontario certified special education resource teacher. This led her on her path helping create accommodations for children and adults with special needs. "I want there to be accessibility, because I grew up without it," she says.

Lisa now works outside the classroom for a government-funded research organization, where she supports large-scale research projects that focus on government policies and programs in education, and for the disadvantaged. She's also a full-time wife and mother, and does volunteer work for cancer research and outreach organizations.

Above and beyond her other committments, however, is her "new baby" on which Lisa is spending every waking moment and all her extra energy: in December 2011, Lisa launched GlutenFreeFind.com, a comprehensive, user-friendly, gluten-free directory.

Lisa says, "with a focus on healthy living, the website provides accessibility to everything gluten-free, from A to Z."

The website has already created a buzz in the gluten-free world. Manufacturers and venues want to list with her, chefs want to contribute to her recipe section, and bloggers want to be featured on her blog. GlutenFreeFind.com is a member of the Canadian Celiac Association and the Celiac Sprue Association.

Lisa has been featured in local magazines and on Rogers Cable, and her list of testimonials is growing weekly, including from some high profile U.S. celebrities who follow her on Twitter and advertise on the site. Her Facebook page is active on a daily basis, with recipe posts and links to gluten-free deals in the GTA.

What Lisa believes sets her site apart from other gluten-free websites is that GlutenFreeFind.com focuses on every category related to gluten-free living.

There are currently nearly 30 categories, all free to navigate, with information ranging from where to buy products and how to travel gluten-free, to where to send your celiac kids to camp and where someone observant can find kosher gluten-free foods. Lisa is constantly researching venues, manufacturers and programs, in the hope of expanding the site and reaching out to other major Canadian cities. Her goal is to become a comprehensive Canadian resource.

All this is making Lisa an extremely busy woman, and she shows no signs of letting celiac disease slow her down. For more information, visit www.glutenfreefind.com.

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Scientists discover parallels in their lives

Jennifer M. MacLeod
Special to The CJN

A series of extraordinary coincidences that began before World War II brought two professionals together at a conference last September, and proved the truth of the old expression, "where there's life, there's hope."

In 2011, the Canadian Sleep Society made the unprecedented decision to honour two individuals with its Distinguished Scientist Award for lifetime contribution to the field of sleep research and education in Canada: Dr. Ben Rusak, a psychologist specializing in circadian rhythms, and Dr. Meir Kryger, the physician who founded Canada's first lab to study patients with sleep breathing problems.

Accepting the award, Kryger, who now lives in Connecticut, briefly mentioned that he was happy to be back in Canada, the home that had ultimately taken his family in from the refugee camps of Germany. "I was born without a country… Canada was my first home."

Rusak, also born in a German refugee camp, was startled: "I was sitting going, 'Whoa, what a coincidence.'"

After the presentation, Kryger says, "Ben [Rusak] came up to me, and we started to compare notes: we were both displaced persons, both families were holocaust survivors, both came to Canada."

The two men already knew each other professionally: As editor for *The Principles and Practice of Sleep Medicine*, known in medical circles as the "Sleep bible," Kryger had spoken with Rusak about a chapter he contributed. However, there is little overlap between their specialties, and they'd never talked at length. If Kryger hadn't made his comments, the two might have never discovered the parallels between their lives. "It wouldn't have come up if he hadn't made that offhand allusion to where he was born," Rusak says.

In their conversation following the ceremony, more similarities emerged. Both families came from Lodz, in Poland. "My father was a soldier in the Polish army," Rusak says. He was astonished that Kryger's had been as well.

"He was conscripted in 1939 and fought in the opening battle of the war when the German tanks came through." Kryger's father was in the same position: "It was spooky to compare notes."

Dr. Meir Kryger, left, and Dr. Ben Rusak accept the Canadian Sleep Society's Distinguished Scientist Award for lifetime contribution to the field.

Rusak was astonished to hear essentially what he'd heard from his own father: "they almost died 100 times… When everything got quiet and all their officers disappeared, everyone surviving in the Polish army headed for Bialystok, a border town where Russia met occupied Poland."

His father made the dangerous journey back to Lodz and warned others to get out. "He got… my mother, his sister and her husband to come with him, [but] most of the people… refused. 'The Germans weren't going to be so bad, they were civilized people, not like the Poles. Things would settle down.'"

Neither family remained long in Bialystok. They were deported to Siberia, then Uzbekistan. After the war, Rusak's family returned to Lodz, but word of the first postwar pogrom convinced them it was time to leave. They crossed Czechoslovakia and Austria into Germany.

"Meir's family followed the same route, settling in a camp near the German border."

Families in the camps applied to any country where they had family: Rusak had relatives in Tel Aviv, Buenos Aires, New York and Toronto. Canada came through first, and in 1949, they crossed the Atlantic in steerage to Pier 21 in Halifax, "where, ironically, I now live," he says.

They settled in Toronto, where Rusak grew up and attended university. After receiving his PhD at Berkeley, he was offered a position at Dalhousie University, where he's been teaching for 36 years now.

Kryger's route was more circuitous. "Our family moved to Israel. We lived in Tel Aviv until about 1953, then we ended up in Canada." He grew up in Montreal and attended McGill University. After three years of graduate studies in Colorado, he moved back to Canada to begin his pioneering work investigating apnea as a cause of sleep disturbance. "By the time I left, I had treated more than 15,000 patients." He is currently at Yale University.

Meeting Rusak was "very moving," Kryger says. "We were both extremely successful… yet we had both come from and were born into nothing. We didn't have a home, didn't have a country… it didn't look like we really had a future."

While he was growing up, his parents and others were reluctant to talk about what had happened during the war. "I didn't find out… until 1982 that my mother had another child who died."

Much of what he's learned came from a book his mother wrote with a nephew, available on Amazon.com, titled *A Passover in Rome*. His father-in-law, a World War II surgeon, also wrote his memoirs, which Kryger has passed on to his own children. "They're all very aware of it."

During a professional trip, Rusak actually returned to Poland to see where his family had come from. He visited Lodz and walked the streets and "probably the same tram tracks my father walked across in the '20s."

The parallels didn't stop with the previous generation: Rusak points out that both he and Kryger married blonde psychologists from the United States, both of whose fathers had served with the U.S. army in Europe. He marvels at their "very independent lives," which have intersected on so many levels.

Kryger, who maintains close ties with Canada, is now a proud member of Mishkan Israel, New England's oldest synagogue, which is renowned for social action, aiding the homeless, hungry and disenfranchised. "I've always felt and taught my kids… it's very important to take care of poor people." He credits this to his own background. "These are people that need help and I feel strongly that I need to do that."

For both, sharing the Distinguished Scientist award highlighted more than just their professional accomplishments: it broadcast the message that anyone can surpass difficult circumstances to reach the pinnacle of professional accomplishment.

"You can arise from a very, very difficult birth and childhood and actually succeed," Kryger says.

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Eat well for a healthy heart

Daphna Rabinovitch
Special to The CJN

February may be heart month but looking after your heart and overall health is truly a 24/7 job. With the plethora of produce and lean meats in your local supermarket, cooking and eating healthfully has never been simpler.

Of course, it's always a good idea to be armed with a few guidelines. First, variety. Not only is it the spice of life, but it's the fastest way to a healthy diet as well. Eat lots of different kinds of leafy greens, cruciferous vegetables and deeply coloured vegetables. Eat fruit whenever you can, and eat it in season. When berries cost a king's ransom, opt for the frozen variety and you'll be sure to get your quota in.

Choose lean meats, and try to eat heart healthy fish at least twice a week. Complex carbohydrates such as whole grains and cereals as well as nuts and seeds have numerous benefits and should be consumed regularly. The kale soup featured below is full of good-for-you items. Kale - and other leafy green vegetables - have been linked with a lower risk of cancer, heart disease and osteoporosis.

Other studies have shown that eating just one daily serving of green leafy vegetables can reduce the risk of heart disease by up to 23 per cent. Kale is also blessed with vitamins C and E (good for brain cells) and K (great for your bones), and lutein (your eyes will thank you.) The fish dish found below will give you plenty of inspiration and variety.

And don't forget complex carbohydrates. The barley in the risotto is high in thiamin and fibre as well as numerous vitamins and minerals, including calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, vitamin A, vitamin E, niacin and folate.

CHICK PEA, KALE AND TURKEY MEATBALL SOUP

Not just a meal in a bowl, this powerhouse of a potage boasts a lean source of protein, turkey, as well as the presence of kale, one of the most beneficial of greens. Partnering with all of this is the cholesterol lowering properties of chickpeas, which also contain healthful amounts of potassium, calcium and magnesium.

Meatballs:

1 lb. ground turkey or chicken
½ tsp. each dried oregano and dried coriander leaves
¼ tsp. fennel seeds, crushed
¼ tsp. each salt and pepper
pinch cayenne pepper

Soup:

2 tbsp. olive oil
1 large onion, finely chopped
3 carrots, finely chopped
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 1/2 tsp. salt
1 tsp. each dried oregano and dried coriander leaves
½ tsp. pepper
pinch cayenne pepper
1 can (14 oz.) diced tomatoes
4 cups chicken stock
1 can (14 oz.) chickpeas, drained and rinsed
7 cups kale, cut into thin strips

For meatballs; In bowl, mix together turkey, oregano, coriander, fennel, salt, pepper and cayenne pepper. Form into 16 one-in. meatballs.

In large Dutch oven, heat oil over medium heat. Add meatballs, cook, turning twice, for 8 to 10 minutes or until no longer pink inside. Remove to plate. Add onions, carrots, garlic and three tbsp. of water to pan. Cook, stirring to scrape up any brown bits, for 5 minutes or until softened.

Stir in salt, oregano, coriander, pepper and cayenne for 30 seconds. Pour in tomatoes, stock and 1 cup water. Bring to a boil. Add meatballs back to pan along with chick peas. Reduce heat and simmer, with the cover slightly ajar for 10 minutes. Stir in kale; cook stirring, occasionally, for about 10 minutes or until kale is thoroughly wilted. Makes 8-1/2 cups, 6 servings.

Food to Live By [Myra Goodman]

FAJITAS WITH LIME MARINATED HADDOCK AND GUACAMOLE

Fajitas lend themselves to a variety of fillings and this fish variation, with its Cuban and Latin American undertones, fits the weekday table beautifully. It only takes minutes to prepare but make sure to buy the avocado ahead of time so it has time to ripen. It's a good idea to have avocados on hand all the time. Although high in fat, it's a heart healthy fat, namely mono and polyunsaturated. In addition, a half cup of mashed avocado has 15 per cent of the RDA for vitamin E, 18 per cent for folate, and 34 per cent for panthothenic acid. It also contains small amounts of iron and zinc as well as a not too shabby eight grams of dietary fibre.

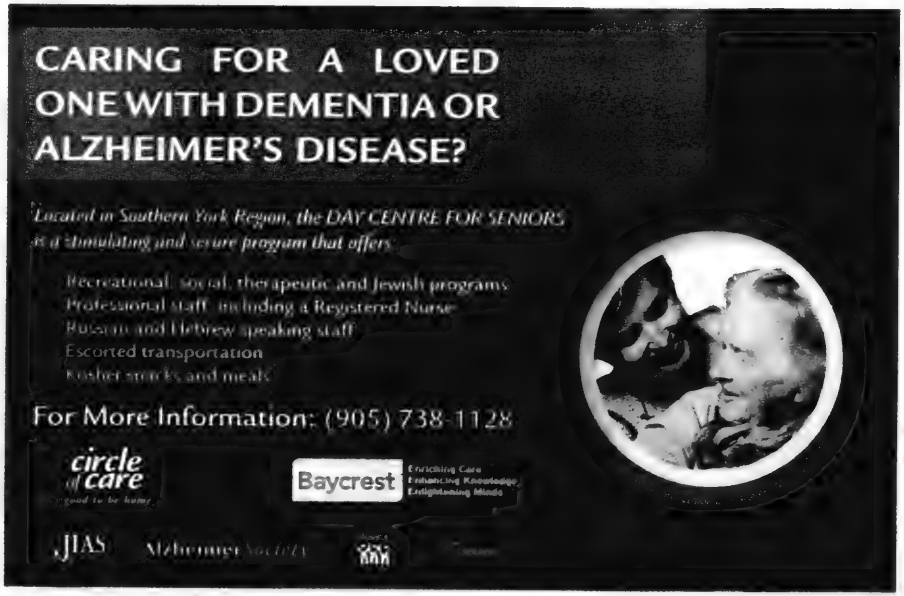
Haddock

3 tbsp. canola oil
¼ cup lime juice
2 cloves garlic, minced
¼ cup chopped fresh coriander
1 tsp. chili powder
¾ tsp. ground coriander
pinch hot pepper flakes
4 haddock fillets (each about 6 oz.)

In bowl, stir together oil, lime juice, garlic, fresh and ground coriander, chili powder and hot pepper flakes. Stir in fish until well coated. Marinate at room temperature for 15 minutes.

Transfer fish to foil lined baking sheet. Broil, 4 to 6 inches from broiler for about 7 minutes, or until fish flakes easily.

Continued on page B11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A little bit goes a long way

Continued from page B10

Fajitas:

1 large ripe avocado, halved and pitted
1 large clove garlic, minced
2 tbsp. lime juice
¼ tsp. salt
¼ cup chopped fresh coriander
½ each red, orange and yellow pepper, cut into thin strips
6 green onions, sliced
4 lettuce leaves
4 10-in. whole wheat flour tortillas

Remove flesh from inside each half of avocado; place in bowl. Add garlic and lime juice; mash until smooth with a few larger chunks of avocado. Stir in coriander and salt. Arrange sweet pepper strips, green onions and lettuce on platter. Flake fish. Divide guacamole evenly among 4 flour tortillas, spreading to cover most of surface. Place lettuce leaf over. Arrange fish, peppers and green onions over half of tortilla. Roll up to serve as fajita. Makes 4 servings.

BARLEY RISOTTO WITH ROASTED BUTTERNUT SQUASH AND SPINICH

You can use either pot barley or pearl barley for this risotto. Butternut squash, like most deeply coloured winter squash, is an excellent source of beta-carotene, a nutrient that is converted into vitamin A in the body. Beta carotene is also a potent antioxidant which studies suggest may fight off certain types of cancer and heart disease. Beta carotene is more easily absorbed by the body if eaten with a little bit of fat or oil so be sure to coat it lightly before cooking. All that is required is about 1 teaspoon of oil per person to boost your body's ability to absorb this carotenoid.

4 cups cubed butternut squash (about 1 squash)
2 tbsp. olive oil
½ tsp. salt

Risotto:

3 cups vegetable broth, preferably low sodium
2 tbsp. olive oil
1 onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 tbsp. chopped fresh sage
1 tsp. salt
½ tsp. pepper
1 cup barley
½ cup dry white wine
1 bunch (10 oz) baby spinach, trimmed and cut into thin strips
½ cup grated Parmesan cheese

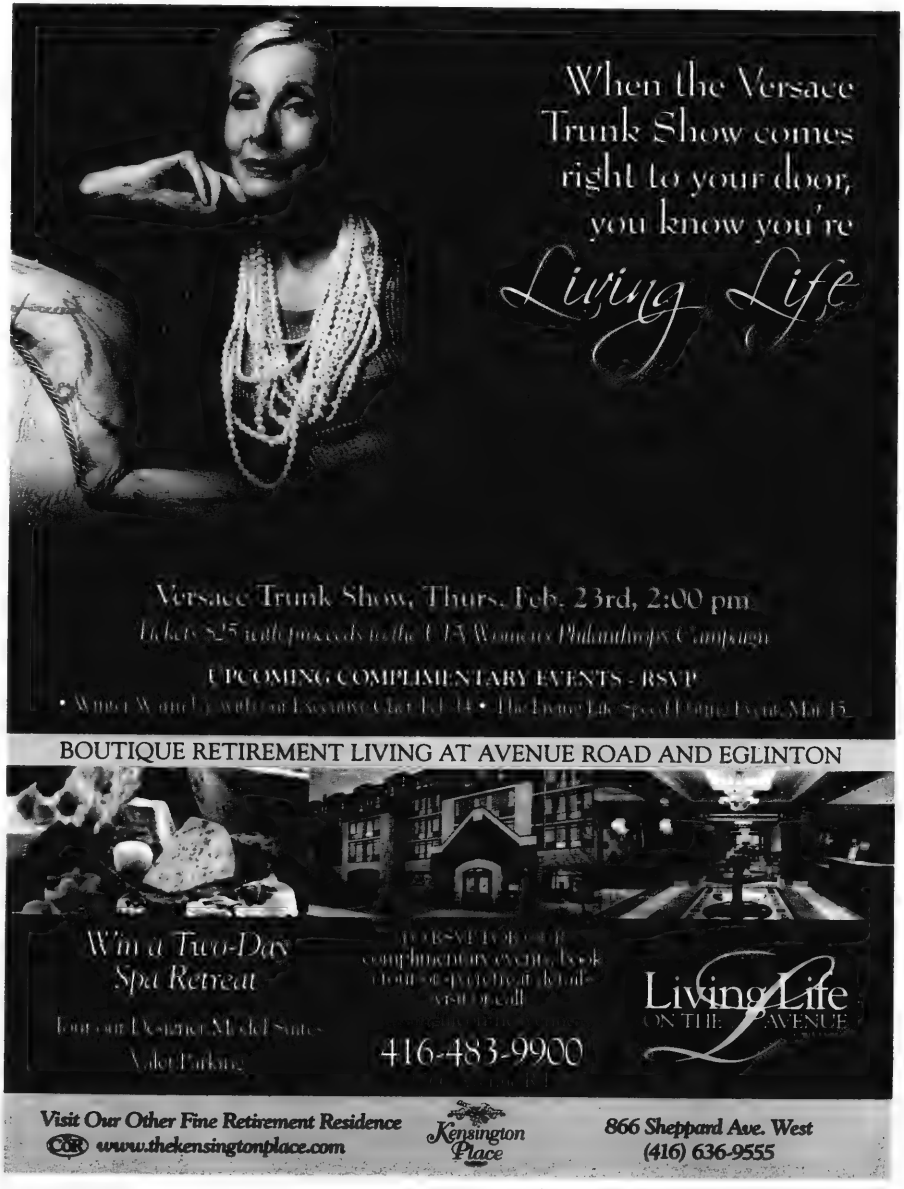
Preheat oven to 400. In bowl, toss together squash cubes, oil and salt until squash is evenly coated. Arrange in single layer on aluminum foil lined baking sheet. Bake in centre of preheated oven, stirring once, for about 35 minutes or until golden and tender.

Meanwhile, combine stock and 1 1/2 cups water in saucepan. Heat over low heat.

In large saucepan, heat oil over medium heat. Add onion, garlic and sage; cook, stirring, for 3 minutes. Stir in salt, pepper and barley until barley is well coated. Increase heat to medium high. Pour in wine; cook, stirring, until wine is completely absorbed. Stir in 1-1/2 cups of the stock mixture.

Cook, stirring, occasionally, until stock is absorbed. Repeat with another 1 1/2 cups of stock mixture, cook and stirring occasionally until all of liquid is absorbed. Pour in last 1 1/2 cups of liquid; cook, stirring occasionally until almost all of liquid is absorbed and barley is tender. The whole process should take between 45 and 50 minutes. Stir in spinach until completely wilted. Gently stir in warm squash. Serve warm with cheese sprinkled on top. Makes 4 servings.

Healthy salads taste good too.
Food to Live By **[Myra Goodman]**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Shayla Gunter-Goldstein
Special to The CJN

Adrenaline is my friend.

Without it, I'd never get my appetizers done at 1:30 a.m. before my brunch guests arrive the next morning. I'd never be able to calm my overtired six-year-old after long holiday visits. I'd never manage to restrain my screaming toddler as I give him his asthma puffer and horrid antibiotics for pneumonia. I'd never be able to spend the night in the emergency room with my ailing mother, sleeping sporadically between tests and blaring announcements.

I'd never manage to do my work, run errands, attend doctor's appointments, pick my sons up at school and daycare before being charged overtime, and get home to cook dinner and do the evening routine with my hard-working and equally tired husband before falling asleep on the couch or at my computer while editing one last story.

Without adrenaline, I think I might just collapse from exhaustion. It has been an extremely trying year in our family. We are truly the sandwich generation.

The sandwich generation is defined as a generation of people, typically in their 30s or 40s, responsible for raising their own children and for the care of their aging parents. As older parents (I had my first child at 39 and my husband is four years my senior), we find ourselves handling the terrible twos and potty training, Grade 1 anxieties and vehement exertion of independence, while at the same time being concerned with parents who – in their eighth decades – are dealing with cognitive issues, depression, failing vision and a slew of other health concerns. It is especially difficult to see this happening to previously vibrant and enthusiastic people. Plus, we feel guilty about not being able to be "superhumans" – everything for everybody around us. It's stressful, to say the least.

These challenges are making me question how my life turned this corner, when I used to be an organized, social, "together" person, whom friends admired for my parenting skills and ability to still have fun and keep up friendships.

I suppose it's a natural flow of life. We all have challenges and obstacles. We all feel overwhelmed at times. We all know we should take better care of our health, eat right, exercise more, take time for ourselves, our spouses and our friends. How many of us truly make the commitment to ourselves and actually do those things? I know I haven't. I know I need to. Adrenaline is going to carry me only so far.

Shayla Gunter-Goldstein's family includes, back row from left, Ari 2-1/2, Shayla, Jack and Jack's mom, Sonja; middle row, Matti, 6, and front, Sharyn (Shayla's mom), left, and Reuben (Shayla's stepfather).

Lately, I feel like Tevye from *Fiddler on the Roof*, as he says to God, "I know we are the chosen people, but once in a while, can't you choose someone else?"

I also know, though, that we are truly blessed with a wonderful family, amazing friends whom we lean on often, employment, shelter, clothing, food, children who are usually a joy, general good health, and love that continues to grow. We just might need some extra adrenaline to help us through the rough spots.

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This Week

National

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Canadian remembrance at Yad Vashem

During his visit last week in Israel, Canadian Foreign Minister John Baird attended an official ceremony at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem for the expansion of the memorial museum's educational facilities. Baird told the assembly at the ceremony that "Israel has no better friend in the world than Canada." While at Yad Vashem, Baird also laid a wreath at the Hall of Remembrance in memory of the six million Jews murdered in the Holocaust. In the background from left, are, Miriam Ziv, Israel's ambassador to Canada; Paul Hunt, Canada's ambassador to Israel; Fran Sonshine, national chair of the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem, and Robert Rozett, director of the Yad Vashem Libraries. ***Please see related stories on pages 8, 27 and 28.***

[Mati Milstein photo]

Iranian military man aids Syria's brutality: report

Zvi Bar'el
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — A top Iranian military official is actively aiding the regime of Syrian President Bashar Assad in suppressing popular unrest in the country, a top member of the Syrian National Council said on Monday.

According to the Syrian official, Kassam Salimani, commander of the Quds Force, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard's special forces unit, came to Syria recently and is working in the war room that manages army manoeuvres against opposition forces.

Assad himself is reported to be constantly in the war room, along with his brother, Maher, his brother-in-law, Assaf Shaukat, and cousin, Rami Makhlouf. The Syrian chief of staff's authority has reportedly been restricted and divided among other military commanders.

The Quds Force includes 15,000 elite soldiers who have operated in Iraq and other locations and specialize in unconventional warfare on foreign soil. Among its other duties, the Quds Force is in charge of training and funding Hezbollah.

Salimani's presence in Syria serves as an indication of the kind of battle Assad is planning against opposition forces, with the Syrian army reportedly planning to wage all out war against the rebel city of Homs.

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Obama says U.S. and Israel in 'lock-step' on Iran – please see page 29

Canada

Rabbis Graduate

TORONTO — Rabbi David Seed, associate rabbi of Toronto's Adath Israel Congregation, and Toronto-born Rabbi David Wise, spiritual leader of Hollis Hills Jewish Center in New York City, were two of the first 14 graduates from a new year-long program that trains rabbis to help run the business side of their synagogues. The Rabbinic Management Institute's Certificate Program in Nonprofit Management is a joint venture of the Conservative movement's Rabbinical Assembly, the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies and the American Jewish University in Los Angeles.

UIA Name Change

TORONTO — UIA Federations Canada changed its name to Jewish Federations of Canada-UIA last week in order to "[clarify] the centrality of our partnership with the Canadian Jewish Federations and communities," president Marc Gold said. Since 1967, Jewish Federations of Canada-UIA has worked in partnership with Jewish federations and regional communities across Canada to strengthen Jewish life and raise funds for programs and services in Canada, Israel and overseas. The name change "is the beginning of a process of clarifying and revalidating the role and function of the national organization," its board said last week.

World

Rabbi Reinstated

AMSTERDAM — The chief rabbi of Amsterdam, who was suspended for signing a statement on "curing" homosexuality, has been reinstated. Rabbi Aryeh Ralbag of New York, who travels to the Netherlands several times a year to rule on matters of Jewish law, was suspended in mid-January by the executive committee of the Jewish Community of Amsterdam pending a face-to-face meeting to discuss his signature on the "Declaration On The Torah Approach To Homosexuality." He was among 180 rabbis, Jewish leaders and mental health workers who signed the declaration, reportedly initiated by Jews who say they've overcome being gay. He said he was wrong to include his position with his signature.

Mom Seeks Child's Return From Prince

Mother and daughter

PARIS — A Jewish mother in France won the first step in an international custody battle against a Saudi prince she says kidnapped her daughter.

A Paris criminal court ruled last month in favour of Candice Cohen-Ahnine's plea to "get back" her 10-year-old daughter, Haya. Cohen-Ahnine claims Haya has been held captive by the girl's father, Prince Sattam al-Saud, a member of the Saudi royal family, since September 2008. Along with having to return the girl to her mother, the prince also was ordered to pay monthly child support of more than $13,000.

"It's a first step in a long journey," Cohen-Ahnine's lawyers said.

Cohen-Ahnine says that when she agreed to visit Sattam with her daughter in 2008 after the couple had separated, she was locked up in a Riyadh palace and separated from Haya. Accused of being a Muslim who converted to Judaism – a capital crime in Saudi Arabia – Cohen-Ahnine was able to escape to the French Embassy and return to France. But Haya has remained behind.

Following the Jan. 12 court ruling, Sattam could face an international arrest warrant if he does not return Haya. But he reportedly doesn't intend to co-operate.

Cohen-Ahnine, 34, met the prince in London when she was 18. Despite differences in religion and nationality, the couple continued their relationship, and Haya was born in 2001. But the couple separated in 2006.

Correction

The caption for last week's front-page photo ("Canadian Cabinet Ministers in Israel") incorrectly identified Finance Minister Jim Flaherty. *The CJN* regrets the error.

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Protesters disrupt pro-Israel event at Western

Israel on Campus calls on student council to take action

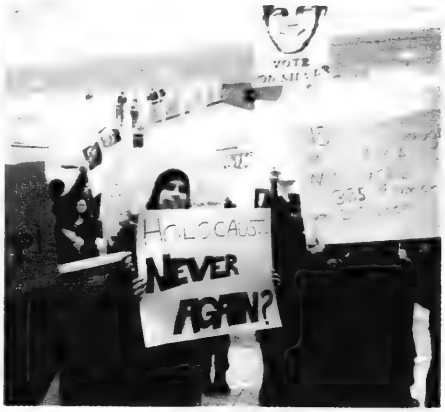
Sheri Shefa
Staff Reporter

Members of the group Israel on Campus (IOC) at the University of Western Ontario are calling on their student council to respond to an anti-Israel protest that violated Western's building usage policy.

On Feb. 1, IOC organized a tabling event beginning at 9 a.m. in the atrium of Western's University Community Centre (UCC) to celebrate Israeli culture, film, music and food.

IOC president Sara Gurza said each student group is granted permission by the University Students' Council (USC) to present a display in the school's atrium.

"This was our day to have that space, and we chose to celebrate our culture. We like to create a very apolitical environment for the day so we can engage as many people as possible," Gurza said.



Anti-Israel protesters wore duct tape and waved signs at Jewish event at Western.

She said that at around 1:30 p.m., members of the campus group Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights (SPHR), as well as members of the Occupy London movement, approached their display holding signs and wearing duct tape over their mouths.

The signs included messages such as "Israel steals 83 per cent of Palestinian water," and "You can't sugarcoat apartheid."

"They fully blocked our display so that no one could see it," Gurza said.

"We approached them and said, 'We're trying to celebrate our culture. Why are you protesting this?'"

Aubrey Chapnick, a third-year business student and an IOC member, said he tried to engage the 30 protesters in conversation, but they refused to speak to him.

"We asked them, 'Why are your mouths taped up? We want to talk to you. It's the only way the peace process can work. They wouldn't talk to us. They would only talk to the media," Chapnick said.

Continued on page 18

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Hope as realism

From the editor's desk...

Last Sunday morning, Prof. Mordechai Kedar of Bar-Ilan University in Israel, urged a breakfast gathering of committed, concerned and caring Jews at the Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue in north central Toronto "not to lose hope."

The scholarly visitor from the BESA Center for Strategic Studies at Bar-Ilan was referring to the possibility that the Arabs of the Middle East might one day reconcile to a sovereign Jewish presence in its midst.

Kedar is no Pollyanna peering at the Middle East through lenses of rosy optimism and gee-whiz whimsy. He is a hardened veteran of the intelligence service of the Israel Defence Forces and one of Israel's leading experts on the Arab world and the development of Islam.

He is a realist who listens to, reads of and speaks with men and women of the Arab world from all walks of life. In a sense, he is a high-reaching set of antennae picking up the signals from the region, studying and interpreting them for a society thirsting to drink from the cup of normalized relations with its neighbours.

He harbours no illusions regarding Israel's enemies.

Yet he told the audience of his contacts with Arab intellectuals, politicians and "ordinary" Arabs who express opinions and made comments to him privately that do not conform with the usual fare of Israel-as-Satan and enemy.

Kedar pointed out that it is among the religious leaders that the most blatant anti-Jewish and anti-Israel opinions prevail. For Muslims, Kedar explained, Islam "replaced" Judaism and Christianity, too, for that matter, as the way to Divine truth. Thus, Muslim religious thinkers and leaders would be hard pressed to publicly admit to the equal legitimacy of Judaism, lest they thereby negate the validity of the replacement aspect of Islamic theology.

And yet even among religious leaders, Kedar related, there are examples of individuals in the region whose theology increasingly allows for and encompasses aspects of Jewish legitimacy.

To be sure, Kedar emphasized, there is no revolution yet of positive or even neutral attitudes toward the Jewish state, but "there is hope," he said.

With the rapid advances in modern technology and ever-changing media, he suggested a new generation of young Arabs – perhaps the next one or the one after that – might arise to challenge the stifling, medieval Muslim orthodoxy that marginalizes women and disrespects other religions.

"I never lose hope," Kedar reiterated.

His plea to embrace the realism of hope has many points of reinforcement among Israelis and within Israeli society.

The Peres Peace Center in Jaffa, for example, is one of the country's key non-governmental organizations that champions coexistence and tries on a large scale to build bridges of trust among Jews and Arabs in Israel.

But there are countless such bridge-building efforts on a smaller scale that are mostly unnoticed by most of us who yearn so constantly and earnestly for peace between Palestinians and Israelis.

For example, a story appeared last week by Hanna Szekeres, on the student journalists' website NoCamels, about socially innovative programs at the Bible Lands Museum in Jerusalem.

The Bible Lands Museum is unique in the world. For it is solely dedicated to exploring the history of the Bible and the ancient Near East. It was founded with significant involvement by Canadians to house the private archeological collection of the late Elie Borowski, often described as a modern Indiana Jones. The artifacts in the museum date from earliest recorded Mesopotamian civilization.

Szekeres notes how the management of the museum uses its facilities and its treasures for specifically educational programs that foster attitudes of coexistence and communal sharing between Jewish and Arab schoolchildren. One of the programs is called "The Image of Abraham."

It is a yearlong program in which the young participants come from Arab and Jewish schools in Jerusalem. They are asked to think about the common elements in the Arab and Jewish culture. Specifically, they learn about the role of Abraham (Ibrahim in Arabic), as a patriarch in Judaism and Islam.

Yehuda Kaplan, education director at the museum, told NoCamels: "I think this project is a very modest attempt to make a change in our troubled and diverse community, by giving the young generation the opportunity to meet and learn about each other's lives.

"I hope that this opportunity opens the children's (and their parents') eyes to the idea that their neighbours have many things in common with them and that by working together they can accomplish great things."

Like Kedar, Kaplan is no Pollyanna.

And like Kedar, he understands that hope, despite seemingly slim odds, is the sine qua non prerequisite for improving life. In Israel, it is the only realistic way to proceed.

– ***MBD***

SeeJN

MINISTERIAL RESPECT

Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird, left, shakes the hand of a young Israeli soldier whose father was killed in a terrorist attack. While in Israel last week, the minister heard first-hand stories from Israelis aided by the Chabad Terror Victims Project. Beside Baird are Rabbi Menachem Kutner, , at left, director of the Chabad Terror Victims Project, and Rabbi Yossi Swerdlov, centre, director of Chabad Children of Chernobyl. Rabbi Chaim Mendelsohn of Ottawa, director of Public Affairs of the Canadian Federation of Chabad Lubavitch, standing behind the soldier, helped co-ordinate the minister's visit.

[Meir Alfassi photo]

Orthodox rabbi decries haredi extremism

Frances Kraft
Staff Reporter

Almost 40 years after being ordained by a haredi yeshiva, a leading modern Orthodox rabbi says he is still very much in contact with the haredi world and that recent reports of marginalization of women by that community are "a reflection of militancy on the part of a very tiny minority that I don't believe represents the true values of the world in which they were raised."

Rabbi Jacob Schacter

Rabbi Jacob Schacter – the senior scholar at the Center for the Jewish Future at Yeshiva University, often described as the flagship institution of modern Orthodoxy – said it's "outrageous" that "a very tiny minority of very sick and disturbed people" are harassing little girls for attire they describe as immodest.

As well, he disagreed strongly with recent moves in the haredi community in Israel to force women to sit at the back of public buses and to prevent them from speaking at funerals and conferences.

"I think it's important for us to be able to benefit from the wisdom of all people... [If not,] we lose out," said Rabbi Schacter in a Friday afternoon interview Jan. 28 at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation, where he would speak that night and the following day as part of the synagogue's "Great Weekend" series.

In a Saturday evening talk on "The Challenge of Choice: Living as a Jew in the 21st Century," the rabbi said that religious observance does not have to come at the expense of individuality.

In the interview, he said that as a modern Orthodox Jew, he is "deeply rooted in the tradition and committed wholeheartedly to the observance of mitzvot." At the same time, he said he finds "tremendous value in the best of the culture of the world around us that I want to access and also feel an obligation to contribute to."

Since his 1973 ordination from Yeshiva Torah Vodaath, Rabbi Schacter said one of the biggest changes he's seen in Orthodox Judaism is "a growing segment of the community being more assertively halachic and traditional in behaviour."

Such a change is positive "to the extent to which it results in a greater commitment to the study of Torah and religious observance," but negative "to the extent to which it leads to the marginalization and rejection of those who don't agree with that perspective."

Rabbi Schacter said that YU is home to multiple perspectives. "I see tremendous respect on the part of each of the constituents. I'm thrilled beyond words to be part of it."

Before rejoining the YU faculty in 2005, Rabbi Schacter was dean of the Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik Institute in Brookline, Mass., which has since closed. In addition to smichah, he has a PhD in Jewish studies from Harvard University. He served as senior rabbi of the Jewish Center in New York from 1981 to 2000.

A proponent of interfaith and interdenominational dialogue, Rabbi Schacter teaches for the Wexner Foundation, which funds education of Jewish leaders. He taught one of its Toronto classes a decade ago.

The rabbi said he's not convinced by the argument that one "gives legitimacy to someone else" through dialogue with them. "I think it's very important for the Orthodox community to have a voice in the general Jewish community."

However, he noted that when visiting a community he is not familiar with, he consults with a local Orthodox colleague if he is invited to participate in an interdenominational dialogue.

As well, he said, "we need to speak not only to each other but we need to have a voice in contemporary North American conversation about the values we believe are important for humanity."

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Torontonians mix it up to aid victims of terror

One Family Fund holds fundraiser

Cara Edell
Special to The CJN

Almost 200 people gathered recently at One Family Fund's first annual Mix It Up at Brassaii Restaurant and Lounge on King Street West in Toronto.

The Jan. 31 event featured hors d'oeuvres, cocktails, live jazz and a silent-auction shopping centre with 100 items, ranging from fashion and beauty to fitness and home décor products.

More than $16,000 was raised for the non-profit organization, which provides financial, legal and emotional support to victims of terror in Israel.

Samantha Margolis, Mix It Up chair, said she was inspired by her mother-in-law, Pam Foreht, to create the event. On a visit to Israel, Foreht met with some of people who One Family Fund assists and she decided the organization needed a higher profile in Toronto.

"Since One Family Fund has never done a fundraising event of this nature, we decided to create the inaugural Mix It Up in hopes that it will become an annual initiative to raise money and awareness," said Margolis.

Pam Albert, One Family Fund's executive director in Canada, said the organization wants to engage new supporters and "share our story of why we need to be there to help victims of terror in the aftermath of terror. They can become much more independent, but the ongoing support of our support groups, retreats and camps gives them the strength to move forward one day at a time."

One Family Fund provides "a tangible, concrete way for people in the Diaspora to connect to victims of terror in Israel," said Albert. "Supporters can come with us to Israel and experience the essence of what we do. They can meet victims of terror, look them in the eye, attend retreats for orphans and bereaved parents, and see first-hand why they need our help. It is about heart connections."

She said One Family Fund shows people that collective help makes a big difference. "Rockets are still falling in Israel, even though we do not hear about them every day. Israelis need to know that we can show our solidarity and be there for them. We truly are one family in Canada joining to help our Israel family."

One Family Fund's upcoming events include its first Israel Dragon Boat Festival on May 14 to 19, its annual bike ride on June 24 and its golf tournament on Aug. 9.

Pam Foreht and Samantha Margolis *[Cara Edell photo]*

For more information, visit www.onefamilyfund.ca or call 416-489-9687.

German hackers reveal Canadian neo-Nazis

Paul Lungen
Staff Reporter

There's no need to man the ramparts, a new wave of antisemitism in not about to descend on Canadian society. Nevertheless, reports from Germany naming 74 individuals linked to neo-Nazi and white supremacist websites should alert Canadians to the fact that the "classical" antisemitic attitudes have not been vanquished.

That's the perspective of Shimon Fogel, CEO of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), who believes those named by a group of hackers in Germany are "the marginal of the marginal." Yes, they can do damage, and their agenda runs contrary to Canadian values of tolerance and respect, but there is no large scale social movement afoot that threatens those values, he said.

Last week, CIJA issued a statement saying that "we were disturbed" about the reported extremists. "Such toxic hatred disgusts the overwhelming majority of Canadians... Today's report should serve as a wake up call for all of us to remain vigilant in standing against hate, regardless of the community that is targeted."

CIJA was responding to a CBC story on the release of names of people associated with neo-Nazi and other racist groups. The names were made public by a loose coalition of Internet hackers called Anonymous.

They revealed the names, e-mail addresses and passwords of 74 Canadians who were linked to Volksfront and Blood and Honour, two extremist organizations.

Two of the named individuals, Alistair Miller and Robertson De Chazal, were charged in Vancouver in connection with an attack on a sleeping Filipino man, who was sprayed with a flammable liquid and set on fire.

Another alleged Blood and Honour member, Shawn MacDonald, has been charged in connection with separate attacks on a Hispanic man, a native woman and a black man in Vancouver.

Fogel said the "episodic events... remind us that we cannot close these files. We need monitoring systems and lines of communication with the authorities so they're halted and don't leech into the general community."

But, Fogel continued, it's a far cry from times in history when it was feared hate groups could insinuate themselves into legitimate organizations and influence society.

"I don't think we're facing that level of extreme antisemitism that is trying to shape the general and societal policies or ideas," he said.

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We are pleased to announce that starting the 2012-13 academic year, **Elana Shapiro Davidson and Ora Shulman will assume leadership of the Posluns Education Centre. As Principals, Ora and Elana will continue the record of excellence that has been established at Posluns and throughout Associated. Elana and Ora each bring to their positions superb academic credentials and distinguished careers. Ora has been part of the Posluns community for the past five years, serving as a vice principal, while Elana has served as the vice principal of our Kamin Education Centre for the past three years. We look forward to the very positive impact they will have.**

Mazal Tov Dr. Dzaldov – It is with great pride that we congratulate **Dr. Brenda Dzaldov**, Principal of Associated's Danilack Middle School, who recently earned her PhD from OISE/University of Toronto. As a teacher, educational administrator, lecturer and author, Brenda has devoted her professional life to education, and in particular to the study of literacy. The title of her doctoral thesis is "Literacy Learning in the 21st century: An observational study of a resource rich class."

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How proud we are

Without doubt, the simultaneous visit last week to Israel by Foreign Minister John Baird and Finance Minister Jim Flaherty was one of the most memorable demonstrations of alliance with and support for the Jewish state by a Canadian government in recent history.

The ministers were in Israel for complex, multi-layered, political, economic, security and relationship-affirming meetings and discussions.

Both Canadian ministers, of course, met with their governmental counterparts and with Israeli President Shimon Peres and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. But their respective itineraries also included wider consultations and participation in key institutional events.

Baird, for example, joined in a panel discussion at the annual prestigious Herzliyah Conference on regional security matters. He also attended the official ceremonies in Jerusalem of the expansion of Yad Vashem's International School for Holocaust Studies. For a significant part of his visit, Baird was accompanied by one of his Ottawa constituents, Rabbi Chaim Mendelsohn, director of public affairs for the Canadian Federation of Chabad Lubavitch.

Flaherty met with Israeli industrialists, scientists and high-tech innovators. "I admire what has been done with the Israeli economy. We have much to learn on research and development and boosting innovation and productivity," Flaherty told a large group of Canadians and Israelis at a reception in Jerusalem. One of the tangible, mutually rewarding results from the finance minister's visit to Israel will be the attempt by both countries to expand the 1997 Canada Israel Free Trade Agreement.

In the moving ceremony Jan. 30 atop the windswept, fir-covered promontory of Mount Herzl, where the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial Museum melds and blends into the beautiful landscape like tears in a painful memory, Baird proclaimed that "Israel has no greater friend in the world than Canada." It was a moral statement, not a political one.

In the curt, unembellished manner that is characteristic of so many Israelis, Minister for Strategic Affairs Moshe Ya'alon succinctly summed up the bilateral relations between Israel and Canada: "We share not just the same interests, but the same values."

Like all conglomerates of human beings, democracies are indeed flawed, problem-laden and imperfect. Thus, imperfectly but determinedly without cease, democracies affirm under conditions of freedom and the rule of law that the sanctity of human life and its preservation are our highest values.

These are the values that Canada and Israel share.

How proud we are, and how thankful to Baird and Flaherty for reminding the world.

25 years ago in *The CJN*

Israeli defence minister Yitzhak Rabin said Israel had information that Syria possessed chemical weapons more potent that those used by Iraq in its war with Iran. Rabin warned Damascus not to contemplate using chemical warfare against Israel, because it knew full what the consequences would be. He did not elaborate.

Dry Bones
ASSAD, THE DICTATOR OF SYRIA, IS KILLING HIS OWN PEOPLE !
AND IF HE WAS KILLING OTHER PEOPLE'S PEOPLE ?
THAT WOULD BE OKAY?
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Antisemitic column

Dr. Sawraj Singh's antisemitic ramblings in a column published on Jan. 7 in the *South Asian Link*, a leading Indo-Canadian newspaper, is reminiscent of some of the propaganda tactics used by the Nazis to incite hatred toward German Jews in the 1930s ("B.C. paper publishes antisemitic editorial," Jan. 19). Like Singh, the Nazis exaggerated the number of Jewish doctors, attorneys, professors and scientists among the German population, thereby increasing antisemitism and facilitating the Final Solution. Many ordinary Germans and others actually believed that the Jews ultimately "got what they deserved."

As a surgeon, Singh was once required to take the Hippocratic oath, whereby he vowed to remain free of intentional injustice, refrain from spreading shameful things, and to preserve and save human life wherever possible, among other things. His offensive statements concerning Jews and Israel, which can only lead to more hatred, violence and possibly death directed at Jewish people everywhere, violate those very principles that Singh once swore to keep sacred.

That Singh can hold such honourable and prestigious positions as the chair of both the Washington State Network for Human Rights and the Central Washington Coalition for Social Justice while expounding racist views is both puzzling and highly troubling. His expressed hateful and antisemitic remarks certainly show that Singh is part of an ongoing problem rather than the solution!

Ralph Schleichkorn
Montreal

* * *

LET THEM GO...

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz

Remembering Kibur Arses

I am grateful to columnist Avrum Rosensweig for bringing to my attention the sad passing of Kibur Arses ("He was a shepherd," Jan. 26). I got to know Kibur as a member of the Canadian Jewish Congress executive and through the important role he played on our community relations committee.

Kibur was a tireless advocate on behalf of the Falash Mora, and as Rosensweig points out, Kibur was part of a CJC delegation I helped staff to Israel in 2000. I was beside him when he, with great passion and eloquence, spoke with then-prime minister Ehud Barak of the dire need to help the Falash Mora recently immigrated to Israel. Everyone in the room was greatly moved and came to understand how one man can move mountains.

Kibur was a man of great compassion. He spoke in quiet yet sincere tones in a way that provoked you not just to hear, but to listen. He asked little for himself, but gave so much of himself to the causes he so strongly believed in. Our prophet Isaiah tells us that the 613 commandments can be summed up in two principles: do justice and carry out acts of righteousness. Kibur Arses epitomized these principles. May his memory be for a blessing.

Bernie Farber
Thornhill, Ont.

* * *

High school reunion

Central High School of Commerce in Toronto, now Central Commerce Collegiate, is celebrating its 100th anniversary with a reunion on May 4 and 5. For more information, visit www.central-commerce100.com.

Hilda Andrade
Toronto

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Haredi leaders must speak out against zealots

Yehuda Meshi-Zahav

The recent violence in Beit Shemesh and Jerusalem's Mea Shearim neighbourhood has led me to speak out against the so-called "Sikrikim" in the harshest possible terms, equating their actions to terrorism.

Sikrikim is the name given to a fringe anti-Zionist vigilante group, loosely linked to the anti-Zionist Neturei Karta, and are said to have been at the head of many of the recent violent attacks against innocent Israelis.

In my mind, there is a dangerous similarity in their actions and those of Islamist terrorists. And I do not use this comparison lightly – as the founder of the ZAKA International Rescue and Recovery organization, I understand only too well the horror of terror.

These haredi Orthodox hooligans have wreaked havoc through harassment and violence for far too long. It doesn't really matter how they justify their actions; often they are just bored and find excuses later. Whatever the reason, they cannot be allowed to go on like this at the expense of innocent bystanders, whose only crime is being in the wrong place at the wrong time, and at the expense of the haredi community, whose collective reputation and image are being tarred by their individual brush.

There would be communal outcry if terrorists dressed up as haredim, attacked a bus in Mea Shearim, broke its windows and injured innocent men, women and children. However, if haredim themselves do something similar in the name of religious zealotry, it is somehow condoned by a cloak of silence spread across the haredi community. This double standard has to end, and I call upon haredi community leaders who deplore their actions to make their voices heard.

The silence of the majority of our leaders has allowed a tiny fringe group of extremists to hijack the media into thinking they represent the entire haredi Orthodox community in Israel. This terrible generalization could not be further from the truth and is insulting to those of us who have worked for so many years to bridge the gaps of understanding with all sectors of Israeli society.

Yehuda Meshi-Zahav

As a proud 11th-generation Jerusalemite from Mea Shearim, I know the anti-Zionist Neturei Karta all too well, having been raised in their midst and spoon-fed their ideology through my formative years. I was personally arrested no less than 34 times for organizing protests against what I then saw as the evil Zionist regime. As I grew older, I realized that unlike my traditional attire, not everything is black and white.

My abhorrent view of the "Zionists" came to a sudden and drastic halt on July 6, 1989, when I witnessed the aftermath of an Islamic Jihad terrorist attack on the No. 405 bus en route to Jerusalem from Tel Aviv. Hearing the commotion, I ran from my yeshiva studies to witness a sobering image that would remain imprinted on my mind forever. Sixteen innocent Jews lay among the carnage, including young soldiers, elderly Jerusalemites, North American tourists and Israeli teenagers.

Suddenly it became clear in my mind that if terrorists do not discriminate between Jews, then neither should I. Instinctively, I ran toward the mangled bus and began to help prepare the victims for burial. Unbeknown to me at the time, these were the humble beginnings of ZAKA.

Members of ZAKA inspect a burnt-out bus attacked by terrorists on French Hill in Jerusalem in 2002 looking for human remains. ***[Israel Sun photos]***

I began to use my organizational skills and contacts to build a framework in which young haredi Orthodox men could volunteer and give back to society in a way that no other government body was prepared to do. We took responsibility for collecting the remains of terror victims for burial, attending one terror attack after another. Our volunteers received professional training and worked side by side with all of the other emergency services. Suddenly people began to associate haredi Jews, once viewed as outsiders who did not serve their country, as caring individuals fulfilling a critical role in society.

Today, ZAKA has thousands of volunteers from all sectors in Israeli society – Jews, Christians, Druze and Muslims. Our work has progressed into that of a UN-recognized, international rescue-and-recovery organization with branches across the globe, ready to deploy to any mass casualty situation.

Once I realized that the Jewish People were one, I began to understand our global role as a "light unto the nations." What better light can we provide than saving lives and assisting others in their time of need, irrespective of race, colour or creed? As our sages tell us, "All of mankind was created in the image of God" – not just Jews, and certainly not just haredi Orthodox Jews.

Authentic Judaism is not about highlighting differences and attacking those who do not share your worldview. It is about bringing the world closer to perfection, tikkun olam, working together for the sake of the greater good. As a haredi leader, I felt the need to publicly distance myself from these fanatics who hide behind the legitimacy of religious garb and spend their time desecrating all that is holy. Through aggression and sick media gimmicks, they seek to bully society into capitulating to their every wish and paint all of Torah Judaism as xenophobic and intolerant.

Authentic Judaism is not about highlighting differences and attacking those who do not share your worldview. It is about bringing the world closer to perfection, working together for the sake of the greater good

The only way to fight their hate is to increase our love and understanding. We must continue to work together as human beings, irrelevant of race, colour or creed to make this world a better place for generations to come.

Yehuda Meshi-Zahav is the founder and chairman of the ZAKA International Rescue and Recovery organization, which has 1,650 volunteers in Israel and international rescue units around the world that have assisted at natural disasters in Japan and Haiti and terror attacks in Mumbai and Mombasa.

Fighting anti-Israel week with historical facts

As some universities brace for the annual spring round of anti-Israel weeks, which falsely accuse Israel of the great crimes committed by South African apartheid racists, we must put this absurdity in historical perspective. For starters, the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians is a national one, not a racial one. The false comparison between what happens in the Middle East today with what non-whites experienced under South Africa's apartheid regime, dishonours the suffering blacks in South Africa endured. Anyone who perpetuates the big lie accusing Israel of practising apartheid or claiming that Zionism is racism is simply passing on Soviet propaganda that has outlived its maker. In that spirit, let's contemplate the African-American community's response in 1975 to the United Nations General Assembly resolution claiming that Zionism is racism.

Gil Troy

in Montreal

The day after the resolution passed, on Nov. 11, 1975, the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, the umbrella group of 32 leading American Jewish organizations, organized a noontime "rally against racism and antisemitism" in Manhattan. Many blacks attended the rally, and three important African-American leaders spoke: Percy Sutton, a famous lawyer and politician; Clarence Mitchell, a veteran NAACP official, and the activist Bayard Rustin. Many in the black civil rights community resented the Arabs hijacking their language and sloppily misapplying it to the Middle East.

"Smearing the 'racist' label on Zionism is an insult to intelligence," wrote Vernon Jordan, the then-40-year-old president of the National Urban League. "Black people, who recognize code words since we've been victimized by code words like 'forced busing,' 'law and order,' and others, can easily smell out the fact that 'Zionism' in this context is a code word for antisemitism." Jordan, a Southern-born lawyer, based his case against the General Assembly for "saying that national self-determination is for everyone except Jews." And he detailed Arab discrimination against Christian Copts, Kurds, Sudanese blacks and Jews – especially dark-skinned Sephardi Jews.

One African-American speaker in particular, Bayard Rustin, stole the show. Born in 1912, a Communist during the Great Depression, a pacifist and draft resister during World War II, a gay activist long before it was safe to be one, and a labour union organizer, Rustin coached his friend, Martin Luther King, Jr., in Mahatma Gandhi's ethos of non-violence. Rustin believed in "social dislocation and creative trouble." Nicknamed "Mr. March," Rustin helped organize the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, meeting Daniel Patrick Moynihan shortly thereafter on the civil rights circuit. Rustin worked closely with Jews, championing Israel as a democratic sentry surrounded by Middle East dictatorships. Rustin knew how much Jews wanted black support for Zionism in refuting the UN's racism charge, and he happily provided it.

Rustin considered the resolution "an insult to the generations of blacks who have struggled against real racism." In his newspaper column, he described the "incalculable damage" done to the fight against racism when the word becomes a "political weapon" rather than a moral standard. Rooting anti-Zionism in the ugly intersection between traditional antisemitism and the Arab desire to eradicate Israel, Rustin quoted Rev. King, a strong supporter of Israel, who said: "when people criticize Zionists, they mean Jews, you are talking antisemitism."

Rustin and others also feared distraction from the anti-apartheid fight. Before the vote, 28 African-American intellectuals appealed to the General Assembly to bury this "extraneous issue." The scholars warned that a taint of antisemitism around the broader mission "will heavily compromise African hopes of expunging apartheid from the world."

Given his roots in the labour movement, Rustin resented the Arabs' hypocrisy, considering their traditional contempt for black labourers. At the rally, Rustin noted Arabs' historic involvement in the African slave trade. "Shame on them!" he shouted. "[They] are the same people who enslaved my people."

Tall and handsome, with his Afro sticking up and looming over his high forehead, Rustin ended his speech by bursting into song, singing *Go Down Moses*. As thousands of New Yorkers, black and white, Jewish and non-Jewish, joined in shouting "Let my people go," the black and Jewish experiences reached a harmonic convergence.

We need to learn our history. We need to learn the facts. We need to fight the apartheid libel with the truth.

And we need to challenge Palestinians to devote a week to celebrating their own nationalism rather than focusing on destroying Israel and denigrating Zionism.

Why I stopped kvetching and learned to love FB

I'm a new convert. I'm a "Facebook by choice" user. I'm going to learn Twitter next week. I've started a blog. What the heck happened to me?

For many years, I sarcastically dismissed social media, and everything I hated about it is still true: it can be a colossal time-waster – inane, narcissistic, prying and all-encompassing. I'm still not interested in knowing who else you're friends with, where you went grocery shopping, or how many times you played Words With Friends.

But everything else about it is also true: it connects people across the miles, it creates an eclectic community of friends of friends, it allows for sharing of big ideas, it fosters intellectual conversation across neighbourhoods, it brings you links to articles you might never read otherwise, and it often makes you think about things you aren't currently thinking about. But whatever its pros and cons, it's the medium of our age. It isn't going away anytime soon, and those of us who refuse to learn it are going to be left in the dust.

We boomers often feel frustrated and left out as our kids so easily navigate social media. It's their mother tongue. We are like immigrants who don't speak the language, so instead of admitting that and going to sign up for an SMSL (social media as a second language) class, we gather in little clumps and tsk-tsk the young'uns who speak it so fluently. We mock them and it makes us feel better that we "just don't get it." We are like old-world grandparents who are proud that their kids are part of the new culture, but refuse to really be part of it themselves, making excuses – "It's too late." We frown, we criticize, but secretly we look over their shoulders and wonder if we aren't missing all the fun.

The problem is especially evident in the Jewish community. Jewish organizations are late adopters. We wait to see what the newest trend is, and then, when it isn't new anymore, we tentatively put a toe in and try it. Often, it's just too late for whatever trend we have just decided is worthwhile, anyway. I remember when synagogues reasoned that they didn't need a website. After all, they had a newsletter, a phone chain and a secretary. Then in fear of being left behind, and in a "We're too late!" panic, many Jewish organizations finally threw together a website with lots of Jewish stars and menorahs and hoped for the best.

And what got jazzed up in a slick new digital package? The same old programming.

Organizations didn't take the time or allocate the resources to truly understand how this new media could be used, so these initial attempts were often poorly designed static brochures that didn't take advantage of the many features online communication offers. Not only that, but not believing that an online presence was a critical part of their modus operandi, synagogues and Jewish organizations chose volunteer hobbyists instead of professional designers to design their sites. Online presence seemed to be a last priority, so no one was trained to keep it up to date or add useful content. Within months, no one wanted to use the website, only confirming the naysayers who predicted that the whole project would be a waste of time and money.

Rabbi Elyse Goldstein

in Toronto

Today it is almost unheard of for a synagogue to not have a website or use e-mail. Now we're quicker to jump on the bandwagon and make Facebook pages for ourselves. But too many of us substitute cool new social media branding for great new ideas, deep connections, interactive learning and discussions, weaving a web of thought and action, and content worth posting. (And we're on Twitter, too! I don't think I'll be the first, but I'll sure be tweeting Torah study and not trivia.)

We need not approach this new language with fear. It's only a language, and as such, it's a tool. Remember, Maimonides said all language is metaphor. So is Facebook. It's a metaphor for the interconnectivity, interactivity, intertextuality, and intercommunal dialogue we could have if we weren't so darned afraid of the "f" word.

Islamic tide washes over Egypt

For as long as he was Egypt's president, Hosni Mubarak never tired of telling foreign visitors that he was a force for stability and that Islamic fundamentalists would be the chief beneficiaries were he to be violently overthrown.

In hindsight, he was right.

Mubarak, who is currently under house arrest on charges of corruption and ordering the deaths of about 800 protesters during the18-day uprising that ended on Feb. 11, is probably saying, "I told you so."

Sheldon Kirshner

in Toronto

A year after his ignominious ouster, Egypt has entered a new, uncertain political era. With three rounds of free parliamentary elections having taken place, two Islamic parties, both of which are anti-western and anti-Israel, have emerged as the big winners.

The Muslim Brotherhood, formed in 1928, banned by Mubarak and his predecessors and now known as the Freedom and Justice party, has emerged as the strongest political party in the land, having won 47 per cent of seats in the first democratically elected parliament in decades. And in a sign of the times, the new speaker of parliament, Saad el Kantani, is a member of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Al Nour, a more orthodox Islamic party whose platform calls for the strict application of sharia law in the public domain and the segregation of sexes, ended up in second place, with 25 per cent of seats.

This means that nearly three-quarters of Egypt's new parliamentarians are Islamists, who were regarded as outcasts under the old regime.

The remaining seats were captured by the New Wafd, a nationalist liberal party that champions multi-party democracy and whose roots predate the fall of the monarchy in 1952; the Egyptian Bloc, whose partners include liberal, social democratic and leftist parties; a coalition of socialist and communist parties, and the National Democratic party, the now-disgraced vehicle of Mubarak's corrupt political machine.

Tellingly enough, the tech-savvy, western-oriented, middle-class youth activists who played a vital role in igniting the Jan. 25 uprising by means of Facebook and Twitter won only a handful of seats.

Whatever its composition, Egypt's parliament remains subordinate to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, which assumed power after Mubarak's downfall.

Led by Mubarak's former defence minister, Field Marshal Mohammed Hussein Tantawi, and composed of self-serving generals who supported and propped up Mubarak until he was deemed a liability, the council has promised to turn over its authority to civilians by the end of June, when a new constitution has been ratified and a president has been elected.

The council, whose members enjoy enormous economic privileges and prerogatives, is unlikely to submit to full civilian control after June, no matter who is nominally in charge.

Although it has partially lifted the despised emergency laws – which were enacted in the wake of the 1967 Six Day War and gave the regime sweeping powers to do as it pleases – they remain effectively in force.

The military's monopoly on power prompted one of Egypt's most respected figures, Mohamed El Baradei, to drop his bid for president. A Nobel Prize peace laureate who headed the International Atomic Energy Agency, he was one of the founders of the National Association for Change, which assumed an early role in calling for Mubarak's resignation.

Prior to announcing his decision not to contest the presidential election, he claimed that precious little had changed since last winter – "the former regime did not fall," he was fond of saying – and accused the military of cracking down on like-minded protesters.

According to human rights organizations, some 12,000 civilians have been tried before military tribunals since last February, charged with "thuggery," and more than 80 demonstrators have been killed.

Charging pro-democracy groups of hewing to a "foreign agenda," the military claims they have accepted foreign funds, attacked government buildings and fomented chaos.

Last spring, the interim government, chosen by the military, launched a formal investigation into the foreign financing of non-governmental agencies.

Two months ago, police officers raided the offices of these groups, some of which, like the National Democratic Institute, are funded by the United States.

These raids, having stoked tensions with Washington, may jeopardize U.S. aid to Egypt for the first time in three decades.

Nonetheless, the United States, in a historic foreign policy shift, has initiated contacts with the Muslim Brotherhood, which has always opposed U.S. interests in the Middle East, including its alliance with Israel.

(Israel's former ambassador to Egypt proposed a secret dialogue with the Muslim Brotherhood, but the idea died on the drawing board).

Recently, the chair of the U.S. Senate's foreign relations committee, John Kerry, and the U.S. ambassador in Cairo, Anne Patterson, met the leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood.

"The United States needs to deal with the new reality," said Kerry, comparing the Obama administration's outreach to the Islamists with Ronald Reagan's arms negotiations with the now-defunct Soviet Union in the 1980s.

By all accounts, the Muslim Brotherhood has assured U.S. diplomats that its objective is to build a moderate Turkish-style Islamic democracy in which human rights, free market principles and Egypt's international commitments and treaties are respected.

Muslim Brotherhood politicians, such as Mohamed Beltagy, claim that its Islamic agenda is broadly focused on creating social and economic justice, this in a nation where corrupt practices are common, crony capitalism is the norm and poverty engulfs the majority of the population.

All rhetoric aside, there is no doubt that the Muslim Brotherhood, and particularly Al Nour, want to reshape Egyptian society in their own deeply conservative image.

Mohamed El Baradei

But while both espouse traditional religious values, their constituents could not be more different. While the Muslim Brotherhood generally appeals to middle-class voters, Al Nour caters to working class and rural Egyptians.

Despite the parties' differences, secular Egyptians live in fear that the Muslim Brotherhood and Al Nour might well form a coalition to push through retrogressive domestic policies.

For a number of reasons, this imagined union may never materialize. The level of mistrust between the Muslim Brotherhood and Al Nour is considerable. The Muslim Brotherhood has called for a broad-based government representing all Egyptians. Al Nour has engaged the New Wafd and the Egyptian Bloc in talks to counter the domineering influence of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Understandably, Israel is concerned by the rise of Islamists in Egypt's unfinished revolution.

Rashad Bayoumi, the deputy leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, has described Israel as a "criminal enemy" and has said that his party will never recognize the Jewish state. Yet it would be surprising if an Egyptian Islamist government disavowed the 1979 peace treaty with Israel.

What realistically can be expected is an even colder peace between Israel and Egypt than has been the case until now.

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Former BQ MP is a Jew by choice

Sheldon Kirshner
Staff Reporter

Richard Marceau, an 11th-generation Quebecker from a staunch Roman Catholic family and a former Bloc Québécois parliamentarian, is a Jew by choice.

He converted to Judaism in 2004 after a long process, but his spiritual odyssey began after he met a Toronto Jewish woman who opened "the door to a people, a nation, a culture and a religion that I grew to love."

Marceau's discovery of a faith and a community that are now an integral component of his identity is set out in his memoirs, *A Quebec Jew: From Bloc Québécois MP to Jewish Activist* (Editions du Marais). Originally published in French, the English-language edition is scheduled to be launched in Toronto on Feb. 16 at the Spoke Club, 600 King St. W., from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

A lawyer who currently works for the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs as a senior adviser, Marceau wrote *A Quebec Jew* to dispel "misconceptions" French-Canadians hold about Jews.

"Ninety eight per cent of the Quebec Jewish community lives on the island of Montreal," he explained. "Consequently, not many French Quebeckers have interacted with Jewish people and therefore hold many misconceptions about us Jews. I saw the need for a book on Jews, Judaism and Israel written by a Quebecker, for Quebeckers, using Quebec cultural references."

Marceau used his own personal story to draw a portrait of Jewish history, culture and Israel and to tear down stereotypes about Jews.

He decided to write *A Quebec Jew* after attending sessions of the Bouchard-Taylor commission, which was convened to study the fraught issue of "reasonable accommodation" in the province.

"The majority of interveners were moderate, but some made it clear that to be a Quebecker, one needed to be a *pure laine*. I decided to tell my story to show that one can be a proud Quebecker and part of this fantastic, francophone, unique and distinct society while being a deeply committed Jew."

A Quebec Jew has been well received. "So far, so good," he noted, saying that major French-language newspapers in Quebec have covered it. "Now I'm working on a tour of Quebec to reach out to, and talk with, people who don't have many opportunities to interact with Jews."

Richard Marceau, right, presents his book, *A Quebec Jew*, to Israeli President Shimon Peres.

Born in Charlesbourg, Que., on Aug. 25, 1970, Marceau is deeply rooted in Quebec, his French ancestors having arrived in the colony of New France in 1635. His father, after whom he is named, is a former civil servant and a practising Catholic. His late mother, Michelle, was a homemaker.

Educated by priests in Quebec City, Marceau graduated from law schools at Laval University and the University of Western Ontario. He also studied at the Ecole Nationale d'Administration in France.

In 1997, at the age of 26, he was elected to the House of Commons. A sovereignist, he represented the Bloc Québécois in the riding of Charlesbourg. Re-elected in Charlesbourg-Jacques-Cartier in 2000 and 2004, he lost his seat in the 2006 federal election. For the next five years, Marceau worked for a pro-Israel lobby group, the Canada-Israel Committee.

An agnostic, he met his future wife, Lori Beckerman, a secular Jew and a fellow law student, while participating in an exchange program at the University of Western Ontario. Although they seemed to have little in common, they fell in love.

He had no intention of converting to Judaism when he was married, but eventually changed his mind. "I wanted to be part of this ancient religion that has given birth to Christianity and Islam, this philosophy that has attracted me by its emphasis on the family, helping one another and asking questions and reasoning."

Marceau converted in a Reform ceremony, but after becoming much more observant and traditional, he went through an Orthodox conversion.

"My conversion was simply a coming home of sorts," he said. "Many years before, a Jewish man I deeply respect told me I had a Jewish soul."

He acknowledged that his father did not react well to his conversion.

"It was hard, and is still hard, for him. Put yourself in his shoes. How would you feel if one day your Jewish son told you he was converting to Christianity."

To Marceau's four siblings, his conversion was not really an issue, since they are fairly indifferent to religion.

"As for my former constituents, I received one letter of disapproval."

Nonetheless, as he writes in *A Quebec Jew*, "becoming a Jew … meant becoming a member of a community that an important segment of Quebec society viewed with suspicion and undoubtedly ignorance."

The Quebeckers to whom he refers do not know Jews, he observed. "They don't know our exceptional contribution to Quebec. And they don't know Israel."

Antisemitism exists in Quebec, he said, but Quebec is not an antisemitic society.

Marceau, his wife and two teenaged sons, Michel and Olivier, live in Quebec, across the Ottawa River from the nation's capital. "Lori and I wanted our children – who are fluently bilingual – to grow up in a French environment."

A regular visitor to Israel, and a fluent Hebrew speaker, Marceau describes himself as "a pro-Palestinian Zionist."

He explained: "I do not believe that being pro-Israel means I cannot be pro-Palestinian. They are not mutually exclusive. I will not fall into the trap of seeing the situation there as a zero-sum game. I believe in the right of the Jewish people to have a state in their ancestral homeland, and I support the Palestinians' legitimate national aspirations."

Although he considers Israel as "a beacon of freedom, gender equality and democratic principles," he is troubled by the current "ugly debate" in the Jewish state over the place of women and opposes the Orthodox monopoly over religious functions.

A separatist who remains dissatisfied with Quebec's place in Canada, he says he would most likely vote yes should there be another referendum.

He claims the Bloc Québécois has always had a "fairly balanced" policy toward Israel, despite strong internal and external pressures to be much more critical of Israel.

"We have Gilles Duceppe to thank for that balanced position," he noted in a reference to its former leader. "I expect his successor, Daniel Paille, with whom I have been to Israel, to maintain a similar position."

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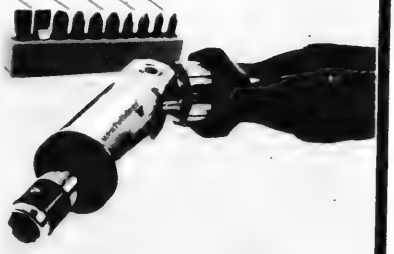

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Some sober analysis of an attack on Iran

Last week's column examined Tony Burman's claim in the *Toronto Star* that an Israeli attack on Iran this year is all but certain. This week's column looks at Israeli analyst Ronen Bergman's Jan. 29 *New York Times Magazine* piece, "Will Israel Attack Iran?"

At 7,600 words, Bergman's is a major article. Yet, surprisingly for someone who concludes that he believes Israel will attack, he offers almost no compelling evidence to support this view.

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

Bergman acknowledges early in his piece that "[Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu and [Defence Minister Ehud] Barak have both repeatedly stressed that a decision [to launch a pre-emptive attack on a country that has repeatedly threatened to destroy Israel] has not been made and that a deadline for making one has not been set."

He discusses at length the debate taking place in Israel, pitting former Mossad head Meir Dagan and former IDF chief Gabi Ashkenazi (among others who oppose a military strike) against the prime minister, defence minister and strategic affairs minister who, Bergman claims, favour such a strike as a final option.

Indeed, most of Bergman's article is an exploration of this debate, along with an account of what measures Israel has already taken. These include, allegedly, covert Mossad operations to set back Iran's nuclear weapons program, such as industrial and computer sabotage, and assassinations of Iranian nuclear scientists. These are in addition to overt measures, namely the advocacy of biting international economic sanctions on Tehran.

There is no sense in Bergman's sober examination that Israel is rushing recklessly or foolhardily into a war with Iran, let alone, as Burman suggested in his *Star* piece, that Israel is trying to ensnare both Iran and the Obama administration in such a war in 2012.

Bergman repeatedly raises the question of whether an Israeli assault even stands a good chance of being successful, where "success" means not destroying Iran's capacity to produce nuclear bombs but only being able to set that back by a few years. He cites experts who claim that, given all the time Iran has had to widely disperse its assets and bury them deeply under mountains, an Israeli assault might be able to set the program back by only several months. If so, some have asked, is it worth taking the risk and starting a war with potentially devastating consequences?

Even if the best that can be achieved is a three-year delay in Iran's program, is a pre-emptive strike worth the risk? "[The Iranians] are holding the fissile material at sites across the country, most notably at the Fordo facility, near the holy city Qom, in a bunker that Israeli intelligence estimates is 220 feet deep, beyond the reach of even the most advanced bunker-busting bombs possessed by the United States." If the United States, with strategic bombers that Israel lacks, doesn't possess the capabilities required to destroy such a vital target, what can Israel, which relies on the United States for bunker-busting bombs, do?

Well-known analyst Barry Rubin has been looking at this debate with cool detachment. He recently wrote in the *Jerusalem Post* that the fact some Israeli leaders talk openly about the possibility of attacking Iran "is the biggest proof that they aren't about to do it." Israel has always acted on the basis of surprise, not by declaring publicly and repeatedly its military plans.

On the other hand, several analysts have argued that only the United States has the military might for the sustained bombing operations required to inflict sufficient damage to Iran's nuclear facilities. Matthew Kroenig makes such a case in "Time To Attack Iran," in the January-February issue of *Foreign Affairs*. Yet even Kroenig acknowledges the claims of critics that success is far from assured, and that since Iran might be able to reconstitute its program, the United States might only be delaying "the inevitable."

Kroenig's bottom line, however, is that the only thing worse than a pre-emptive assault on Iran's nuclear assets is living with a nuclear-armed Iran.

Paul Michaels is director of research and media relations at the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs.

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Concert to feature 'world's greatest cantors'

Frances Kraft
Staff Reporter

Last July, Cantor Eric Moses of Toronto's Beth Sholom Synagogue was sitting with colleagues Sol Zim and Yaakov Motzen over a late-night shwarma dinner in Manchester, England, where they were attending a cantors' convention.

It was approaching midnight when the conversation turned to the idea of mounting a major cantorial concert.

Moses suggested having it in Toronto. "Let's go big," he remembers saying.

Now, after months of organizing "The World's Greatest Cantors in Concert: The Present and the Future," he's still enthused about the project.

The event will take place Wed., March 28 at 7:30 p.m., at the Toronto Centre for the Arts. Moses will serve as MC, and the event will be a fundraiser for Beth Sholom. Tickets start at $60.

"The idea of cantors performing together en masse doesn't happen frequently," Moses told *The CJN*. "This is a great opportunity to see all the great cantors assembled in one location."

Two of the 11 cantors in the concert are based in Israel, while the rest work in North America.

Cantor Eric Moses

He said that he has had calls from people in Chicago, New York and Los Angeles who want to attend. For him, it's a "Grateful Dead moment," like having fans of the rock band converge from afar.

Moses said that the "golden age" of chazzanut dates back to the early 1900s, when immigrants came to North America from eastern Europe. "The power of music speaks volumes to people."

Because going to Broadway shows or the opera was not affordable for many immigrants, people went to synagogue "to get their week's entertainment," he said.

Moses noted that cantorial music transcends religious denominations. A case in point: he trained at the Tel Aviv Cantorial Institute, which is an Orthodox institution, but serves a Conservative congregation.

"There was always a common understanding, regardless of affiliation," he said. "The love of the art form breaks down the barriers."

Performers at the concert include "up-and-coming talent" Yanky Lemmer and Yaakov Stark, who are both based in New York, and Netanel Hershtik, from Westhampton Beach, as well as seasoned chazzanim Chaim Adler (Israel), Moshe Shulhof (Miami), Benzion Miller (Boro Park), Alberto Mizrahi (Chicago), Sol Zim (New York), Gideon Zelermyer (Montreal), Naftali Herstik (Israel) and Yaakov Motzen (Miami).

Adler, Miller and Motzen have all served Toronto congregations. Adler was at Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation, while Miller served Shaarei Tefillah Congregation, and Motzen was at Shaarei Shomayim.

For more information or to purchase tickets, go to greatestcantors.com, or call 416-783-6103, ext. 228.

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Correction

The Feb. 2 article "New JF&CS president has bat mitzvah" should have included United Way Toronto as one of the agency's funders. As well, the May 14 fundraiser at the TIFF Bell Lightbox is titled Jewish Folks Telling Jokes.

Young adults get set to gather in Vegas

Tribefest connects through Jewish culture

Sheri Shefa
Staff Reporter

In just its second year, TribeFest, "a celebration" of Jewish culture for young North American Jews, is on pace to attract a capacity crowd of 1,800 people to its three-day event in Las Vegas next month.

TribeFest co-chair, Toronto native Jason Rubinoff, 41, said he's excited to be part of an initiative meant to give Jews avenues to make meaningful connections.

A Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) project, TribeFest drew more than 1,300 people from 84 communities to its inaugural event last year.

The programming caters to Jews between the ages of 22 and 45 who are encouraged to connect with their roots by learning about Jewish culture, social justice, networking and socializing during the three-day event at the Venetian Hotel in Las Vegas March 25 to 27.

Building on its momentum from last year, Rubinoff said he is encouraged by the commitment from Canadians who have already registered.

About 70 Canadians attended last year, but this year they're on pace to double that number.

"Last year, Ottawa sent nobody. The Canadians came from Toronto, Montreal and Winnipeg," Rubinoff said.

He said registration just opened last month, and at least 10 Jews from Ottawa have already signed up.

"It's a matter of spreading the word. And if you can get those connectors, friends bring friends."

Rubinoff emphasized that TribeFest is not a conference.

"It's really a celebration. The whole idea is to really connect people. It's not about a conference that's all about federation," Rubinoff said.

"Typically, conferences are about campaigning, giving back, getting involved, giving money… TribeFest is really about finding people and opening up the tent and letting everybody come in. The goal is for them to discover something Jewish about them, and hopefully along the way… they're going to be able to connect with something that they didn't connect to before."

Participants will be treated to presentations from entertainers, authors and athletes including former *Saturday Night Live* cast member and comedian Rachel Dratch, *New York Times* best-selling *The Year of Living Biblically* author A.J. Jacobs and four-time Olympic gold medalist, swimmer Lenny Krayzelburg.

Rachel Dratch

In addition to the main stage speakers, the scheduled programming includes content on six different themes, or tracks: faith and spirituality, Israel and the Middle East, culture and the arts, social justice and global responsibility, innovation, and hot topics.

Rubinoff said JFNA solicited proposals for programs, and he was floored by the interest as more than 150 program proposals were submitted by local federations and individuals.

In addition to lectures and programs, TribeFest will also present a "Big Show."

"It's an exhibit hall where organizations set up tables, and it's a good opportunity for people to walk through and discover Jewish organizations and establish meaningful dialogue with organizations."

TribeFest has even incorporated a social service project in partnership with PJ Library, a non-profit organization that mails free Jewish-themed children's books to families in 165 North American communities.

Rubinoff said TribeFest organizers will send busloads of participants to various public Las Vegas schools in underprivileged areas on March 26, to distribute 1,000 backpacks filled with books.

"We've actually worked with the school board to identify what they need, that the books are age appropriate and specifically for the curriculum.

Continued on page 19

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We should all protect kids

Rabbi Erin Polonsky

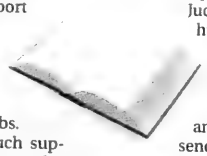
The Ontario government has introduced legislation to deal with the escalating problem of bullying in schools. The legislation is an effort to keep our children safe, promote healthy interactions between children and ultimately ensure productive communities in which we can all thrive. I applaud Premier Dalton McGuinty for promoting such legislation.

The bill is a realistic one, recognizing that bullying is all-encompassing. Children may bully each other for trivial reasons or for more deep-seated reasons. Regardless of the impetus, bullying has no place in our schools and has been shown to have dire and even deadly consequences.

Judaism teaches that we must take every measure possible to save another human life. Preventing bullying is such a measure. Maimonides teaches in his Code that if one person is able to save another and does not save him, he transgresses the commandment in Leviticus that "neither shalt thou stand idly by the blood of thy neighbour." Similarly, if one person sees another drowning in the sea, or being attacked and although able to rescue him does not, or if one hears others plotting evil and does not call it to the person's attention, or if one knows that a violent person is going to attack another and although able to make him change his mind, he does not – if one acts in any similar way – he transgresses the injunction of "neither shalt thou stand idly by the blood of thy neighbour."

Some of my Orthodox colleagues – although thankfully not all – have taken issue with the bill's provision that schools must support "gay-straight alliance" clubs. They have argued that such support is contrary to Jewish law and values. Together with my colleagues of the Reform Rabbis of Greater Toronto, I take issue with this contention.

Rabbinic Reflections



Judaism promotes acceptance of others and openness to differences, and it values healthy children, adults and communities. The creation of these clubs is the ultimate gesture of acceptance of differences. It is an opportunity for gay youth to have a safe place to express themselves among peers, as well as for straight youth to reach out to their gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered counterparts in an effort to understand, accept and learn from one another. That is the essence of what it means to be part of a community. This is not an attack on religious values. This is what religious values are all about! There are strong differences of opinion within the Jewish community about homosexuality, but wherever we stand, we should all be able to rally around measures that seek to keep our kids safe.

Judaism teaches that each human being is created *b'tselem Elokim*, in God's image. To deny gay people their safe places in our schools and communities is to send the message that they do not contain the spark of God within them. Sending this message will not bring them closer to Judaism. On the contrary. It will create resentment for our beautiful tradition. Nowhere does the bill support indoctrination to reject their parents' faith, as has been alleged by some Jewish groups. If any indoctrination is happening here, it is of tolerance and acceptance, a lesson that we can all use.

Rabbi Erin Polonsky is spiritual leader of Neshamah Congregation of York Region in Vaughan, Ont.

Exciting new discoveries

Recently, two important discoveries pertaining to Jews and ancient Israel were announced. One involved a cache of Jewish documents around 1,000 years old that were found in a cave in Afghanistan. The other discovery takes us much further back in time to the first use of the word "Israel" outside of the Bible. It dates to almost 3,500 years ago in ancient Egypt. Both of these discoveries are amazing in their own ways.

The discovery of Jewish documents in Afghanistan takes us far from our ancient homeland to a war-torn region that is constantly in today's headlines. Controversy and strife are not new to Afghanistan. That country has been experiencing these things for millennia.

What is intriguing is the question of what Jewish documents were doing in the area some 1,000 years ago. At the time, Afghanistan was near the route of the fabled Silk Road that connected China to Europe, which had been craving its luxury goods, especially silk, at least as far back as the days of the Roman Empire.

We know that Jewish merchants and traders were involved in the region dating to ancient times, at least as far back as the days of the Persian Empire. The fabled documents from the Cairo Genizah, from roughly the same time period as the ones found in Afghanistan, also mention Jewish merchants dealing with the East.

More than a century ago, the legendary British-Hungarian (and Jewish) explorer/archeologist Sir Aurel Stein explored the Silk Road and found a number of sites containing manuscripts in its vicinity. Since the Silk Road traverses mostly desert, any writings that were left there tend to be very well preserved. Stein found the world's oldest book as well as documents that were more than 2,000 years old. But he didn't find any Jewish writings. The documents recently found in Afghanistan are promising to add fascinating new evidence about Jewish activities on the Silk Road in the Middle Ages.

Past Forward

Alex Gropper

Also exciting is the recent publication of a discovery by scholars in the Egyptian Museum of Berlin about the earliest use of the term "Israel" outside of the Bible. Until this publication, the earliest extra-biblical mention of Israel was on a monumental inscription of the Pharaoh Merneptah, son of Ramses II (a.k.a. Yul Brynner), dated to late 13th-century BCE.

This new inscription pushes the use of "Israel" back by two centuries to around the year 1,400 BCE. If this dating is correct, it raises a host of fascinating questions. Among them would be the date of the Exodus. One also wonders what characterized this early Israel and, most importantly, is there any information about its religious beliefs and practices.

The fascination of any discovery is the fact that it raises more questions than it answers. As Einstein once said, "When the light of knowledge expands, so does the darkness surrounding it."

Project recalls 1939 tragedy of MS St. Louis

Diane Koven
Ottawa Correspondent

OTTAWA — The tragic fate of a ship carrying Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany was recalled Jan. 25 at the launch of the MS St. Louis Commemorative Project, which features a new children's book and a mural depicting the ill-fated ship and its passengers.

The project, funded by a $100,000 grant from the federal Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, was spearheaded by Devora Caytak of the Jewish Youth Library of Ottawa and overseen by project manager Erica Phillips-Posner.

The MS St. Louis was a German ocean liner that set sail from Hamburg on May 13, 1939, with 937 refugees from Nazi Germany – 930 Jews and seven non-Jews – on board, hoping to find a safe haven.

Only 29 passengers were able to disembark in Havana, Cuba. The rest were then refused entry to the United States and Canada.

The ship was forced to return to Europe, where several countries did accept some of them. Unfortunately, even many of those who found refuge were later murdered in Nazi concentration camps.

One passenger, a young child at the time, was Herbert Karliner. He lost his family in the camps, but survived and made a life for himself in Miami, Fla. He was at the launch to tell his story, which drew both tears and smiles from the audience.

The author and illustrator of the book, *So Near, and Yet so Far: Klara's Voyage on the M.S. St. Louis*, were present to describe the background and process of developing the project. Author Sara Loewanthal gave a dramatic reading of the book as its strikingly illustrated pages were projected on a large screen behind her. She was followed by illustrator Nicholas Jackson who described his research and showed the various stages of development of the sketches to paintings that formed the book's illustrations.

The other component of the project is a large, multimedia mural by artist Michoel Muchnik, who described the symbolism of the various objects and depictions. The mural was on display in the foyer of Ben Franklin Place, the venue of the event, but it will be permanently installed at the Jewish Youth Library.

Speaking on behalf of the federal government, Rick Dykstra, parliamentary secretary to Jason Kenney, minister of citizenship, immigration and multiculturalism, said that "federal officials made a tragic and misguided decision" to deny the MS St. Louis the right to land in Canada, and he vowed that "the outcome of that decision should not and will not be forgotten."

Ottawa city councillor Katherine Hobbs echoed the sentiment on behalf of Mayor Jim Watson and the municipal government, noting that "much has changed since 1939… it is my hope that all Ottawa residents take the time to learn about this important event in history."

Israeli Ambassador Miriam Ziv and U.S. Ambassador David Jacobson also attended the event. Earlier in the day, a video conference was held at the U.S. Embassy to introduce the project to various U.S. consulates.

One thousand copies of the book will be distributed to schools and libraries across Canada, along with an educational booklet for teachers on topics such as bullying, immigration and responsibility.

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Israel goes to the Oscars – Pt. 1

When they walk down Oscar's red carpet and into the Kodak Theatre, they won't turn as many heads as Meryl or Michelle or George or Brad. But one country will be hanging on to every move of the filmmakers behind *Footnote*, this year's Israeli nominee at the Academy Awards for best foreign-language film and the 10th Israeli film to be nominated in this category. **[http://bit.ly/oscarisrael1]**

Today, a look back as Israel goes to the Oscars.

Sallah Shabbati (Israel's Oscar nominee in 1964): Back in pre-Tevye days, Chaim Topol played Sallah in Ephraim Kishon's satire of Israeli society. Not a model citizen, here's how Jewlicious.com describes him. He's "lazy, he's a drunk, he's a gambler who brings his *sheshbesh* [backgammon] board to the synagogue… he on principle refuses to talk to women, and he's perfectly willing to sell off his eldest daughter to the highest bidder. And yet, he may be the most lovable character in Israeli cinematic history." **[http://bit.ly/oscarisrael2]**

Hashoter Azulai (*The Policeman*) (1971): Kishon was also behind Israel's next nomination, as writer and director of *Hashoter Azulai*. Here's how one reviewer described policeman Avraham Azulai, as played by Shaike Ofir. "Azoulai's incompetence is not a result of lack of skill, but rather that of a soft heart and kindness. When he stops a driver for some kind of traffic violation, he writes him up, but it's not the driver who ends up paying the fine but Azulai himself." **[http://bit.ly/oscarisrael4]** Enjoy a scene from the movie in which Azulai manages to quell a haredi demonstration in his own inimitable manner (no subtitles). **[http://bit.ly/oscarisrael14]**

Ani Ohev Otach Rosa (*I Love You Rosa*) (1972): Set in Jerusalem in the 1880s, director Moshe Mizrahi's *Ani Ohev Otach Rosa* tells the

Jewish & Digital

Mark Mietkiewicz

story of a young Sephardi widow who according to the halachah of the levirate marriage (*yibum*) is required to marry her late husband's brother, Nissim. But there's no immediate wedding – Nissim is only 11. Years later, Nissim returns with marriage in mind. **[http://bit.ly/oscarisrael7]** *New York Times*: "Mr. Mizrahi's polished handling of his cast and subject makes them come alive in a simple, subdued and knowledgeable portrait." **[http://bit.ly/oscarisrael8]**

HaBayit Berechov Chelouche (*The House on Chelouche Street*) (1973): Director Moshe Mizrahi was back the following year with the story of a family of Egyptian Jews who settle in Tel Aviv in British-mandate Palestine of 1947. Gila Almagor plays the widowed mother of four, including Sami, whom we follow from shy teenager to member of the Haganah during the War of Independence. **[http://bit.ly/oscarisrael9]** More on the movie here. **[http://bit.ly/oscarisrael10]**

Mivtsa Yonatan (*Operation Thunderbolt*) (1977): Within a couple of years of the daring rescue at Entebbe, several dramatized versions appeared including *Mivtsa Yonatan*, featuring Gila Almagor with Yehoram Gaon as Yonatan Netanyahu. Despite the Oscar nomination, critics weren't as kind, calling the screenplay cliché-ridden and lacking nuance. **[http://bit.ly/oscarisrael11]** Judge for yourself from the opening credits in which we watch the Israeli military training for the raid. **[http://bit.ly/oscarisrael13]**

Next time, we return to the screening room for Israel's five most recent nominees for best foreign-language film.

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Group decries 'veiled threats' against Jews

Sheri Shefa
Staff Reporter

A lecture at McMaster University by pro-Iranian, anti-Israel speaker Zafar Bangash late last month contained "veiled threats" against Jews, said Avi Benlolo, president and CEO of Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies.

"Despite McMaster's assertion that the presentation by Bangash would be respectful, his words were clearly hateful, inflammatory and laced with veiled threats against Jews," Benlolo said.

During the Jan. 26 lecture, titled "Iran in the Crosshairs," Bangash, president of the Islamic Society of York Region, who is known for advocating Iranian-style theocracy, warned the crowd of the consequences of going to war with a heavily armed Iran.

A video of the lecture was uploaded by a website called shiatv.net and in it, Bangash is recorded saying, "If there were an attack on Iran, and obviously the fact that Israel would be involved in it, [the] U.S. would be involved in it, it is quite possible that, you know, members of the Jewish community might be targeted... We will not want that to happen at all, but you cannot control the emotions of the people."

He continued with a non sequitur, saying, "You know what happens to the Palestinian people – someone throws a stone and the Israelis come and bomb the whole town. This is common knowledge."

During a question-and-answer period, Bangash compared Zionists to Nazis and racists, and he reiterated his stance that Jews are not entitled to their own homeland.

Days before the lecture – sponsored by the Hamilton Coalition to Stop the War, Independent Jewish Voices, as well as student groups Students for Justice in the Middle East, McMaster Muslims for Peace and Justice, and Students Resisting War and Occupation – Benlolo wrote a letter to McMaster president Patrick Deane.

The letter challenged the president to take a stand against the speech by Bangash, who was quoted during a rally last summer at Queen's Park as saying, "This black man in the White House, Barack Obama... he would rather have Americans starve to death, but he cannot say no to the Zionist parasitical state... That is what makes them racists, that is what makes them barbarians."

McMaster spokesperson Gord Arbeau responded by putting the onus on event organizers to ensure respectful dialogue and cited the university's "important role in maintaining freedom of speech."

Benlolo said he planned to file a complaint against Bangash with Hamilton police.

'We were celebrating our culture'

Continued from page 3

"We weren't doing anything political. None of our material had a political slant. But this group of students took it upon themselves to make it political."

Gurza added that there was nothing controversial about the IOC message.

"Literally, we were celebrating our culture, so it was very upsetting."

One of the protesters, Sumbal Sabah, said the demonstration was planned in solidarity with Palestinians.

"Israel can continue to enjoy its freedoms – cultural, educational, economical freedoms – at the expense of millions of Palestinians who continue to suffer," Sabah told *The CJN* in an e-mail.

"The students who took part did so out of respect for Palestinians, not hatred for Israel."

Gurza said she complained to Mark Wellington, the USC's senior manager of student life, that the protesters were violating her club's right to hold an event and therefore violating school policy.

According to Western's building usage policy, "counter-programming and protesting are not allowed on the same day as the programmed event..." and "no individual or group shall... distribute posters, banners, flyers, handbills or any other printed material without prior written approval of the USC."

Protest at Western

Gurza said Wellington called campus police to monitor the protest and ensure it didn't cross the line into a physical confrontation.

"I was speaking with the campus police, and they said that because it was peaceful they didn't do anything, but what I want to stress is that the members of SPHR violated the policy. You're not allowed to counter-protest, especially without approval," Gurza said.

"My biggest concern is that they violated these policies, and the USC has to make sure that these policies are enforced."

But Chapnick explained that the SPHR members may have found a loophole that could let them off the hook.

"No particular group took ownership of the protest, so technically, [USC] can't sanction the group, because they didn't take responsibility for it," he said.

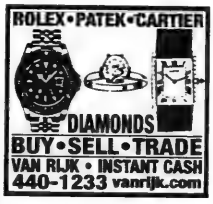
USC president Andrew Forgione said the council "is currently investigating whether or not any USC clubs had direct involvement in the protest."

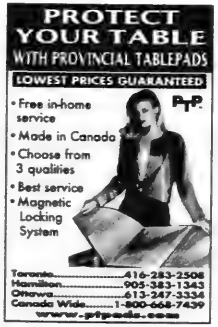
He added that if it can be proven that SPHR used club resources to support the protest, his office will file a complaint to the USC's clubs governance committee (CGC) for review.

"CGC can authorize the sanctioning of a USC club – sanctions that can range from prohibitions to probation to de-ratification," Forgione said.

London Jewish Campus Services executive director Naomi Mazer condemned SPHR for its "clear violation of university space policy.

"The administration must ensure that their policies regarding space are enforced and that SPHR face disciplinary action for their despicable behaviour, which was an embarrassment for the entire student body."

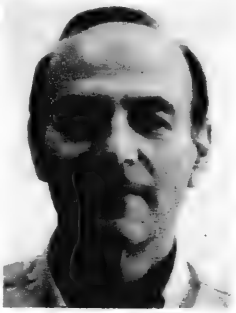




Shoah studies program seeks master's students

Sheri Shefa
Staff Reporter

The hope for the University of Haifa's new Holocaust studies graduate program – the first of its kind in Israel – is that it will address the declining number of young students who choose to pursue an academic career in the field.


Arieh Kochavi

Michael Meyer, fundraising director for the Canadian Friends of Haifa University, said he hopes the program will breathe new life into the aging community of Holocaust studies scholars.

"A lot of people in Shoah studies are getting older, and not many younger people are getting involved in the courses, and they're concerned about that," Meyer said.

Although Holocaust studies courses are available at universities all over Israel, this is the first program in Israel that offers a master's degree.

Prominent World War II scholar Arieh Kochavi, who heads the year-long master's program, as well as the Strochlitz Institute for Holocaust Studies at the university, said in a statement that the multidisciplinary program is designed to train a new generation of Holocaust scholars to explore newly uncovered documents and archives in Israel, Germany and Poland.

Museums such as the Ghetto Fighters' House museum and Yad Vashem in Israel, and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., will collaborate with the program's administrators to provide students access to archives.

The multidisciplinary aspect of the program enables students from backgrounds in history, international law, and social psychology to explore the Holocaust through different lenses, Meyer said.

The program also includes two study trips to Germany and Poland in partnership with local institutes, including the Center for Research on Anti-Semitism at the Technical University of Berlin (ZFA), the Polish Academy, and the Center for Holocaust Research at the Jagiellonian University of Krakow, Poland.

In addition to visiting sites that are relevant to Jewish life before and during the war, students will also have the opportunity to attend seminars with leading German and Polish scholars.

Meyer said he's hoping to attract some Canadians students to the program, which runs in English.

"We're trying to get this course out to as many people as possible, even those who can't afford it. For those who can't afford it, we're looking to raise scholarship money," he said.

"For people who live outside of Israel, it costs about $18,000, and that includes tuition, room and board."

He said Israeli students can be sponsored for $12,000.

Applications are currently being accepted for the program, which begins in October. For more information, contact Meyer at mmeyer@haifa-univ.ca, or call 416-917-6648.

Tribefest set for March

Continued from page 15

These are books that the parents of these children would not be able to afford," Rubinoff said.

"It's a very powerful way of demonstrating the act of giving back and giving to a community."

Elyse Lackie, incoming chair of JFNA's National Young Leadership Cabinet, a network of socially conscious Jews in their 20s, 30s and early 40s, said she attended TribeFest last year, and will be there again in March.

She said it's exciting to watch people getting engaged and excited about Jewish culture.

"It is so invigorating to see so many different faces of a young Jewish community. And this is not what your parents or grandparents would have looked like 50 years ago. It's a totally new look," Lackie said.

"There are tons of different opportunities – both Jewish and non-Jewish – to connect to something. Jews are looking to connect in meaningful ways and that's not exclusive to Jewish connections."

As for the role of the federations, Lackie described them as conveners that bring people together for a good cause.

"If you have an experience that invigorates you in a Jewish way, we're going to make it possible for you to continue on that Jewish journey. That's our role – not to do it for you, but to open the door for you and show you to experience it for yourself."

For more information and to register, visit www.tribefest.org.

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He referred me to chiropractor Dr. Rebecca Henry. "If she can fix me, she can fix you," he said. My doctor is the smartest man I know, so I left his office, fired my physiotherapist and went to Dr. Henry's office to book an appointment.

From the very first session,

Fitness Corner

Felyce Zomparelli

things began to change. When I tell people that, they don't believe me, but it's true! After the initial assessment, she went to work on my right hamstring (the back of my leg) with her hands. Over the next several months, three times a week, she used different muscle-release techniques on both the front and back of my leg.

Later, we moved on to the Graston Technique, another way to help stimulate muscle healing, and lately to a laser for deep-tissue healing in areas I still won't let her treat by hand. I remember asking her later on what made her treat my leg when everyone else assumed all my symptoms were back- and disc-related.

She said, "Because you said so, so what would it hurt?" Dr. Henry also gave me homework from the very first session: those dreadful transverse activation (deep core) exercises. Again I had a flashback. I was given those exercises right after both my back surgeries to help with recovery. I do those exercises every day without fail. I am determined to spend the rest of my life getting better.

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דער יידיש ווינקל

דזשערי קעין

ווער האָט געוווסט?
אַ ייִד האָט געמאַכט אַ באַלאַגאַן פֿון דער היינטיקער וועלט!

וועז מען קוקט אַרײַן אין די פֿאַרשיידענע משוגעתן וואָס וואַלגערן זיך אַרום אין די געדאַנקען פֿון די נישט אַזוי קלוגע, קען מען לײַגן אויפֿן קאָפּ פֿון אַ ייִד, זיגפֿריד מאַרקוס, די שולד פֿאַר די קלימאַט ענדערונגען, די באַשמוצונג פֿון דער לופֿט וואָס מיר אָטעמען, און די הויכע פּרײַז מיר באַצאָלן פֿאַר גאַזאָלין וואָס מיר גיסן אַרײַן אין אונדזערע אויטאָמאָבילן. פֿאַרוואָס? אָט האָט אײַר...

די דײַטשן גרויסן זיך מיט די נעמען פֿון דײַמלער און בענץ. זיי האָלטן אַז די צוויי זענען די עכטע בריער פֿון אויטאָמאָבילן. עס איז געווען אַ צײַט וען אַ דרייסער נאָמען איז געשטאַנען גלײַך מיט זיי — דער וועלט בארימטער יידישער אויסגעפֿינער זיגפֿריד מאַרקוס. אָבער אין די היטלער- יאָרן איז מאַרקוסעס נאָמען אויסגעמעקט געוואָרן פֿון דער געשיכטע וועגן דער וועג עס האָט געבויט דעם ערשטן אויטאָ.

זיגפֿריד מאַרקוס איז געבוירן אין עסטרײַך אין יאָר1831. אין זײַנע יונגע יאָרן האָט ער זיך געזומען צום אויסזוכן ענטפֿערס צו אַ גאַנצע רײ וויסנשאַפֿטלעכע פֿראַגעס וואָס ער האָט באַוווּנדערט. איינע פֿון די פֿראַגעס איז געווען וי קען אַן איינציקער מענטש פֿאָרן שנעלער און מער דירעקט ווו ער וויל און וען ער וויל, און ניט דאַרפֿן פֿאָרן מיט אַ פֿערד און וואָגן אָדער אַ באַן?

מאַרקוסעס ענטפֿער איז געווען צו בריען אַ מאָטאָר וואָס ניצט בענזין. ער האָט אריינגעשטעלט דעם מאָטאָר אין אַן איבערגעאַרבעטן וואָגן און מיט אַ מאָל האָט ער געהאַט דעם ערשטן אויטאָמאָביל. די דײַטשישע רעגירונג האָט מאַרקוסן געגעבן אַ פּאַטענט פֿאַר זײַן מאָטאָר.

די מאָדנע זאַך איז, נישט קוקנדיק אויף דעם פֿאַקט אַז ער האָט געבויט דעם ערשטן אויטאָמאָביל, האָט מאַרקוס בלויז אַרויסגענומען אַ פּאַטענט פֿאַר דעם מאָטאָר און נישט פֿאַרן אויטאָמאָביל. דײַמלער און בענז האָבן שפּעטער געבויט זייערע אויטאָס מיט מאַרקוסעס מאָטאָרן.

דאָס ערשטע מאָל וועז מאַרקוס איז אַרויסגעפֿאָרן מיט זײַן מאָטאָר קאָטערינקע האָט די פֿאָליציי אים אַרעסטירט פֿאַר פֿאָרן אין אַ וואָגן אָן אַ פֿערד.

צוישן זײַנע 130 פּאַטענטירטע דערפֿינדונגען איז געווען דער מאָדערנער סטעטאָסקאָפּ וואָס דאָקטוירים נוצן נאָך הײַנט צו הערן וואָס טוט זיך אין הארץ און אין די לונגן. מאַרקוס איז געשטאָרבן אין 1898 צו 67 יאָר.

פֿון רעדאַקציע: אויב איר האָט נעראַנקען וועגן אונדזער ווינקל לאָמיר וויסן, דורך פּאָסט אָדער בליץ- פּאָסט: cjninfo@gmail.com

OPTIMISTIC STUDENTS: Bialik Hebrew Day School Grade 2 students, from left, Ben B., Roni V. and Rachel O. show off their visual and literary interpretations of optimism, the character trait being emphasized this month as part of Bialik's character education program.

TECH IN CLASS

Robbins Hebrew Academy Grade 6 students Jonah Gutmann, left, and Nathaniel Katz used laptops in their science class, where they were building and testing circuits. RHA's new mobile laptop cart with wireless Internet access at its Beth Tzedec campus has enhanced the school's ability to integrate technology into the curriculum.

SCIENCE SINGERS: Toronto Heschel School Grade 2 students – from left, Lily, Eden, Ethan and Josh – sing a song about the water cycle while dramatizing it with actions.

Mazel Tov
מזל טוב

Mazel tov to Eddie Freid on your 93rd birthday. You're better than ever! Love, Emma-Belle, Lisa, Loren and Michael.

Debbie & Michael Leibovitch, Nancy & Stephen Greenstone proudly announce the engagement of Samantha & Matthew. Thrilled grandmothers and siblings share in the excitement.

Sharlene Milgram & Sheldon Bergson announce the birth of Shane Isaiah Milgram Bergson, Dec. 24. Grandparents: Stephanie & Mark Milgram, Sam & Betty Bergson.

Mazel tov on the engagement of Mahla Shapiro & Jeremy Finkleman.

Mazel tov on the engagement of Eva Yekutieli & Ari Shortt.

Mazel tov on the engagement of Kyle Lonn & Adina Tropp.

as featured on onlysimchas! Celebrating Jewish Life www.onlysimchas.com

Email your digital photos to cblackman@thecjn.ca or go online to www.CJNews.com and click the "Family Moments"

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What's New

By LILA SARICK

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25% OFF LIMO VOUCHER TO TORONTO PEARSON AIRPORT WITH PURCHASE
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Deadline reminder: Feb. 13 is the deadline for the issue of Feb. 23. Feb. 17 is the deadline for the issue of March 1. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; e-mail whatsnewcjn@gmail.com, or fax 416-391-0829.

Thursday, Feb. 9

RADICAL VIEWS OF GOD

Rabbi Micah Streiffer presents a 3-part series on "The God Who Isn't: Radical Jewish Views of God," starting tonight, 7:30 p.m., Temple Kol Ami. www.templekolami.ca.

FREUD AND THE RABBIS

William Kolbrener discusses "Repetition and Creative Memory in Freud and the Rabbis," 4 p.m., Koffler House, 569 Spadina Ave. Presented by the Centre for Jewish Studies, U of T, 416-978-1624.

Friday, Feb. 10

FAMILY SHABBAT

Temple Kol Ami holds a family service for school-aged kids and their families, 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, Feb. 11

B'NAI SHALOM

B'nai Shalom Congregation of Halton-Peel, a Conservative, egalitarian congregation, meets at 10 a.m. in Oakville. 905-901-9889 or www.bnaishalom.ca.

MISHPACHAH MINYAN

Shaar Shalom Synagogue holds a Shabbat service for families with young children, 10:30 a.m.

JEWISH ENVIRONMENTALISM

Rabbi Lawrence Troster speaks Shabbat morning at Beth Tzedec Congregation on "What Is Jewish Environmentalism?"

BALLROOM DANCE LESSONS

Ballroom dance classes at Beth Radom Synagogue, tonight and March 10, 8 p.m. 416-636-3451.

TORAH CLASS

Alan Cooper teaches Torah class at Beth Tikvah Synagogue, 9:45 a.m.

Sunday, Feb. 12

JEWISH HISTORY

Kalman Weiser discusses "Rise of Western Nationalism and the Jewish Response," Congregation Darchei Noam, 7:30 p.m. members $5, non-members $10.

SINGLES DANCE

Shaar Shalom Singles (ages 45 and up) host a dance to the music of **DJ Dave Jones**, 7:30 p.m. Call **David** 416-224-9494.

YIDDISH WOMEN STARS

Sharon Power discusses "Great Women Stars of the American Yiddish Stage," Beth Tikvah Synagogue, 2 p.m. RSVP **Sandy**, 416-458-1440 or 416-736-8073, or yiddish18@yahoo.ca.

RAMAH OPEN HOUSE

Camp Ramah holds an open house, 2 p.m., at the First Narayever Congregation, 187 Brunswick Ave. RSVP **Michelle**, mbass@campramah.com or 416-789-2193.

WOMEN'S TORAH STUDY

Ora Shore Ziring will discuss "Comparing and Contrasting Mitzvot Between Man and Man: Man and God," 9:30 a.m., Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. 416-633-5770 or 416-877-2050.

TU B'SHVAT CONCERT

Beth Tikvah Synagogue presents a children's concert for Tu b'Shvat, 10:30 a.m. at Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts. Tickets $15 adults/$10 children in advance. Call 905-787-8811.

PLANTAPALOOZA

Shaarei Tefillah Congregation holds a Tu b'Shvat Plantapalooza, 10 a.m., 3600 Bathurst St. 416-787-1631.

Continued on page 23

On the Slopes for Candy
The Candy Schaffel Black Snow Day
Wednesday, February 29, 2012 Alpine Ski Club, Collingwood
In support of SHAARE ZEDEK
Play in the Snow
• Lift Ticket
• Free ski and snowboarding lessons
• Sample new ski and snowboarding equipment
• Snowshoe activities
• Fun races
Play Indoors
• Half-day morning spa services which include Scandinavian baths and hydrotherapy
• Half-day afternoon health and wellness workshop provided by Newtopia
Also enjoy
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Continued from page 22

MYSTERION

Mind reader **Mysterion** performs at a teen program at the Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation, 7 p.m. **Rich Winkler,** 905-886-3810, ext.135.

Tuesday, Feb. 14

STRAIGHT FROM ISRAEL

Young emissaries **Maor Cohen** and **Amarel Gofer** present an update and video of Israel, Beth David Synagogue, 8 p.m.

MARRIAGE COURSE

Chabad of Markham offers a 6-week marriage course for engaged couples, taught by **Rabbi Avraham** and **Goldie Plotkin,** starting tonight, 83 Green Lane, Thornhill. 905-886-0420.

NORA'S WILL

The film *Nora's Will* will be shown at Beth Tikvah Synagogue at 2 p.m. as part of its Tuesdays with Larry movie series.

BEE SEASON

The film *Bee Season* will be shown at Temple Har Zion. Bring your lunch at noon, program begins at 12:30 p.m. Call 905-889-2252.

JEWS FOR JUDAISM

Jews For Judaism presents a counter-missionary seminar, 8 p.m., Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St. 416-789-0020 or toronto@jewsforjudaism.ca.

Wednesday, Feb. 15

CROSS ISRAEL HIKE

One Family Fund Canada is holding an information night for the 2012 Cross Israel Hike, 7:30 p.m., Shaar Shalom Synagogue. RSVP 416-489-9687, ext. 200, or melanie@onefamilyfund.ca.

MELTON MINI SCHOOL

Melton Mini School offers the class "Bereshit, the First Family," taught by **Loretta Tanenbaum,** 10 a.m. at Beth Emeth Synagogue. To register, 416-789-7400.

Other News

DANI GALA

DANI (Developing and Nurturing Independence) hosts a gala dinner featuring musicians **Baruch Levine** and **Ethan Bortnick,** March 18, Terrace Banquet Centre. Sponsorships available. Visit www.dani-toronto.com, call 905-731-6606.

HARBORD REUNION

If you ever attended or taught at Harbord Collegiate Institute, you're invited to its 120th birthday party, April 26-27. To register, www.HarbordClub.com.

KINDERCAMP & TORAH TOTS

Registration now open for Torah Tots, September 2012, at Chabad of Markham, 83 Green Lane, Thornhill. Call **Goldie** 905-886-0420, ext. 227. Early-bird discount for kindercamp registration, until March 1. Visit www.kindercamp.ca, call 905-886-0420, ext. 221.

JF&CS GROUPS

Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or www.jfandcs.com. All programs require pre-registration. All programs are held at the Lipa Green Centre, unless otherwise noted.

Beyond the Chupah, Becoming a Couple: A 5-session marriage preparation course, starting Feb. 14, 7 p.m., Beth Tzedec Congregation.

Dating in Midlife: A workshop for men and women over 40 who have been single for more than 2 years. Feb. 15.

You're About to Separate, What to Tell The Kids: A workshop for parents, Feb. 16, 9:30 a.m., Promenade Mall, Suite 313.

High-Conflict Divorce: A workshop for parents, Feb. 22, 6:30 p.m.

BEREAVED PARENTS

Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer** at JF & CS, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or bfeffer@jfandcs.com.

FOR SENIORS

Seniors Social Club meets once a month at Earl Bales Community Centre. **Warren Green** discusses "Jews as Capitalists, Merchant Princes and Pirates," Feb. 12, 7 p.m. Call **Sandy,** 416-736-8073, 416-458-1440.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park. (60+). **Valerie**, 416-395-7881. Casino Rama, March 25. Tuesdays, gentle exercise, 10 a.m. first class free; Wednesdays, duplicate bridge, 12:30 p.m.; Thursdays, line dancing, 10 a.m.; social bridge, 12:30 p.m. Non-members welcome.

National Council of Jewish Women, Aviva branch, is looking for women over 70 for their group, which meets mid-day every other Tuesday. Call 416-633-5100.

LZA Seniors Cultural Club meets Tuesdays, 10 a.m., Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell. 416-630-9444.

New Horizons is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club that offers kosher food, casino trips. Romi and ulti card players welcome. 416-256-1892.

Adath Israel Congregation. Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub. Refreshments $2. Call **Pearl**, 416-635-6317, or **Sheila**, 416-665-3333.

Bernard Betel Centre 416-225-2112. Feb. 9, **Judy Weiss** discusses "Living Beyond Past Experiences," 1:30 p.m. Feb. 14, lecture on "A History of the Junction Shul," 10 a.m.

Active Seniors, Miles Nadal JCC, 416-924-6211, ext.155. Feb. 9, **Jordan Klapman** gives a musical presentation on "Tin Pan Alley's Greatest Music Publishers and Their Hits," 1:30 p.m. Feb. 16, psychologist **N. Khatree** talks about factors affecting mood as we age and strategies to change patterns of thinking, 1:30 p.m.

Active 55 Plus Speakers Series, Feb. 23, Two wellness experts discuss "Stress and its Effects on the Body," 6:30 p.m. Ext. 526.

PROSSERMAN JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com.

The movie *The Impossible Spy* will be shown Feb. 13. Refreshments 12:45, film starts at 1 p.m.

Drop-in duplicate bridge, Thursdays 12:30 p.m.

Current events discussion, Thursdays 12:45 p.m.

Shalom Singers Choir needs members. Rehearsals, Thursdays 10 a.m.

Spaces available for Tic Tac Two program for September 2012. Call **Kailah Rubin**, ext. 4351.

The senior social art group is looking for a volunteer to assist participants, Mondays, 2-4 p.m. Call **Janet**, ext. 4259.

Spaces are still available in preschool Shabbat, music and sports programs. Call ext. 0.

Register now for Centre Camp, locations in Toronto and Vaughan, centrecamp.ca

Fun Family Day activities free at the JCC, Feb. 20, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

MILES NADAL JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org.

Kevin Courrier discusses "Movies in the Reagan Era," Feb. 13, 7 p.m. Call ext. 606.

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner teaches a course on "Icons of Spanish Jewry," Thursdays 8 p.m., starting Feb. 9. Ext. 154.

Rabbi Rena Arshinoff discusses "Forgotten Mourners: Jewish Responses to Bereaved Children," Feb. 12, 11 a.m. Ext. 154

A Kid for Two Farthings is being screened on Feb. 19 at 4 and 7:30 p.m. Free for children with adult admission. Ext. 606

Tickets on sale now for pianist **Yitzhak Yedid**, March 1; **Lenka Lichtenberg** and **Roula Said**, March 5. Call ext. 0.

SISTERHOODS MEET: The Women's League for Conservative Judaism, international northeast region, recently held a retreat at the Toronto home of Debby Gollom to share successful sisterhood programs and plan future activities. Standing from left: Joan Segal (Beth Emeth), Ruthann Lubin (Beth Tzedec), Gollom (Beth Tikvah), Louise Maerov (Beth Tikvah) and Mollie Rothman (Beth Torah). Seated from left: Helen Bienstock (Beth David), Fran Caine (Beth Tikvah) and Leona Eligberg (Beth David). ***[Merv Gollom photo]***

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 32

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Thousands mourn death of toddler

David Lazarus
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — "Baruch Dayan Ha'emet." (Blessed be the true Judge).

Those words, recited when we receive news of a tragedy, ran over and over again last week on Facebook's Ayelet Yakira Galena's fan page, as hundreds wept and expressed their condolences over the Jan. 31 death of two-year-old Ayelet Galena.

Ayelet died at 5 a.m. in Cincinnati Children's Hospital, five months after receiving a bone marrow transplant on Aug. 30, 2011, for a rare and deadly condition that causes bone marrow failure.

"With unstoppable tears and broken hearts, we regret to announce… after hours of fighting and holding on, our precious Ayelet, the light and strength for so many, could not fight anymore," her parents Seth Galena and Hindy Poupko Galena said in a statement on a blog site devoted to their young daughter's fate, Eye on Ayelet (ayeletgalena.tumblr.com).

The sad ending culminated weeks of up-and-down crisis for the toddler, whose fate had been followed by thousands.

In December, Hindy Poupko Galena, the daughter of Congregation Beth Israel Beth Aaron's Rabbi Reuben Poupko and his ex-wife, Arna Poupko Fisher, told *The CJN* that despite the fact that Ayelet's transplanted marrow was a "seven-out-of-eight" match after a search of many months, she still faced numerous, potentially life-threatening hurdles.

The situation remained "precarious," Poupko Galena said at the time. (Poupko Fisher also lives in Cincinnati and was a constant presence at her granddaughter's bedside.)

And it was indeed precarious. Over the five months, little Ayelet faced several life-threatening situations that raised euphoric hopes for family and supporters when she rallied one day, and despair the next when another crisis arose.

On her last day, Ayelet "put up a serious fight, but her lungs collapsed, her blood pressure dropped, and the blood could not get to her huge heart," her parents said.

Ayelet Yakira Galena

In an entry on The Sisterhood, a blog at Forward.com, the story of Ayelet's transplant and decline was chronicled, with photos of her dressed in "frilly frocks" that later gave way to the reality, "myriad tubes and machines connected to Ayelet's swollen body and bald head (which was always lovingly covered with floral hats and headbands)."

The Forward blog also notes how her parents would celebrate Shabbat at their daughter's bedside and recite "the post-bathroom *Asher Yatzar*, so that Ayelet's kidneys might again begin working ('We need a big night of peeing and prayer,' they wrote on Jan. 30)," the day before her death.

Before the transplant, Ayelet's search for a marrow donor had captured the imagination of New York media and celebrities, among them Rihanna, Eva Mendes and 50 Cent, all of whom had recorded supportive messages on her behalf.

On Ayelet's Facebook fan page last week, however, word of her death spread rapidly to her more than 5,000 followers.

"I am sitting here in Israel, tears streaming down my face for someone I never personally met," said one message.

"Am Yisroel is in mourning," said another.

About a week before Ayelet's death, her parents said the gestures of support they received from the public "are the single reason we are [still] standing."

"People are only dealt the cards they can handle," Hindy Poupko Galena had told *The CJN* three months after the transplant.

Funeral services for Ayelet took place Feb. 1 at the Jewish Centre in New York's Upper West Side, where her parents live.

Mission focuses on social justice

MONTREAL — "How did this come to happen?" "This," was the highly publicized December incident in Beit Shemesh, Israel, in which an eight-year-old Orthodox girl was spat upon by extremist haredim for not dressing "modestly" enough. The sole Canadian participant in a recent Yeshiva University social justice mission to Israel says the above question, posed by a panellist on the mission, served as an ideal backdrop to frame a serious, thoughtful discussion on the issue. Here, Montrealer Gershon Albert, at right, speaks with two participants during Yeshiva University's Tzedek v'Tzedaka mission to Israel. *To read story, go to cjnews.com*

OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Nemirovsky, Isaak	Jan. 19/12	
Ruditser, Grigory	Jan. 20/12	6091 Bathurst St.
Rismowich, Miriam	Jan. 21/12	Private
Swartz, Carol	Jan. 20/12	505 Cummer Ave
Nadas, Joseph	Jan. 22/12	16 Almington St
Shapiro, Pearl	Jan. 22/12	55 Amer Ave
Weizenbluth, Helen Lillian	Jan. 22/12	63 Combe Ave
Leibelman, Mikail	Jan. 25/12	Private
Unger, Mariah Elizabeth	Jan. 25/12	Private
Garfinkel, Manya	Jan. 26/12	53 Markwood Lane
Czarny, Chana Gitla	Jan. 26/12	30 Greenfield Ave
Goldblatt, Frank	Jan. 26/12	Private
Sweet, Rebecca	Jan. 25/12	2 Neptune Dr
Gertler, Marjorie	Jan. 23/12	99 Peckham Ave
Garten, Mayer	Jan. 26/12	72 Prue Ave

FREEDMAN, Mel at age 71, beloved husband of the late Sheila Freedman, loving father of Amy (JonArno), Mark (Kristi). Adoring Zaeda to Sophie, Jacob, Zoe, Ashey, and Joseph. Dear brother of Arnold (Myrna Freedman) and brother-in-law of Gerald and Fran Kirsh and son of the late Harry and Clara Freedman of Brantford. Mel was a kind and gentle man who lived a hard-working life committed to education, the Jewish community, but most of all to his family. We are grateful to all those who provided care and support to Mel and to the whole family. Funeral was held on Monday, January 30 in Hamilton. Memorial donations may be made to Congregation Darchei Noam Hebrew School, Toronto 416-638-4783 or Congregation Keneseth Israel Hebrew School, Philadelphia 215-887-8700

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Sheila Marshall	Jan 22/12	484 Steeles Avenue W.
Leonard Whyne	Jan 22/12	70 Rosehill Avenue
Mickie Gillman	Jan 22/12	11 Lynnhaven Road
Blanche Caplan	Jan 23/12	65 Skymark Drive
Myrna Finer	Jan 22/12	61 St. Clair Ave. West
Dr. Michael Weinberg	Jan 24/12	83 Brickstone Circle
Evelyn Oberman	Jan 24/12	10 Trench Street
Kristine (Klara) Tyndel	Jan 24/12	316 Lytton Blvd.
Freda Giddens-Freeman	Jan 25/12	1 Northwestern Drive
Ursula Goldenberg	Jan 24/12	568 Briar Hill Avenue
Isabella Burstein	Jan 26/12	96 Fifeshire Road
Goldie Swartz	Jan 28/12	645 Castlefield Avenue
Marion State	Jan 27/12	50 John St., #1610
Helen Sussman	Jan 25/12	484 Steeles Ave. West
Lily Nash	Jan 27/12	3560 Bathurst Street
Jack Pasternak	Jan 27/12	91 Palm Drive
Lawrence Mintz	Jan 27/12	138 Pears Avenue
Sophie Cooper	Jan 28/12	100 Canyon Ave
Ruth Shuster	Jan 28/12	6200 Bathurst Street

HEBREW BASIC BURIAL

Wilfred Heller	Jan 24/12	12 Overbrook Place
Abraham Bonze	Jan 23/12	174 Broadway Avenue
Hyman Feldman	Jan 28/12	3560 Bathurst Street
Jay Hershberg	Jan 28/12	15 London Green Court

BAYCREST
gratefully acknowledges
these Funds honouring the memory of:

Blanche Caplan	Freda Giddens-Freeman	Pearl Shapiro
Sophie Cooper	Sylvia Lockshin	Kristine Tyndel
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Survivor of 9-11 no longer lives to work

Diane Koven
Ottawa Correspondent

OTTAWA —Esti Fogel was once ill and housebound, relying on the goodness of family and friends to help her with basic needs such as meals and child care. Once recovered, she resolved to "pay it forward" and help others whenever possible.

Three and a half years ago, Fogel assembled some friends and formed Ten Yad (Lend a Hand), a group of volunteers whose mission is simply to help those in need.

In its relatively brief existence, Ten Yad has grown by leaps and bounds. Now a registered charity with an army of volunteers, the organization remains unaffiliated and independent but works co-operatively with other community agencies to meet common goals. When individuals or families are facing acute, life-altering situations such as illness or death – or the happy occasion of the birth of a child – volunteers will step in and provide food, transportation, child care or whatever is needed.

On Jan. 29, Ten Yad held its inaugural Friend-Raising Gala at the Canadian Aviation Museum. The gala showcased the organization and introduced it to many members of the community who may not have heard about it. Another fund-raising effort, the Ten Yad cookbook was also launched.

In the midst of a large hall filled with airplanes, 350 people were seated at elegantly decorated tables enjoying the klezmer and Yiddish-inspired tunes played by the Central Band of the Canadian Forces Jazz Quintet.

The keynote speaker, New Yorker Ari Schonbrun, told his remarkable tale of "lending a hand" as a survivor of the 9-11 collapse of the Twin Towers in New York. A senior executive at Cantor Fitzgerald, Schonbrun, he said that of the firm's 662 employees, "only one person walked out without a scratch, and you are looking at that person... 658 of my friends and co-workers were brutally murdered, simply because they were sitting at their desks, no other reason." Three others were badly injured.

Schonbrun described the series of "co-incidences" on that fateful day that led to his miraculously surviving the explosion and how he helped a co-worker who was badly burned to escape from the building and get to a hospital for treatment.

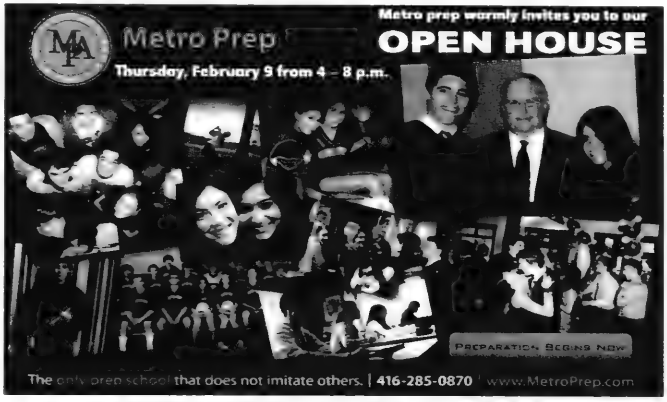
"I was plucked out of a burning building... and somebody asked me why. I need to talk to people and tell people that we live in a world today that is going in the wrong direction and we aren't doing anything about it. We need to make a change," he said.

His personal priorities have drastically changed in the past 10 years. He no longer lives to work, he said, but takes time to enjoy his family and to appreciate life.

"The next time somebody calls you and asks you to help," said Schonbrun, "just answer, Ten Yad."

For more information about Ten Yad, go to www.tenyad.ca or call 613-618-0485.

Canadian diplomats participate in a Jan. 31 roundtable on Iran that took place in Tel Aviv. From left are MP Irwin Cotler, Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird and Canadian ambassador to Israel Paul Hunt. For story, please go to cjnews.com *[Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade photo]*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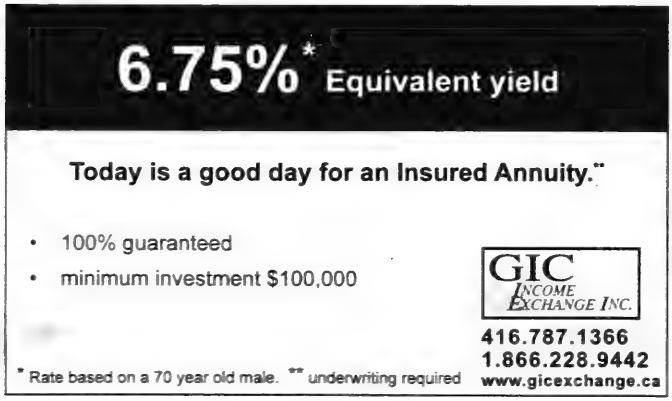
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The problem with Zero Tolerance in domestic abuse cases

Family Matters
by
John Syrtash
B.A. (Hon.), LL.B.
Counsel
Garfin Zeidenberg LLP
Family Lawyer & Mediator
for 31 years

Ontario has a zero tolerance policy and police officers are instructed that they must lay a charge "if there are reasonable grounds to believe an offence has been committed in relation to the Criminal Code, Child and Family Services Act, Children's Law Reform Act or Family Law Act". In the politically-charged atmosphere of "domestic violence", 'reasonable grounds' often consists of a complaint about a single event of domestic violence, even if there is no visible evidence, no corroborating witness and even if the event took place years ago.

Once interviewed, the person alleged to have committed the offence may protest that nothing happened whatsoever, that the whole allegation is fabricated, or that it was a minor mutual struggle (i.e. they pushed each other with the person alleging the assault starting the altercation). It makes no difference. In many such situations, once the person goes to the police, the police often videotape the complaint made and arrest the person complained about. In almost every one these situations, the complainant is a woman and the person complained about is a man. Men rarely go to the police to complain about women attacking them.

In those cases where women have truly been assaulted, this process appears to be quite fair and works well to protect women and their children who witness violence in their families. Much has been written in this space over the past 31 years about domestic violence against women and how difficult it is to obtain their co-operation when I attempt to interview them; many are so abused that they cannot break out of such relationships.

They are psychologically trapped by the men who victimize them into a pattern of abuse to which they have become "accustomed", especially if they are financially tied to the gentleman's purse strings. No matter how much I explain that the law will protect them with spousal/child support, property division and restraining orders, most don't believe me or find greater comfort in the abusive relationships with these monsters to which habit has chained them. When I offer to get them medical or psychological help, many simply walk way, comforted in the "knowledge" that their partners have taken away all their self-esteem in exchange for a Faustian devil's bargain: a roof over their heads, an allowance and a way of life that they "know."

Women not the only victims of domestic violence

What is less known is the hidden problem of domestic violence against men. I have had several male clients over the years who have been punched, had items thrown at them, have been stabbed with pens and other implements, have been bruised, spat on, kicked violently and even hospitalized. These men are terrified to fight back. Some are badly intimidated by their partners, don't have the personality to "fight back", or are very concerned about the impact of their reactions on their children. Others seriously worry about the police and getting arrested should they defend themselves, so they walk away and don't tell anyone, especially the authorities. They are also understandably embarrassed. It may not be 'politically correct' to even suggest this problem exists, but it sadly does, and often in wealthy homes, not just modest ones.

When a person, inevitably male, is falsely accused, it is not unusual for them to be summarily arrested, falsely imprisoned, kicked out of their own home, sometimes where their businesses are located, strip-searched and thrown in jail. This includes some of my clients. They are then alienated from their own children and cut off from their possessions inside the home, often for several months to a year, until their criminal lawyer is brave enough to conduct a full-blown trial to obtain a complete acquittal. Such a trial can easily cost $10,000-20,000 and that money is never recovered, unless they have successfully sued their wives for wrongful prosecution.

In many such cases, such a victimized spouse might settle for a "peace bond" in which he agrees to "keep the peace" even if he didn't do anything because it's cheaper and less risky than a trial! And just how fair is that? Unfortunately, by that time, his wife has effectively won the custody battle, since she has had the children in her care for the better part of the year and "exclusive possession" of the house. In fact, she falsely accused her husband of assault and had him arrested for the express purpose of creating "facts on the ground" in order to get sole possession of the house and control of the children. Once your husband is arrested the court imposes a Court Order, called a recognizance or "bail order" pending trial (a year later) that prevents the husband from coming back to the house.

The victimized spouse, usually male, has now spent thousands of dollars for the privilege of (a) being thrown in jail; (b) being shut out of his own home; (c) suffering the embarrassment of being charged with a criminal offence in front of the community; and (d) not seeing his kids except on terms his wife will accept, unless the Family Court intervenes, which costs even more money — a lot more money.

Moreover, it takes time to have a Family Court make an Order on parenting issues. In Newmarket Ontario, one can wait several months for a Case Conference and then a motion on the issue. And since the fellow is no longer living with the children, the Court will normally side with the parent who has lived with the children since the separation when awarding "custody" or "primary care and control." Hence, by kicking out the father on false charges, the mother wins this fight by underhanded means. Then when the father goes to Family Court, he fights only for "better terms of access." Is this really fair?

Surely more careful investigations must be carried out before the Zero Tolerance rule is applied so summarily in this Province.

In the meantime, men better make sure that they marry or partner with a woman who plays fair. Otherwise, a jail cell may be awaiting them if she decides to simply pick up the phone and dial three digits: 911.

Men living with their "better halves" in potentially violent situations would be wise to consult competent family law counsel to ask about their options to avoid such confrontations. Moving out may be the best solution in certain situations. In others it would be the worst decision and getting a civil restraining order might be the wisest course of action if you feel threatened.

Mr. Syrtash is Counsel to Garfin Zeidenberg LLP, Suite 800, 5255 Yonge Street (at Norton) just north of Mel Lastman Square, Civic Centre Subway station, Toronto, ON M5G 1E6. John Syrtash can be reached at (416) 642-5410, Cell (416) 886-0359. Visit www.freemychild.com; www.spousalsupport.com; www.garfinzeidenberg.com.

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Chabad centre eyes increased security

Antisemitic incidents in Victoria

Lauren Kramer
Pacific Correspondent

VANCOUVER — In the wake of recent antisemitic incidents in Victoria, B.C., one Jewish institution in the city is hoping to beef up its security measures.

The Jewish Education Centre, run by Chabad Vancouver Island, is applying for a $5,000 grant from Public Safety Canada's Communities At Risk Securities Infrastructure Program, which provides up to 50 per cent of total project costs to a maximum of $100,000 per project.

Ottawa requires applicants to have at least 50 per cent of project costs funded by non-governmental sources when an application is submitted.

The centre wants to install $10,000 worth of security upgrades, so it must raise $5,000 on its own, said Elizabeth Wolfe, who is writing the grant application on behalf of the centre.

Rabbi Meir Kaplan, who operates the centre near McKenzie Avenue and Borden Street, hopes to improve the centre's exterior lighting, add a lock to the Aron Hakodesh and insert a Shabbat timer to enhance security on Friday nights and Saturdays.

The centre serves an average of 100 people each week, providing a preschool program for 15 children Monday through Friday, as well as Sunday school for 30 children, religious services on weekends and adult classes on weeknights.

"The centre is on the edge of a schoolyard and in somewhat of an undesirable neighbourhood," Wolfe said.

"At night it's very dark here, and people will pass through the school to access that neighbourhood. We had an antisemitic incident in the park nearby a while ago, and we're hoping that by improving the lighting, it will discourage people from doing that kind of thing in the future."

Rabbi Kaplan was quick to add that he rarely encounters any antisemitism in Victoria, and that the recent graffiti in the city's Jewish cemetery was not reflective of the community at large.

"We're fortunate to live here," he said. "But nevertheless, there've been incidents that make us feel it necessary to have better security around the facility so we can offer people going into the building maximum protection. We feel it's our responsibility."

New rabbinical book called 'heretical'

JTA

A prominent Chabad Lubavitch rabbi in Toronto has condemned the latest book by celebrity Rabbi Shmuley Boteach and pronounced that it's "forbidden" for anyone to buy or read it.

In an open letter published on the Jewish news website the Algemeiner, Rabbi Immanuel Schochet denounced Rabbi Boteach's book, *Kosher Jesus*, as "heretical."

The book "poses a tremendous risk to the Jewish community," wrote Rabbi Schochet, an emeritus professor of philosophy and religion at Humber College and spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Joseph.

"I have never read a book, let alone one authored by a purported frum Jew, that does more to enhance the evangelical missionary message and agenda than the aforementioned book," Rabbi Shochet said. "It is forbidden for anyone to buy or read this book, or give its author a platform in any way, shape or form to discuss this topic."

The volume "must be rejected for being heretical." The latest offering from Rabbi Boteach, a Chabad-ordained rabbi and former movement emissary who was criticized by fellow rabbis years ago for offering spiritual advice to the late singer Michael Jackson and for authoring the 1999 book *Kosher Sex*, explores the Jewish roots of Jesus and whether the exploration should lead modern Jews to "rediscover" and celebrate the extent to which the Hebrew Bible shaped his thinking.

In a lengthy response disseminated widely online, Rabbi Boteach said that he must "defend myself against the appalling and libelous charge of heresy." He said his book paints Jesus as "a Torah-observant Jew whose mission it was to restore Jewish observance fully among his Jewish brethren and fight Roman persecution."

"It's time these universal Jewish ideas that have so influenced the world be traced back to their original source," Rabbi Boteach wrote in defence of his book. "It's time that the Jewishness of Jesus be re-discovered by Christians."

As for Rabbi Schochet's charge the book will embolden Christians to convert Jews, Rabbi Boteach said that the book "is the ultimate argument against Christian missionaries" because it offers "significant information to argue convincingly against any Christian attempt to evangelize Jews."

Canada looks to strengthen trade with Israel

Viva Sarah Press
CJN Israel Bureau

JERUSALEM — Canada's Finance Minister Jim Flaherty met with members of Israel's financial community and representatives from Israel's high-tech sector during his visit to Israel last week.

He made no secret of Canada's desire to expand its free-trade relationship with Israel.

"I admire what has been done with the Israeli economy. We have much to learn on research and development and boosting innovation and productivity. I look forward to learning more," Flaherty said at a Jerusalem reception marking the Israel-Canada friendship.

Israeli Finance Minister Yuval Steinitz said that the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement (CIFTA) has been beneficial for both countries. Now, both governments want to expand the trade agreement's scope.

CIFTA went into effect in 1997, initially eliminating tariffs on all industrial products manufactured in Canada and Israel, as well as a limited number of agricultural and fisheries products. By 2003, additional agricultural and agri-food tariff reductions on goods previously excluded from the agreement were successfully negotiated, according to Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

"We want to expand the free-trade agreement with Canada. It's good for us to export and import but, more importantly, an Israel-Canada relationship can build co-operation in high-tech, biotech, between universities, research and development and innovation commercialization. Relationships are already good, but there's room for improvement," Steinitz told *The CJN*.

"Canada and Israel are two of the few countries that succeeded to grow again following the economic crisis. Both governments need to enhance and promote and widen [CIFTA] to other areas, and I'm confident this can continue to our economic co-operation in the future," Steinitz said.

Jim Flaherty and Benjamin Netanyahu

Israel is Canada's sixth-largest export market in the region. The Canadian government reports that Canada-Israel bilateral goods trade has more than doubled since the inception of CIFTA, from $507 million in 1996 to $1.4 billion in 2010.

"Co-operation in science and technology, research and development, sophisticated agriculture, military co-operation, this co-operation is going to be enhanced," said Minister for Strategic Affairs Moshe Ya'alon. "We share not just the same interests, but we share the same values."

In Canada, the government's consultations are ongoing on how best to modify CIFTA.

Flaherty conducted a conference call with Canadian media from Tel Aviv last week.

In his preamble to the gathered media on the call, Flaherty noted that while in Israel he'd met with, among others, Israeli Finance Minister Yuval Steinitz; Palestinian Monetary Authority governor Jihad Al Wazi, and Stanley Fischer, governor of the Central Bank of Israel.

"Their perspectives were helpful in understanding the economic landscape here," Flaherty said. He said he also visited the Weizmann Institute and the Technion Institute of Technology, calling the visits "informative."

Asked by *The CJN* how he plans to increase trade and grow the Canadian economy via relations with Israel, Flaherty said he met with Israeli Chief Scientist Avi Hasson "and had a good discussion" about venture-capital initiatives, innovation and research and development programs.

Flaherty also reiterated Steinitz's position that broadening CIFTA is a priority.

"We are advocating expansion of free trade with Israel. That would be desirable," he said.

The biggest lesson he learned from his trip to Israel, he said, is that Israel's focus on the research and development sector was a result of "an intentional effort to become a world leader in commercialization.

"Canada has a challenge… we're one of the world leaders in investing in R&D, but we're not getting the productivity results we should be seeing from that investment. So I learned a great deal about how R&D and innovation are approached here, not only by government but also by the universities, research institutes and by businesspeople who invest."

He said Canada should consider emulating some "aspects" of the work Israelis do in these areas.

With files from Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf

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Baird, Flaherty celebrate Canada-Israel friendship

Viva Sarah Press
CJN Israel Bureau

JERUSALEM — It was an evening of mutual gratitude.

At a gala reception held on Feb. 1, visiting Canadian parliamentarians spoke of Canada's passionate bond with this little nation in the Middle East, while their Israeli hosts reiterated appreciation for Canada's strong support.

"There are so many great connections between Canada and Israel," Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs John Baird told those gathered at the dinner at the Inbal Hotel.

The event was hosted by the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), the Canadian Embassy and the Canada-Israel Industrial Research and Development Foundation.

Baird and Canada's Finance Minister Jim Flaherty spent last week in Israel holding meetings with their Israeli counterparts and reaffirming Canadian support for the Jewish state.

The Canadian ministers held brief meetings with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President Shimon Peres. They also travelled to the West Bank for talks with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and his prime minister, Salam Fayyad.

Canada's decision to stand by Israel when much of the world is only too happy to condemn Jerusalem is something Israel's Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon said should not be taken for granted.

"Certainly in this day and age when there are dark forces turning, it's important that countries that share the same values share a good relationship. We have appreciation for the Canadian government," Ayalon told *The CJN*.

With harp and flute notes in the background, dozens of parliamentarians from both countries mingled with embassy staff, reporters, army officials, philanthropists and businessmen.

Guests-of-honour Baird and Flaherty, who attended numerous policy roundtables during their visit to Israel – including speaking at the Herzliyah Conference and meeting with Israeli heads of industry – were cheery and full of praise for the Israel-Canada alliance.

"The saying, 'If I'm not for myself who will be for me'… I think that for many years Israel felt there was no one in its court," Flaherty said. "But as Minister Baird said, it's not that Canada is behind Israel, it's that Canada stands shoulder to shoulder with Israel." Such sentiments were reiterated throughout the evening.

Canadian and Israeli diplomats and Jewish community representatives met in Israel last week. From left are, Israeli Ambassador to Canada Miriam Ziv, CIJA Chair David Koschitzky, Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon, John Baird, Israeli Finance Minister Yuval Steinitz, MK Benny Begin, Israeli Minister of National Infrastructure and Canada's Ambassador to Israel Paul Hunt. ***[Mati Millstein photo]***

"Canada was always Israel's friend but in the last 10 years became one of Israel's best friends in the world – some people will say Israel's best friend. I think the Canadian government is better friends with Israel than we are sometimes with ourselves," said Israeli Finance Minister Yuval Steinitz.

Though an overall feeling of optimism prevailed at the event, there was no missing the perforations of threats from the Arab world and specifically Iran.

"We're living through a period in which support for Israel is important. There's a critical mass of threat… a triangular threat from Sinai, from Gaza and from Egypt," Liberal MP and former justice minister Irwin Cotler told *The CJN*.

Baird said it was during a visit to the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial Center that the danger Israel faces from Iran really hit home.

"[Nazi leader] Adolf Hitler wrote about his plans in great detail. He had already published *Mein Kampf*. What [Iranian President Mahmoud] Ahmadinejad has said about what the Jews are and wanting to wipe them off the earth is something the world should take very seriously," Baird told *The CJN*. "I'm not saying this is what is going to happen. But when people look back 50 or 60 years, no one can say we didn't know. No one can be surprised. The Holocaust tells us that we must take Iran's threats seriously."

Baird announced from Israel last week that Canada had tightened sanctions on Iran and had frozen the assets of three Iranian-born Canadians and five Iranian companies operating in Canada, and prohibited them from conducting business using the Special Economic Measures Act.

Israel's Minister of Information and Diaspora Yuli Edelstein also spoke of the Iranian threat.

"Iran is a great danger. Ahmadinejad is saying that he will increase by 127 per cent the nuclear budget. He's on a mission and is determined to fulfil it. The question is whether the world is on a mission and determined," Edelstein told *The CJN*.

"Whether coming from Iran, Al Qaeda or Hamas… we need some more clear voices like [Canada's] when it comes to challenges ahead of us," Minister for Strategic Affairs Moshe Ya'alon said. "The Canadian people and the Canadian government are so admired here in our tiny country, the State of Israel."

Nevertheless, the positive vibe at the party managed to overcome the mention of warnings and threats emanating from Israel's enemies. After all, this was a reception to celebrate friendship.

"We're honoured and pleased by the ministers' visit and the support of the Canadian government of Israel as a fellow democracy," CIJA chair David Koschitzky said.

Canadian Ambassador to Israel Paul Hunt, a co-host of the affair, and Miriam Ziv, Israel's ambassador to Canada attended, along with many of their embassy staff.

Baird acknowledged the high turnout of Israeli ministers to the event, saying that he knows only too well that most parliamentarians prefer to duck out of engagements of this nature. Even David Weinberg, director of the Israel Office of CIJA, who has hosted many events, told *The CJN* that not only was it easy to secure the attendance of Israeli guests but also other influential people requested they be invited to the affair.

Baird and Flaherty were scheduled to travel to China from Israel over the weekend.

With files from Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf

International

U.S. and Israel to work together on Iran: Obama

JTA

WASHINGTON — Israel and the United States will work "in lockstep" to keep Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, President Barack Obama said.

In a pre-Super Bowl interview on NBC Sunday, Obama also discounted reports that Israel is getting ready to strike Iran.

"I don't think that Israel has made a decision on what they need to do," he said.

Asked if Israel would give him advance warning of a strike, Obama said he would not go into details of conversations, but added, "We have closer military and intelligence consultation between our two countries than we've ever had…

"My number 1 priority continues to be the security of the United States, but also the security of Israel, and we are going to make sure that we work in lockstep as we proceed to try to solve this, hopefully diplomatically."

U.S. President Barack Obama

Obama downplayed reports of an Iranian attack on U.S. soil, and said a military confrontation would be destabilizing.

"Obviously, any kind of additional military activity inside the Gulf is disruptive and has a big effect on us – it can have a big effect on oil prices," he said. "We've still got troops in Afghanistan, which borders Iran. And so our preferred solution here is diplomatic, we're going to keep pushing on that front."

He repeated, however that "we're not going to take any option off the table."

In related developments, Jewish and Israeli institutions in the United States are on high alert over concerns that Iran or its proxy will target them, a U.S. news network reported.

The institutions have established special precautions, ABC reported Feb. 3, citing an Israeli internal security document. The document was a letter from the head of security for the Israeli consul general for the Mid-Atlantic states, according to ABC, which said the security threat has increased on "guarded sites" such as Israeli embassies and consulates, and "soft sites" such as synagogues, as well as Jewish schools, restaurants and community centres.

ABC reported that local and regional law enforcement and intelligence officials in U.S. and Canadian cities including New York, Los Angeles, Philadelphia and Toronto have increased security at Israeli and Jewish institutions, and that federal officials have also increased vigilance in looking for imminent attacks.

"In the past few weeks, there has been an escalation in threats against Israeli and Jewish targets around the world," ABC quoted a U.S. regional intelligence document as saying.

The document said that "law enforcement should be vigilant when making periodic checks at all Jewish facilities."

In addition, an Israeli intelligence report warned that forged Israeli passports might be used by potential terrorists trying to leave the Middle East and enter the United States and Canada.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said Feb. 3 that his country is prepared to assist those who would confront Israel and the United States.

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Egypt's gas pipeline to Israel attacked again

JTA

JERUSALEM — Egypt's gas pipeline to Israel was attacked for the 12th time in a year on Sunday.

The attack near El Arish in the northern Sinai Peninsula came after masked gunmen planted explosives under the pipeline, security officials told the French news agency Agence France-Presse. The pipeline also supplies gas to Jordan.

Gas delivery was stopped after the attack. The supply of gas to Israel has been stopped numerous times in the last year, leading to a scramble to find alternate fuel sources to produce electricity, all of which are more expensive.

Egypt supplies Israel with more than 40 per cent of its natural gas needs to produce electricity, and electricity prices have risen by more than 10 per cent in Israel since the attacks began.

The first attack on the pipeline came in February 2011 during uprisings against Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, who has been deposed.

Selling gas to Israel has been unpopular on the Egyptian street since the opening of the pipeline in 2008. Mubarak has been accused of giving Israel a sweetheart deal on the gas, since Egypt lost more than $714 million on the pact.

Jordan agreed in October to pay double what it previously paid for gas from Egypt, Reuters reported. Egypt is expected to demand that Israel also agree to a major price hike.

Also Sunday, Israel's Delek Group Ltd. said it has discovered what it estimates to be nearly 1.3 trillion cubic feet of natural gas in Israeli waters near the Lebanese border. Delek is working in co-operation with the U.S. company Noble Energy.

Syrian army targets houses and their residents

Continued from page 1

The report says Assad's goal was to gain ground ahead of a visit by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, who was scheduled to arrive in the country Tuesday, along with a military delegation that includes the head of Russian intelligence.

Assad's aim, sources say, is to display his control of the situation and his ability to suppress the unrest, with the determining battles to be staged in Homs and in the re-occupation of the town of Zabadani, which fell to Free Syrian Army forces last month.

An Al-Arabiya report indicated that the battle over Zabadani has already begun, with Syrian soldiers defecting to the opposition along with eight tanks, and that Homs has been placed under a siege that included cutting electricity and water supplies.

The report also claimed that the Syrian army for the first time has been using rockets to target houses in Zabadani, as well as mortars to hit populated areas. As of this writing, some 60 people have been reported killed and hundreds wounded in the wanton attacks. Seven houses have been reported demolished with their residents still inside.

Syrian opposition organizations that are active internationally are currently trying to gain a political foothold by bypassing the UN Security Council, where a resolution underwritten by the Arab League failed after Russia and China vetoed it on Saturday.

Bashar Assad

Opposition leaders are now trying to find a way forward, as it is clear that Turkey and the Arab states oppose military action against the Assad regime, and the imposition of economic sanctions will not stop Assad.

In view of the Russian and Chinese opposition and the Iranian threat to open a new front, there is doubt as to whether a western coalition would agree to act directly against Syria. The question is whether the Free Syrian Army will be able to get additional military assistance, and to arm itself with heavy artillery, tanks and shells so that it will be able to pose a real challenge to the Syrian army and change the civilian resistance into a real military struggle, much as the rebel forces in Libya did.

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Martin Rochwerg Elected National President

ORT Canada is pleased to announce the election of Martin Rochwerg as National President succeeding Carrie Katz.

Martin Rochwerg is a senior tax partner at Miller Thomson's Tax and Private Client Services group and is among the most frequently recommended estate planning lawyers in Canada. According to Euromoney's Best of the Best for 2010, Martin is one of the world's top 25 pre-eminent Trusts and Estates Practitioners.

He is a member of the Board of Governors of the Canadian Tax Foundation. As counsel to families, businesses, investment groups and philanthropists in Canada and internationally, Martin provides advice on personal tax and estate planning, succession to family business, wills and trusts. He advises trustees and beneficiaries on estate, trust and charitable administration and dispute resolution, and corporate clients on tax minimization and ownership regimes.

Martin's long history of involvement in the Jewish Community includes Board Member of Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto and Chair of its Professional Advisory Committee; Member of the Executive Committee and Board of Associated Hebrew Schools, Vice-Chair of the 2000 International Conference of Int'l Academy of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists and member of the Board of ORT Toronto. In 2000 Martin was a Chaperone on March of the Living.

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Germany donates $13 million to Yad Vashem

© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — Visiting German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle signed an agreement last Wednesday granting 10 million euros ($13 million Cdn) to Israel's Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial Center over the next 10 years.

"The agreement signifies the German government's wish to help facilitate Yad Vashem's various activities in Israel and globally which further commemoration, documentation and education of the events of the Holocaust," Yad Vashem said in a statement.

Education Minister Gideon Sa'ar said that the agreement constituted an important source of funding, and will be used to expand Yad Vashem's activities and to locate and purchase significant Holocaust documents from archives in Europe, making them accessible to the public via the Internet, Israeli media reported.

"This decision reflects the importance that the German government attaches to the subject of the Holocaust. The commemoration of the Holocaust is an endless task," Sa'ar said.

Yad Vashem chairman Avner Shalev said, "This agreement strengthens the obligation of the German government and the German people regarding Holocaust remembrance."

German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle

Westerwelle, who met Holocaust survivors at the centre in Jerusalem, spoke of "a program against forgetting."

Among the survivors who met Westerwelle was 80-year-old Vera Dotan, who survived Auschwitz and the death march the Nazis forced the prisoners to make as the advancing Red Army closed in on the extermination camp in early 1945.

Her father was murdered immediately on arrival in Auschwitz, and her only brother died of typhus two days before the camp was liberated.

For 40 years, she hardly spoke a word of German. That changed in the 1980s, when she heard that some people did not take the Holocaust seriously.

"I then told myself, together with my husband: 'We must tell our story. People must know the Holocaust is not a fairy tale.'"

From then on, she has told her story again and again, and in German, too.

She said that she was "very grateful" for the funding agreement. "We need a lot, and when it comes from Germany, it is maybe worth even more," she said.

Israel Briefs

Ethiopians arrive

Seventy-one Ethiopians arrived in Israel accompanied by lay leaders from the Jewish Federations of North America. After landing Feb. 2 at Ben-Gurion Airport, the new immigrants were taken to an absorption centre in Kiryat Gat. The mission travelled to Ethiopia to meet the remaining members of the community and to visit the Jewish community centre and school in Gondar before escorting the olim to Israel. The federation umbrella group gives more than $3 million annually to Ethiopian aliyah and absorption in Israel, as well as medical and educational services for those still in Ethiopia. More than 6,000 Ethiopian Jews, who are called Falash Mora, are in Ethiopia seeking to make aliyah.

Cooking for peace

Chefs from the White House, the Kremlin, the Élysée Palace and the Chancellery of Germany are touring Israel and will cook a gala dinner for peace. The delegation from the group Club des Chefs des Chefs, or Chefs of the Heads of State, arrived in Israel Feb. 1 at the invitation of Shalom Kadosh, executive chef of the Fattal Hotel Group. The elite chefs will travel around the country, meet local chefs and cook a gala dinner called "Cooking for Peace" at the Herods Hotel in Tel Aviv. Each chef will prepare a dish that is representative of his or her local cuisine with Israeli and Palestinian chefs. Proceeds from the dinner will be donated to the Peres Center for Peace in Tel Aviv to support its youth programs.

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Canada

200,000 missiles aimed at Israel, IDF officer says

Amos Harel
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — About 200,000 missiles are aimed at Israel at any given time, a top Israel Defence Forces officer said last Thursday, adding that Iran's ability to obtain nuclear weapons is solely dependent on the will of Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

The remarks by military intelligence chief Maj.-Gen. Aviv Kochavi came after IDF Chief of Staff Lt.-Gen. Benny Gantz, said last Wednesday that the threats facing Israel have increased and intensified in recent years due to regional instability.

Speaking at the Herzliya Conference, Gantz said that Iran's nuclear program is a "global problem and a regional problem," adding that Tehran's attempts to acquire nuclear weapons must continue to be disrupted.

Kochavi, speaking at the Herzliya Conference, spoke of the growing threats Israel was facing: "a more hostile, more Islamic, more sensitive Middle East, one more attune to public sentiment, less controlled by the regimes, and less susceptible to international influence."

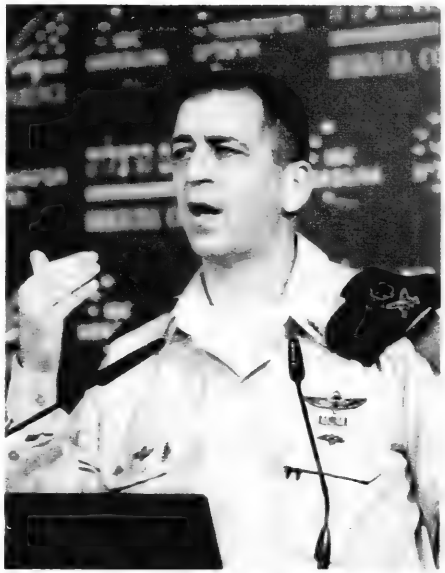
The chief of military intelligence said that about 200,000 missiles are aimed at Israel at any given time, but he added that "Israel's military deterrence is intact."

Referring to Israel's concerns over Iran's nuclear ambitions, Kochavi presented a relatively tame estimation of a possible timeline en route to an Iranian atomic bomb, saying that the project depended more on the will of Iran's supreme leader than on any technological advancement.

"If Khamenei issues a command to achieve a first nuclear explosive device, we estimate it would take another year before that's achieved," the top IDF official said, adding that "if he asks to translate that ability to obtain a nuclear warhead, that would take another year or two."

Kochavi also reiterated the IDF estimate that Iran is in possession of more than four tons of low-grade enriched uranium as well as almost 100 kilograms of uranium enriched at 20 per cent.

"If those are enriched more, to a 90 per cent level, that would be enough for four atomic bombs," the IDF officer said.



Military intelligence chief Maj.-Gen. Aviv Kochavi

The military intelligence chief added that the sanctions on Iran "are taking their toll. There's 16 per cent unemployment, 24 per cent annual inflation, and practically no growth," he said, adding that "at this point the pressure isn't leading Iran to a strategic shift."

However, Kochavi said "there's a potential, with greater pressure, that the regime, interested first and foremost in its own survival, would reconsider its position."

Defence Minister Ehud Barak said on Thursday that if sanctions on Iran's nuclear program do not prove effective, then military action against the Islamic Republic must be considered.

"Today, unlike in the past, there is widespread international belief that it is vital to prevent Iran from becoming nuclear and that no option should be taken off the table," Barak said at the closing day of the conference.

"Should sanctions fail to stop Iran's nuclear program, there will be a need to consider taking action," he said.

He noted that many analysts believe that confronting a nuclear Iran will be much more complicated and dangerous, and will cost many more lives than taking action today. "Whoever says 'later' could find that it is too late," he stressed.

Barak added that Israel's challenge is to continue aiding the international community to work toward halting Iran's nuclear program, "without taking any option off the table."

Deputy Prime Minister Moshe Ya'alon said that all of Iran's nuclear facilities are vulnerable to a military strike, adding that the spectre of a nuclear Iran would be a "nightmare to the free world."

Ya'alon also said that an explosion that virtually destroyed an Iranian Revolutionary Guard missile base near Tehran late last year targeted a system that was "preparing to produce a missile with a range of 10,000 kilometres, thus threatening the United States."

Speaking at the conference, President Shimon Peres said that Tehran's "evil" leaders cannot be allowed to obtain nuclear weapons.

"It is the duty of the international community to prevent evil and nuclear [weapons] from coming together. That is the obligation of most of the leaders of the free world, one which they must meet," Peres said.

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Study finds Israel second-most educated country

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JERUSALEM — Israel is the second-most educated country in the world, says a report released by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

According to the OECD's Education at a Glance 2011 report, 78 per cent of the money invested in education in Israel is taken directly from public funds, while 45% of Israel's population has a university or college diploma.

Israel also had the largest increase in overall population, approximately 19.02 per cent from 2000 to 2009.

The report shows that while education has improved across the board, it has not improved evenly, with some countries enjoying much greater rates of educational attainment than others.

According to 24/7 Wall St., which helped compile the data, the countries included in the list have had educated populations for a long time. While they have steadily increased the percentages of their populations with post-secondary educations, the increases are modest compared to developing countries.

According to the report, the 10 most-educated countries in the world are Canada, Israel, Japan, the United States, New Zealand, South Korea, Norway, the United Kingdom, Australia and Finland.

Israel experiencing natural gas shortage

Avi Bar-Eli and Itai Trilnick
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

TEL AVIV — Israel is running out of natural gas as the only existing production field, the Mary-B field off the Ashkelon coast, is close to being depleted.

This could lead to electricity shortages, planned blackouts and much higher electricity rates. The shortage is expected to last at least until next year, when the Tamar gas field starts production.

Noble Energy, which operates the Mary-B field for the Tethys Sea partnership, has halted production at eight of the 10 wells in the field over the past few weeks. The remaining gas in the other two wells will run out within a few weeks at the present rate of production.

The Energy and Water Resources Ministry, previously known as the National Infrastructure Ministry, is expected to order Noble Energy to cut back on its gas production within the next few days, for the fourth time so far this year. The idea is to draw out the supply of gas from the offshore field for as long as possible and allow increased production during the hot summer months when electricity demand reaches its peak.

This shortage comes on top of the problems with the supply of Egyptian natural gas, which provided 40 per cent of Israel's gas before continued attacks on the gas pipeline in Sinai suspended gas supplies for months. The current supply from Egypt, which could stop again at any time, is about 25 per cent of the amount the Egyptians are committed to providing.

The alternative to natural gas is powering electricity plants with diesel or heavy fuel oil, both of which are much more expensive and more polluting. That would also necessitate higher electricity rates. A 6.6 per cent electricity price hike is already scheduled, and an additional 13.4 per cent price hike is in the works over the next three years. Even worse, the infrastructure for supplying diesel fuel is inadequate to meet the quantities required to supply all the Israel Electric Corporation's (IEC) power plants and replace the natural gas. This could force blackouts.

Last week, the energy ministry asked the public to cut back on electricity use during the peak winter hours of 5 to 10 p.m., as electricity production could fall short of peak demand during these hours.

The supply of gas from the Mary-B field was cut from 550,000 cubic metres per hour to only 300,000. This amount is expected to drop within days to just 150,000 cubic metres per hour. This would allow flows of 350,000 cubic metres in July and an increase to 450,000 in August and September. After that, the amount would be cut back to a minimum until the field runs dry.

The government originally planned on adequate supplies from the Mary-B field through mid-2013, though these estimates were updated and supplies were expected to run out in early 2013. But a number of wells collapsed as they filled with water, which cut the supply much more quickly than forecast.

Last year the Energy and Water Ministry ordered the Tethys Sea partnership to develop various satellite fields near Mary-B. Tethys Sea is 47 per cent owned by Noble Energy, an American firm, and 53 per cent by the Delek Group. The nearby fields include the Noa field, to the east of Mary-B, with 1.2 billion cubic metres of natural gas. This field was discovered in 2000 but never developed as the company said it was not commercially viable. Only last year did the ministry order Tethys Sea to begin development, and the state hopes production can start in August.

Tethys Sea will also start emergency drilling, including further wells in various small structures within the Mary-B field in July, which could supply another 0.7 billion cubic feet of gas.

Switching to diesel fuel would raise the cost by four times. The IEC would also have to raise very large sums to fund the purchase of the more expensive fuels, above the planned five billion shekels ($1.3 billion Cdn) it had intended to raise this year.

The problem with the diesel fuel supply infrastructure is that it was intended to replace natural gas only for short periods of time and cannot meet the requirements of peak production. In addition, the frequent switch between diesel and gas in 2011 created excessive wear and tear on the generating equipment.

The energy ministry has other plans to reduce electricity use. It wants to encourage consumers to shift electricity use to off-peak hours by charging lower rates at such times and much higher prices at peak hours.

Cabinet considering Med-Red railway

Moti Bassok
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — The Israeli cabinet is examining a plan for building railway links between the Mediterranean and Red Sea coasts, which would carry passengers and create a new route for Europe-Asia trade that could compete with the Suez Canal.

Establishing passenger train service through the desert, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said, would mean the southern Red Sea resort of Eilat would be just two hours away from Tel Aviv, 350 kilometres to the northwest.

The cabinet is expected to vote on the plan at this week's meeting.

"There will be a line for carrying goods from Asia to Europe," Netanyahu told the weekly cabinet two weeks ago. "It has created very great interest among the emerging powers – China and India, and others," he added.

A network of new railway lines and roads would connect the new Eilat route to northern Israel, and this would create "a junction between continents," the prime minister said.

"[The plan] is therefore of strategic importance, both nationally and internationally," he added.

The Ministry of Transportation is considering several proposals for a new rail line, but the preferred option would have Chinese state-owned contracting companies do the work.

"The professional capability of the Chinese companies in the construction of railway systems and transport networks is among the best in the world," Transportation Minister Yisrael Katz is quoted as saying. Katz met his Chinese counterpart in Beijing last September, and the two agreed to prepare a joint proposal for the Eilat route.

Israeli Transportation Minister Yisrael Katz *[Flash90 photos]*

Israeli officials say the so-called Med-Red railway could also be used for future exports of Israeli natural gas to India, and possibly China, from the Mediterranean fields currently under development.

However, Labor party leader Shelly Yachimovich slammed what she called Katz's plan "to put the railway to Eilat project into the hands of the Chinese while bypassing proper tender processes and importing thousands of Chinese workers." She said the move showed "a malfunction in the government's judgment...The government's first duty is toward its own citizens," she added.

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We are pleased to announce the appointment of Jonathan Allen as the Executive Director for the greater Toronto area. Jonathan brings with him many years of experience in both local and Israel based fundraising and organizational development. He is very proud of his Cape Breton roots, but is equally proud of his 15 year involvement with the Toronto Jewish community. We are very happy to welcome Jonathan, his wife Ellen and their three children to the Ben Gurion University family.

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Israeli quartet gives lesson in improvised jazz

Daniel Koren
Special to The CJN

Toronto's Trane Studio was packed recently when the Ori Dakari Quartet made their way onto the stage, to play the first show of a scheduled three-city Canadian tour, with stops in Edmonton and Calgary.

Jazz enthusiasts sat in anticipation, watching as the Israeli band commenced into graceful, unprecedented, improvised jazz. The result was a charming and tranquil evening of unscripted jazz.

Guitarist Ori Dakari made a name for himself in the so-called "radical Jewish culture" scene of New York, where he moved in 2007. His debut CD, *Entrances*, in 2009, was released on composer/producer John Zorn's Tzadik Records.

On *Entrances*, Dakari, playing the roles of lead guitarist and composer, was accompanied by three musicians he met in the United States – alto sax player Uri Gurvic, drummer Eric Doob and bassist Takashi Sugawa. *Entrances* made a strong impression on the international jazz community. With his fellow instrumentalists, Dakari went on to perform in Thailand, Serbia, Russia and Israel before making his way to Toronto for his Canadian debut.

At Trane Studio, the foursome wasted no time in displaying the range of their influences and styles, transitioning from contemporary jazz to Middle Eastern tambour, from relentless bass solo to a North African-inspired medley.

Ori Dakari performs at Trane Studio. *(Ronnie Friedman photo)*

Each member displayed his own brand of musical prowess at least once throughout the evening, standing at the forefront of the group's unified musical direction. Two enjoyable moments of merit, respectively, were when Gurvich brought out the flute and when Doob fashioned upbeat, African-embraced rhythms with the bongos.

The sessions were intimate and intense, the musicians playing together in earnest, developing off one another's melodies. The Middle Eastern sets were high-spirited, with Dakari leading the way as the ensemble presented their interpretation of Israeli music, fused with jazz in its core. It was certainly an enlivening experience, though thoroughly as endearing were the softer, more subtle moments throughout the evening. Various solos transpired, with some instances of discernible North African medleys. Exotic would be one way to characterize the session, and during the finale, it could even be called experimental.

Jazz is a broad term. As such, scholars have had difficulty defining it, though they have agreed that it remains in a state of perpetual metamorphosis. Though the majority of their set remained within the confines of contemporary jazz, the Ori Dakari Quartet managed to give a little something extra to the traditional-jazz pundit. They offered fans the good fortune of sitting in a relaxed, casual venue lit by candles, while the music urged them to dance the horah. A rare occasion indeed.

Born and raised in Kfar Saba, Dakari was acclaimed as an "outstanding musician" by the Israeli army and the Israeli ministry of culture when he was only 18 years old.

The quartet was brought to Toronto by the Ashkenaz Foundation, which has brought an exceptionally diverse lineup of musicians to the city. It has promised more spirited shows to come in 2012. Mind you, this evening of fruitful, Israeli swayed jazz will be hard to top.

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CELEBRITY BRIEFS

Ben Stiller to star in show about Jewish family

JTA

NEW YORK — Ben Stiller reportedly has signed on to work with the cable giant HBO to produce, direct and star in a new show called *All Talk* written by Jonathan Safran Foer.

The show revolves around a Jewish family living in Washington and is billed as "politically, religiously, culturally, intellectually and sexually irreverent." Alan Alda, of *MASH* fame is set to co-star.

Shooting is set to begin in the fall.

Fran Drescher's close encounter : Sorry all you *Nanny* fans but we have some bad news: Fran Drescher is losing it.

In an interview with The Huffington Post, Drescher confessed that she believes in aliens. Here's the story:

"You know, it's funny because Peter [Marc Jacobson, Drescher's ex-husband] and I both saw [aliens] before we knew each other, doing the same thing, driving on the road with our dads ... we were both in junior high. A few years later we met, and we realized that we had the same experience. I think that somehow we were programmed to meet. We both have this scar. It's the exact same scar on the exact same spot."

Jacobson disputes the account, saying the scar is from burning herself with hot water, not an alien invasion. But Drescher is undaunted.

"That's what the aliens programmed us to think," she explains. "But really, that's where the chip is."

Synagogue hits up Mel Gibson: What's up with Congregation Beth Shalom in Corona, Calif.? The strapped-for-cash synagogue reached out for financial help to the Hollywood actor best known to Jews for his antisemitic rants.

In a letter to Mel Gibson, the synagogue made this offer: "Our proposal to you, Mr. Gibson, is since you have been cited as an antisemitic, and have denied those allegations, what better way to prove to all your fans and the nay sayers - – than to endorse and help raise funds for our cause – SOS, Save Our Synagogue."

Gibson's rep said the actor "knows nothing about the request but wishes the temple all the best."

A GIANT BOOK

English literacy institute A.H.A.V.A. has launched its seventh annual read-a-thon by inviting local school children to help create what is expected to be the biggest book ever made in Israel. The book, titled *The Giant's Book*, is about a giant who can't find a book big enough to read. It measures almost two metres tall, over one metre wide and is being made by school children from over 13 schools in Ma'aleh Adumim who will be given words to write and design. A.H.A.V.A. is a non-profit organization in Israel dedicated to promoting English literacy for children.

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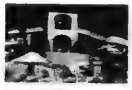
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EYE ON ARTS

By BILL GLADSTONE

EVENT AT KIEVER SYNAGOGUE EXPLORES 'LOST AND FOUND SPACES' IN TORONTO, MONTREAL, WARSAW AND KRAKOW

Globe and Mail architectural critic **Lisa Rochon** moderates a panel consisting of writer **Shawn Micallef**, author **Sara Ferdman Tauben** and architectural photographer **David Kaufman** on the subject of "lost and found" places in Montreal, Toronto, Warsaw and Krakow.

Ferdman Tauben's new book is *Traces of the Past: Montreal's Early Synagogues*, copies of which will be available for sale. The discussion will be followed by a reception with music and refreshments, during which guests may view a specially mounted exhibition of Kaufman's photographs of synagogues and city spaces.

Presented by Makom, the grassroots downtown community, at the Kiever Synagogue, 25 Bellevue Ave., which this year marks its 100th anniverary. Thursday, Feb. 15, 7 p.m. $5 at the door.

Theodore Bikel, seen here in *Sholom Aleichem*

The Kiever also hosts an open house at which guests may chat with Tauben and view Kaufman's photographs inside the beautiful historic sanctuary. Sunday, Feb. 19, 2 to 5 p.m.

* * *

***Visiting Mr. Green*: Theodore Bikel** plays the elderly Jewish widow Mr. Green in this well-done two-act play by **Jeff Baron** that also stars **Aidan deSalaiz** as the young New Yorker who almost hits him in his car and is ordered by a judge to pay weekly visits.

The 87-year-old Bikel is outstanding and deSalaiz brings a likable energy to his role. The story is about two characters, brought together by a fluke accident, who end up deeply affecting each other. The Harold Green Jewish Theatre production is at the St. Lawrence Centre's Jane Mallett Theatre until Feb. 18. www.hgjewishtheatre.com

* * *

Names in the News: Montreal-based filmmaker **Sharon Hyman** explores the concept of "feeling grown-up" in a new 52-minute documentary, *Neverbloomers: The Search for GrownUphood*.

Hyman, who specializes in "autodocumentaries" – turning the camera on one's self to tell one's own story – shows "a side of the female psyche not typically seen in the mainstream media," she says. Her previous autodocumentary, *Worried*, made with **Naomi Levine**, premièred at the Montreal New Film and Video Film Festival and was broadcast on WTN.

In the new film, Hyman speaks with friends, strangers, taxi drivers, doctors, a chassidic rabbi, a filmmaker and her mother. Her conclusion is that "we all feel like impostor grown-ups – at least part of the time." Premières on CBC's documentary channel, Feb. 27, 8 p.m. www.neverbloomers.com

* * *

Reading by Nathan Englander: Authors at Harbourfront Centre presents acclaimed short-story writer **Nathan Englander** reading from his new collection, *What We Talk About When We Talk About Anne Frank*. 235 Queens Quay, Brigantine Room, Feb. 22, 7:30 p.m. $10; members and students free.

In the same venue, theoretical physicist and novelist **Alan Lightman** reads from his novel *Mr g*, Feb. 15, 7:30 p.m. and Toronto author **Lilian Nattel** reads from *Web of Angels* on March 7. 416-973-4000, www.readings.org

* * *

Sharon Hyman

Arts in Brief

• Friends of Yiddish presents **Sharon Power** speaking on Great Women Stars of the American Yiddish Stage. Beth Tikvah Synagogue, 3080 Bayview Ave. Sunday, Feb. 12, 2 p.m. $5, includes refreshments; FOY members free. RSVP by Feb. 9 to Sandy, 416-458-1440, yiddish18@yahoo.ca

• Author-critic **Kevin Courrier** speaks on *The Reagan Era: Moscow on the Hudson, Diner, Pennies from Heaven* and more in the latest lectures in the series American Movies and the Politics of Idealism. Media Mondays at the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, Feb. 13, 7 to 9 p.m. $12 drop-in at the door, students $6. 416-924-6211, ext. 606.

• Toronto Jewish Film Society presents *A Kid for Two Farthings* (1955), a British film directed by **Carol Reed** about a young boy who searches for a magical unicorn to help the disillusioned adults around him. With guest speaker **Mark Clamen**. Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre, Sunday, Feb. 19, 4 and 7:30 p.m. Special screening is free for kids aged 6 to 12 with adult admission. $15, $10, at the door. 416-924-6211, ext. 606, film@mnjcc.org

• The Civic Light-Opera Company presents *Forbidden Broadway*, the funny Tony Award-winning musical revue that pays tribute to and spoofs many favourite musicals. With **David Haines, Julie Lennick, Peter Loucas, Susan Sanders, Andrea Strayer** and **Joe Cascone**, who also directs. Fairview Library Theatre, 35 Fairview Mall Dr. Feb. 22 to March 10. $28. www.CivicLightOperaCompany.com, 416-755-1717.

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All entries received by 3 p.m. on **Monday, March 5th** are eligible. The winning entries will be randomly selected at The CJN offices on **Tuesday, March 6th**. The winners will be notified the same day. Odds of winning depend on the number of entries received. One entry per person.

The CJN will not enter into any correspondence with contestants

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Family business turned into an entertainment empire

Kathryn Kates
Special to The CJN

Soon after graduating with a master's of arts degree from Washington State University, Howard Pechet joined his family's hotel business, eventually turning it into an entertainment empire.

It started when Pechet's father, Eugene, who owned 19 Western Canadian-based hotels and adjoining taverns, asked his son to look into dinner theatres operating in the United States, in the hopes of starting one at the family's new Mayfield Hotel in their hometown of Edmonton.

Pechet opened Stage West in 1975. Admittedly, he didn't know what he was doing and says his first three productions did poorly.

The next production, *The Gingerbread Lady*, starring 1950s starlet Gloria DeHaven, was an ironic success.

"*The Gingerbread Lady* is about a retired alcoholic actress. Our main income in the theatre is from liquor, and I'm doing a play about this actress who comes out of rehab and falls off the wagon. So, it wasn't probably the best choice of plays to open with," Pechet says.

The next production, a Cole Porter revue, also failed. "I thought, we could probably do it ourselves and that's how we got started. [Then] I brought in [actor] Gig Young to do a play called *Harvey* and the thing just took off."

Since then, Pechet, now executive producer of Stage West and chairman of Stagewest Hospitality, which includes several hotels, dinner theatres and casinos, has produced almost 1,000 plays and has co-written 14 musical revues, setting the Guinness World Record for producing the most theatre productions.

His mission has been to offer a great buffet with outstanding theatre productions headlined by internationally known celebrities and entertainment icons from the world of television and movies, including Ginger Rogers, Mickey Rooney, Susan Ruttan, Anson Williams, Billy Hufsey, Loretta Swit and Don Knotts, to name a very few.

Howard Pechet with his Guiness Award

"Over the years, we opened theatres in Regina, Winnipeg, Calgary and Mississauga, and that's how we grew," says Pechet.

"We also produced plays in Palm Springs, San Diego and toured around Ontario."

He followed his theatre successes by opening hotels in Medicine Hat, Mississauga and a hotel/casino complex in Camrose, Alta.

Stage West in Winnipeg and Regina, although successful, eventually closed, which was more to do with property issues than anything else. The Edmonton location was sold. Stage West Calgary and Mississauga are thriving to this day.

Pechet started to pen his own shows in the late 1990s. His productions include *California Dreaming*, *The British Invasion I & II* and most recently, *Motown Gold* with director and co-writer Tim French, which received excellent reviews. There are plans to tour it in the United States.

"Right now, I'm working on a play called *Summer in the City*," says Pechet. "I'm doing this with Randy Johnson, a writer-director, who I have wanted to work with for some time. He did plays about Elvis and Janis Joplin, both sanctioned by their estates. *Summer in the City* will open in Calgary in May and in Mississauga next Christmas."

Pechet feels Jews have a historical bias that is culturally oriented. "Certainly, the Jewish community as a whole in Edmonton was very supportive of theatre, ballet and opera. Communities like in Winnipeg underpin many of the cultural activities that go on in Winnipeg," he says. "When you come out of a community that is so culturally supportive, I think it becomes an inherent characteristic of the children that grow up in those communities. It has helped me in my appreciation of music, the stage and actors."

Today, Pechet lives in Rancho Mirage, Calif., with his wife, Henriette. The two recently became grandparents to grandson, Greyson. A third generation of Pechets has now joined the family business. Pechet's son, Jason, is the president of Stagewest Hospitality and his other son, David, heads the casino division.

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The Street Sweeper is a very inspiring read

Joseph Serge
Arts Editor

There's a scene in *The Street Sweeper* (Doubleday Canada) where a black oncologist, a white Jewish historian and a skinny, black street sweeper carrying a menorah are engaged in conversation about a Holocaust survivor.

The story of how this unlikely group got together forms the basis of this bold and absorbing novel, the third by Australian writer Elliot Perlman, a former lawyer.

"We are far more connected to people than we realize," Perlman says over the phone from Melbourne. "We are connected in ways we would be astonished to find out and in ways we seldom realize. And we are connected to people around us through ways that we might not be aware of."

Elliot Perlman
[Peter von Felbert photo]

The novel flips back and forth between several characters in different countries and different decades – including prewar Poland, the Warsaw Ghetto, Auschwitz, the displaced persons camps, postwar Chicago and present-day Manhattan.

It follows two main plot lines. One is of the unusual friendship between a black janitor, Lamont Williams, and a Holocaust survivor, Henryk Mandelbrot. The other follows Adam Zignelik, a Jewish-Australian historian in Manhattan, who is nervous about losing his teaching position at a university.

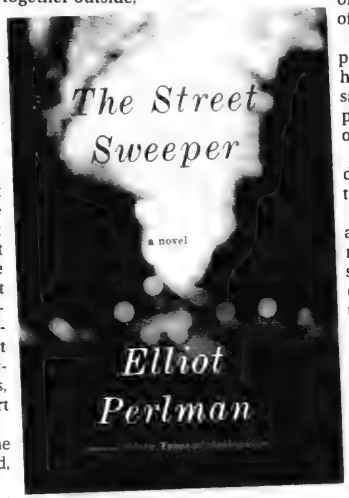
The Street Sweeper begins in present-day Manhattan, outside the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, where Lamont, an ex-con, is talking to Mandelbrot who is being treated for cancer.

The idea for this novel came when the author was living in Manhattan just across from this hospital.

"Manhattan, they say, is the microcosm of the world; well, this hospital is the microcosm of New York. It has every conceivable ethnic group, socioeconomic group and racial group. People from all over the world come to be treated, to work or to visit."

While waiting at a bus stop near the hospital, Perlman would often start thinking about all these people of different backgrounds gathered together outside, sharing cigarettes and stories with each other.

"I wondered what if an unlikely friendship blossomed with people who would otherwise never have a chance to meet. That was the beginning of the long journey of writing this novel, which took 5-1/2 years."



One morning, on one of his first days on the job as a janitor at the hospital, Lamont finds Mandelbrot left outside in a wheelchair to get fresh air. Annoyed by the cigarette smoke, Mandelbrot asks Lamont to take him back to his room. Lamont, who wants to make it to his six-month probationary period without incident, is understandably reluctant. He works in Building Services, he says. It's the job of Patient Escort Services to handle patients.

But seeing as that there is no one from Patient Escort Services around, he decides to do it himself.

So begins their friendship. Lamont visits Mandelbrot after his shift, and each day Mandelbrot tells Lamont stories from his wartime experiences, beginning in the Warsaw Ghetto and ending in the crematoria of Auschwitz, where he was a *Sonderkommando*.

"The *Sonderkommandos* were made up almost entirely of Jews who were forced, under the pain of immediate death, to work in the gas chambers and crematoria of Auschwitz," Perlman explains.

Perlman did extensive research for this book, interviewing more than 15 people and visiting Poland and Auschwitz six times. It was there that his guide introduced him to the last surviving Jewish Polish survivor of the *Sonderkommando*.

"I was able to interview this man to get his story. The last time I went was in 2008, and he had just died. I consider myself lucky to have his story, the wartime experiences of this survivor, that formed the basis of Mandelbrot's experiences.

"Mandelbrot is desperate for people to know what happened to him and to his people," Perlman says. Mandelbrot finds that few people care anymore, not even his own grandchildren.

"You need to remember!" Mandelbrot keeps telling Lamont, who takes an unexpected interest.

The preservation of memories, is a major theme in the novel. "Memory is critically important for us as a species so that we lessen the chances that we repeat the dreadful mistakes of the past," Perlman says.

Perlman's grandparents were Russian and Polish Jews who fled Europe in the 1920s to escape the harsh economic conditions and antisemitism.

His step-grandmother, on the other hand, remained in Europe and was a survivor of Auschwitz, where she witnessed the hanging of four women for their role in the October 1944 uprising, a real incident that plays a major part in the story Mandelbrot tells Lamont. Perlman dedicates his book to these women.

Perlman also pays tribute to his great-uncle Rafal Gutman, who lived in Warsaw at the outbreak of the war. When the Jews were herded into the ghetto, the Nazis approached the community leaders to appoint someone to make a list of the order in which people were to be deported.

"My great-uncle was offered this position by the Nazis but was reluctant to do it and he committed suicide."

During one of his trips to Poland, Perlman went to the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw and found the last official record of his great-uncle's life.

"This may sound banal – it was a 1939 telephone directory that had his name, home number and street address." Perlman then tracked down the address, "and I became the first member of my family to step on the spot that used to house my father's uncle before he was taken away. So when I needed a character [during a scene in prewar Warsaw], I decided to give that character my great-uncle's name."

While the Holocaust forms the heart of this book, Perlman points out it's not just a Holocaust novel.

"It's also a story about civil rights, it's partly a love story. It's a story about history and memory and social justice, resistance, courage and unexpected kindness."

The narrative does not follow a linear, chronological path and jumps around, sometimes on the same page, between continents, characters and eras. This may jar some readers.

A paragraph that takes place in the Warsaw Ghetto may be followed by a paragraph set in a Jewish deli in postwar Chicago or a bar in present-day Hell's Kitchen.

This, and *The Street Sweeper*'s occasional historical digressions, do not take away from its literary merit. It is layered with overlapping plot lines, powerful themes, moving descriptions and enduring characters. A very inspiring read.

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Tennis Canada hires Israeli to develop players

Marvin Glassman
Special to The CJN

MIAMI — Tennis Canada hired top Israeli coach Oded Jacob recently to head its junior development group in British Columbia

"We are fortunate to have hired one of the best coaches in the world to identify talented youngsters in tennis," said Ryan Clark, chief executive of Tennis BC, who selected Jacob over other top candidate. "Oded will take our youngsters and turn them into international champions. You don't go out and get a guy of Oded's talent without having a lofty goal in mind."

Despite the fact Israel has less money for tennis than nations such as France, Spain or the United States, Jacob has been held in high esteem in tennis circles for his stellar achievements. He nurtured Israeli tennis players Shahar Peer, Dudi Sela and Harel Levy from their teens, helping them develop into world-class players over the past 15 years.

Jacob was instrumental in achieving several milestones for Israel. Two players he developed – Peer and Sela – led Israel to a World Group Fed Cup berth in 2008 and the 2009 Davis Cup semifinals respectively. When Peer was ranked No. 11 earlier this year, she became the highest ranked Israeli ever in tennis.

Although Jacob is elated to be working with Tennis Canada, he would never have left Israel if, in his view, the emphasis on development had been as strong now as it was in the past.

"I was proud of my work with Dudi, Harel and Shahar, but now Israel is not developing our youngsters in tennis to keep our level high for the next generation. So, with deep regret, I decided to leave Israel and will work with the Canadians as they have the right tools, attitude and outlook to develop future tennis champions," said the 46-year-old Jacob.

Oded Jacob

"Tennis Canada is looking to expand its high performance program in British Columbia, as it did in Montreal and Toronto. I am excited and eager to be a part of the program to develop Canadian youth in tennis. Of all the achievements I had in Israel, the most rewarding time was working with the youth. You see the growth right in front of your eyes, and that is exciting," Jacob added.

Ironically, some of Jacob's most noteworthy achievements with Israeli tennis players took place in Canada.

Jacob coached Levy to the most impressive result of his career when Levy finished as a finalist in the 2000 Rogers Cup (then called the Du Maurier Open) in Toronto, coming from qualifying to win six matches in a row before losing the title match to Marat Safin.

Levy's achievement was one of the best performances by an Israeli athlete. "I was especially proud of what Harel did under those circumstances. It was a shame that Harel needed hip surgery soon after that tournament, as he was ranked in the top 50 and may have gone on to have a more stellar career than he had," said Jacob.

Jacob also was the Fed Cup captain who guided Peer to two wins and Tzipi Obziler to an upset victory over Aleksandra Wozniak in an Israeli 3-0 sweep of Canada at the 2007 World Group Two playoff held in Kamloops.

Given recent success by Canadians over the past year in tennis, with Rebecca Marino and Milos Raonic both ranked in the top 50 on the professional circuits, Jacob has high expectations for the future.

"I am sure the work will pay off with a Canadian becoming an international champion soon," he said.

Former CHAT basketball star changes teams in Israel

Compiled by CJN Staff

HOD HASHARON, Israel — The Maccabi Hod Hasharon professional basketball team, the official farm team of Maccabi Bazan Haifa, announced it has signed power forward Jared Mintz through the 2012-13 season.

Mintz, a native of Toronto, played 12 games with Bnei Hasharon Herzliya, posting averages of 2.2 points and 2.0 rebounds in 8.5 minutes. The six-foot-nine Mintz played for NCAA Division I Lafayette College from 2007 to 2011, posting averages of 15.8 points and 5.8 rebounds per game during his senior season. He was named to the All-Patriot League First-Team during his junior and senior seasons.

Mintz, 23, made aliyah to continue his playing career in Israel.

"We are very excited to sign Jared Mintz, who has excellent potential and will have the opportunity to really develop his skills with Hod Hasharon," said head coach Rami Hadar. "Jared is a good shooter and has excellent basketball knowledge."

"Jared Mintz is a player we targeted as a prospect in the beginning of the season because of his potential and we are pleased that we can develop him in the second division," said Maccabi Bazan Haifa owner and U.S. businessmen Jeffrey Rosen. "Jared has an excellent story, being that he made aliyah, and we couldn't be more proud to add him into our program."

Mintz was a four-time MVP for the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto. He represented Canada in the Pan-American Maccabi Games in Chile in 2003 and in the World Maccabiah Games in Israel in 2005 and 2009.

Maccabi Haifa, an Israeli Basketball Super League team, is one of the original eight teams to form the Premier League during the 1954 season. Under Rosen's ownership, the team has earned a playoff appearance in three out of its last four seasons. Rosen bought the team in July 2007.

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FUNDRAISER COMBINES a PASSION for DANCE & FASHION

Danielle Kagan
[Lindsay Nemeth photos]

More news for young Jews on heebonics.ca

Barbara Silverstein
Special to The CJN

The adage "busy people get things done" certainly applies to Danielle Kagan.

The University of Toronto student is a double major in political science and Jewish studies, she's a tap and jazz dance instructor at two dance studios, she leads a Zumba class at a Curves fitness centre and she's also co-captain of U of T's Varsity Blues dance team.

But Kagan, 21, is not satisfied to rest on her laurels. She's added a new project to her list.

She's co-chairing Raise the Rhythm, a fundraiser encompassing a fashion show and contemporary dance in support of Canadian Feed the Children, a non-profit organization that works to end child poverty in Canada and in the third world.

The event, on Feb. 27 at the Al Green Theatre at the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, will feature performances by some innovative local dance troops and "top young designers," said Kagan.

Raise the Rhythm will combine fashion and dance, two of Kagan's passions.

"It takes in everything that I love. I love fashion. I keep up-to-date with all the new designers, and I'm really involved in the dance world."

She's been dancing since she was five years old. After graduating from the dance school All That Dance at 16, she joined Vlad's Dance Company until she graduated high school.

After spending a year as a student at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Kagan transferred to U of T, where she was able to continue honing her skills as a dancer on the Varsity Blues dance team.

"Now, me and my dance co-captain, Victoria Marshman, are running the [Raise the Rhythm] show," she said.

"We're choreographing all the numbers ourselves. It's gives us a lot of creativity... It's an artistic outlet from studying."

Kagan said she comes to this event with experience she gained chairing a dance and fashion show when she was a student at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto (CHAT), Richmond Hill campus.

"It was really fun. I wanted to do the same thing again, but on a bigger and more professional scale."

So what's Kagan's secret for integrating this fundraising activity with her work, dance and academic responsibilities?

She says attending CHAT and dealing with the double curriculum has helped her develop excellent time-management skills.

"I'm using those skills now. Somehow, I manage to balance it all."

Choosing a beneficiary for this charitable event was a no-brainer, because Kagan's family has been supporting Canadian Feed the Children for a number of years.

"The charity does a lot of good work on different projects in Africa and Haiti. They are also providing whole food to needy children in Canada."

In fact, raising money for the organization may be becoming a family tradition, she said.

"My cousin, Elan Panov, did some terrific charity events for Canadian Feed the Children, when he was at Western [University]. I loved what they did."

Kagan says she's co-producing the show with Marshman, and Jessica Domingo.

"We brainstormed to decide what we wanted for the show... We said, 'We're all dancers. Let's throw in some professional Toronto-based dance companies.'"

Eryn Waltman, a Toronto-based choreographer who recently founded a contemporary dance company, will be performing, said Kagan.

"She has her own dance company called Conteur. I saw her show at a charity event. She's wonderful."

Also featured are "Canada's legendary beatboxer," Scott Jackson, and choreographers from a contemporary dance program called Bridge to Artists.

The audience can also expect a performance from Kagan's Varsity Blues dance team.

For the fashionistas in the crowd, local fashion designers, including Arnaldo Santos, Sheila Jobin, VerseTen, and Michelle Walmsley, will put their mark on the show.

"Arnaldo is a good friend of mine," said Kagan. "I modelled at his last charity event. He got me in contact with a lot of other up-and-coming Canadian fashion designers."

She says she's pleased with the calibre of the artists and designers who are volunteering their time.

"If people know dance and fashion in the Toronto community, these are names that you will recognize."

Kagan is already musing about making Raise the Rhythm an annual event.

"I hope that it's successful so that we can do it every year. It's a lot of work, but it's worthwhile."

Tickets for Raise the Rhythm are $25 for adults and $15 for students. For more information about the show, call 647-299-7765 or visit the website at www.raisetherhythm.com.

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'You're actually a polygamist'

You know, you're actually a polygamist," I tell Meir while we sit at breakfast.

Meir seems interested. "Am I?" he asks.

"Formally, you're married to me, but actually I'm at least four, five different women," I explain.

Meir takes a sip of his coffee. "And here I was thinking it'd be an interesting conversation." He sighs.

I swallow my pride and continue. "There's Nina, the mother. She's a responsible, serious person, who tells little humans to do their homework, who shouts when things are not in order, who never wastes any punch lines on them, who never tries to charm them or to impress them, who never jokes with them because if she does, her kids right away think they're allowed to joke back and almost always some lines are crossed.

New to Canada

Nina Shenhav

"So this Nina just defrosts frozen dinners in the microwave. Silently. Till the end of time. Last week, mother Nina, slipped up and smiled at the kids. Their reaction? They asked if she had had her hair cut."

Meir smiles and I continue.

"There was working Nina. She was very well mannered, polite, serious and willing to please. She used to kiss behinds like there was no tomorrow and wanted to kill herself quietly in the office washroom every day. I had to get rid of her, so I quit."

Meir pats my back. I continue.

"There's Nina the friend, and here we're getting into some sub-Ninas. Like the empathetic friend who listens for hours and hours to the nagging, boring laborious stories about some annoying kids, husbands, bosses and mothers-in-law. There's also bubbly cheerful Nina, a friend who is called on to entertain and perform. She's required to deliver great jokes, anecdotes and funny stories, or else she's of no use to no one.

"There is feminist Nina, who needs to pick up the women's torch and hate all men, and there is feminine Nina, who needs to gaze at some guy's eyes and tell him how important he is and how the world would not exist without manly men."

Meir raises an eyebrow. "I don't believe I've ever been introduced to that Nina," he says. "You never told me or made me feel manly."

"We're not talking about Nina the wife," I say, explaining the obvious.

"Oh, let me help you here," he suggests chivalrously. "There's Nina the wife, who criticizes you, who shouts at you, who blames you for everything she can't do, who never laughs at your jokes, who never really listens to you, who's always angry and moody, who… well you get the picture."

I don't say anything for a long time. I finish my coffee. "I'm not talking to you," I say finally. "Ever."

Meir seems amused. "Just imagine," he says, "what would happen if some of those Nina entities were to show up in the wrong situations, huh?"

Lord, that's a frightful thought…

Nina.shenhav@gmail.com

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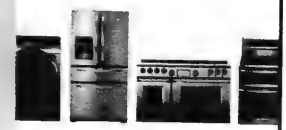

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The CJN's French-language reporter in Montreal, Elias Levy, writes about:

Rabbi Raphaël Afilalo, who talks about the meaning of Kabbalah.

Exclusive to cjnews.com in Hebrew

David Broza evokes nostalgia and yearning.

Exclusive to cjnews.com

Feb. 7, the 15th of Shevat on the Jewish calendar, is the time to celebrate Tu b'Shvat, new year of the trees. On Tu b'Shvat, it is customary to eat fruits and nuts, especially those which are associated with Israel.

Massachusetts-based Internet cooking sensation wins Best New Kosher Cookbook of 2011 award.

Moshe Ya'alon, vice prime minister of Israel and minister of strategic affairs, detailed his country's approach to the nuclear threat of Iran at a briefing in New York. Above, Ya'alon presents an award of excellence to an Israeli naval officer. ***[IDF photo]***

Be a humanitarian matchmaker

The Vietnam War came into our homes in the 1960s and '70s through the nightly news and newspaper headlines. We learned that three million Americans served in the war, 58,220 soldiers were killed and 150,000 were wounded.

We knew thousands of Americans came here to avoid the draft. We remember the fatal shooting at Kent State University, the riots at the 1968 Democratic convention in Chicago and the 1968 massacre at My Lai and platoon leader Lt. William Calley. What we don't remember is that one to three million Vietnamese were killed in the war, and how others were affected by this heinous massacre.

Urban Writer

Avrum Rosensweig

One of them walked into my home the other day to install California shutters. For this column, I'll call him Thic.

Thic was born in 1960, the same year as me. He remembers all too well the corpses piled up outside his home after America changed its policy and pulled its troops out of Vietnam.

Thic told me he was "scared" throughout his childhood in Saigon. Today, he often zones out imagining that hill of loss beside his family's raised house.

"I wake up just seeing the dead people," he said as he measured my windows.

Thic is anxious. A little shirty.

Thic is tired. The elegance in his demeanour, though, reminded me of Phan Thi Kim Phúc, the little girl in the famous picture, running down a road naked near Trang Bàng, Vietnam, on June 8, 1972, after a napalm bomb was dropped on her village. I interviewed her once. She was the face of the war, but today she is mostly another forgotten survivor of another atrocious war.

I consider the people on our native reserves, in Rwanda, Cambodia, the Congo, Liberia, Sudan and in South America, where massacres were like omelettes (popular) and genocides chuckled like tricksters who pull your chair out from under you. I wondered how those people are doing, what they are fixing in people's homes and how they're sleeping.

I considered how many survivors are walking around our planet, their pain and suffering overshadowed by statistics and historical accounts of battles, the costs of the wars and their effect on our oil bills.

Our world is populated by Thics. More of them are being created every day in places like Southern Sudan, where children are being butchered once again while others are crawling into thickets with machete slashes to their heads. Their childhoods, like Thic's, have been stolen.

One day, one of those grown-up children will deliver deep-dish pizza to our home or lay some laminate down in our Florida room. He'll show up months after jumping a vessel in a Canadian harbour, after getting over his befuddlement about our sometimes careless, always blessed existence. When you see that scar on his cheek, ask him about it. (I wonder if our survivors were asked about their numbers by strangers.)

Once you've heard his story, figure he is suffering alone and that there aren't too many Sudanese or Vietnamese Spielbergs out there recording his life. Then introduce him to someone in our community, maybe a survivor or maybe an Israeli who has suffered through wars. Go past the petition you signed for Darfurians and be a humanitarian matchmaker.

Make that one of the lessons of Holocaust education, Birthright and March of the Living – to help the Thics.

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This Week

National

Non-profit to showcase Israeli artists. *Page 3*

New shul to open downtown on High Holidays. *Page 6*

Bridal

Celebrate your simchah in style with our special supplement. *Section B*

Campus

Journal editor seeks to make Jewish topics accessible. *Page 30*

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Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut (1912 – 2012)

We were blessed he was in our midst

Carolyn Blackman
Staff Reporter

We are all blessed with the privilege of having had Rabbi Gunther Plaut in our lives, said his son Rabbi Jonathan Plaut in a eulogy at his father's funeral at Holy Blossom Temple on Sunday.

Senior rabbi at the temple from 1961 to 1977 and a senior scholar at the synagogue after that, Rabbi Gunther Plaut died on Feb. 8 after a long battle with Alzheimer's disease. He was 99.

"Holy Blossom was blessed for having had him in its midst for 51 years, blessed is the city for knowing such a leader, blessed are the immigrants for having such a champion of human rights, blessed is Israel for having such a strong supporter and blessed is God for having such a loyal servant," Rabbi Jonathan Plaut said.

Born in Germany, Rabbi Gunther Plaut, a scholar and writer, was a law student at the University of Berlin in 1934 when the Nazi party came to power.

He moved to the United States the following year, and came to Toronto in 1961 after serving as a U.S. army chaplain during the war, and a rabbi in St. Paul, Minn. He was with the American forces that went into the concentration camps and saw first hand the remnant of those brutalized by the Nazis.

In keeping with the social responsibility he taught from the pulpit, Rabbi Plaut was a former president of Canadian Jewish Congress and of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, He also helped found Toronto's Urban Alliance for Race Relations and served as vice-chair of the Ontario Human Rights Commission for seven years.

Continued on page 26

Mike Keenan to coach Maccabi Canada

Paul Lungen
Staff Reporter

Stanley Cup winner Mike Keenan has agreed to coach Maccabi Canada's hockey entry at the 2013 Maccabiah Games in Israel.

Keenan will lead a team that is expected to include pros from the AHL and ECHL, as well as NCAA and junior-calibre players. They will face opposition from the United States, France and Israel as Canada tries to repeat its gold-medal performance from 1997 – the only time hockey has been a Maccabiah sport.

"I'm really excited about it. It's a place I've never been," Keenan told *The CJN*. "It will be a new experience, a new opportunity to learn about [Israel] first hand. It will be very interesting."

The addition of Keenan gives Maccabi Canada's hockey program instant credibility, said Alex Voihanski, general manager of the team and the primary person charged with finding players.

Keenan is a highly respected hockey man whose experience in pressure-cooker situations is second to none. In addition to winning the Stanley Cup with the New York Rangers in 1994, he coached in the finals two other times and was behind the Canadian bench in the 1987 Canada Cup. That was a team that featured superstars Wayne Gretzky, Mario Lemieux and Mark Messier in their prime – arguably the best Canadian team of all time, Voihanski said.

Continued on page 39

Mike Keenan

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Israeli diplomat's wife wounded in attack in India – see page 31

CANADA

Winnipegger Named

LONDON — Winnipeg native Jason Marantz has been appointed chief executive at the London School of Jewish Studies (LSJS), one of the United Kingdom's most prestigious Jewish educational institutions. Marantz, 37, moved to Britain in 1999 and as CEO will work with LSJS president Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, Britain's chief rabbi. The LSJS is the U.K. Jewish community's leading institution for teacher training and adult education. Before joining the LSJS, Marantz headed London's Wolfson Hillel Jewish Primary School.

WORLD

Schalits In Paris

PARIS — Former captive Israeli soldier Gilad Schalit and his parents met with French President Nicolas Sarkozy at the presidential palace in Paris. "We are very touched," said Noam Schalit, speaking to journalists at the Élysée Palace Feb. 8. Hours later, Schalit's parents attended the annual gala hosted by the French Jewish umbrella group CRIF. Sarkozy had met repeatedly with Gilad's father, Noam, after the young Israeli soldier, who has dual French citizenship, was captured on the border with Gaza in 2006 and held hostage there for more than five years by Hamas. During the CRIF dinner, Noam Schalit thanked Sarkozy and the French people for their efforts to help to free his son, adding that due to poor health, Gilad was not able to attend the event.

Torah Wrap Apology

ATLANTA — A Baptist bishop in Georgia has apologized for a church service in which he was wrapped in a Torah scroll and called a king. "The ceremony was not my suggestion, nor was it my intent, to participate in any ritual that is offensive in any manner to the Jewish community," Bishop Eddie Long wrote in a letter to Bill Nigut, southeast regional director of the Anti-Defamation League, according to the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*. Nigut released the letter on Feb. 5. In a service at the New Birth Missionary Baptist Church in Lithonia, Ga., an Atlanta suburb, earlier this month, Ralph Messer, a messianic Jew and self-described rabbi, ordered congregants to wrap Bishop Long in a Torah scroll and lift him up on a chair, bar mitzvah-style, while he held the Torah scroll, which was identified as being rescued from Auschwitz. The church has 25,000 members, and some 600,000 viewers have watched a video of the service on YouTube. Nigut told CNN the apology was "very heartfelt, sincere." *Please see related story on page 18.*

Celebrity Rabbi May Run For U.S. Congress

Rabbi Shmuley Boteach

NEW YORK — Rabbi Shmuley Boteach has sent a letter declaring his intent to run for the U.S. Congress in New Jersey's newly formed 9th District.

Rabbi Boteach sent the letter of intent to the offices of the Bergen County Republican Organization by the Jan. 31 deadline but has not decided definitively to run, the *New Jersey Jewish Standard* reported.

He would face the winner of the Democratic primary between U.S. Reps. Steve Rothman and Bill Pascrell. Two other potential Republican candidates also have submitted letters of intent, according to the PolitickerNJ website.

Rabbi Boteach told the *Jewish Standard* that one of the factors that will go into his decision of whether to run will be how much money he can raise for the race. He said he will make up his mind in the next two months.

He told the newspaper that he wants to "bring Jewish values into the political discourse."

Rabbi Boteach has been working, unsuccessfully so far, to get the city of Englewood, N.J., to rezone his house as a synagogue.

He is a syndicated columnist and has written several books, including a controversial new one titled *Kosher Jesus*, which examines Jesus' Jewish roots and which Toronto's Rabbi Immanuel Shochet declared heretical.

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New non-profit to showcase Israeli artists

Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf
Staff Reporter

TORONTO — Jew-dos in Canada are about to become infused with a lot more Israeli flavour.

A new Toronto-based non-profit called the Motek Cultural Initiative has struck an agreement with UJA Federation of Greater Toronto to help provide Israeli cultural entertainment to all manner of Jewish community galas, soirées, and campus events across the country.

Founded as the charitable arm of Motek Productions, a for-profit entertainment agency that books Israeli artists across North America, the non-profit is bringing in renowned Israeli world music group the Idan Raichel Project to launch the non-profit with a charity concert on March 18 at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre.

The federation will issue tax-receipts to donors.

The idea is to foster more awareness of and promote Israeli cultural relevancy in North America through song, music and performance, according to Ravid Dahan, president and CEO of Motek Productions and chair of the new non-profit.

"Music is the vehicle which people can use to understand Israeli culture today," she told *The CJN*.

Having attended numerous events put on by major Jewish community organizations to benefit Israeli causes, what struck her most was the consistent lack of "actual Israeli vibe" at each one, she said.

Ravid Dahan
[Yaniv Hason photo]

Dahan, who immigrated to Canada from Israel five years ago, saw an opportunity to enlighten both Jewish and non-Jewish communities and has made it her mission to positively frame Israel as an emerging cultural hotbed and to provide that authentic vibe.

"The non-profit will help engage the next generation about all Israel has to offer through entertainment," she said. "Local organizations, while doing wonderful work to help Israel, were always choosing to use entertainment that wasn't representative of Israel."

Aside from turning North Americans on to Israeli artists, she said the Motek Cultural Initiative would also be an essential tool in the ongoing war against the boycott, divestment and sanctions campaigns and the constant vilification of Israel in western countries.

She believes her initiative will help engage the next generation of the Diaspora Jewish and expatriate Israeli communities to "win the game" in their efforts to portray Israel more positively.

"Exposing the average Canadian to Israeli music and having them interact directly with the community will result in a broader understanding and appreciation of Israeli culture globally," the Motek website states.

Dahan is in the process of assembling the rest of her board of directors and advisory board and expects to hire a full staff for the organization this year, she said.

The Motek Cultural Initiative will host a yearly gala and, starting in 2013, will organize monthly events in which Israeli artists will perform for Canadians of all faiths and cultures.

For more information, visit www.motekculturalinitiative.com.

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We mourn the loss

We received the news last week of the death of Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut with sadness and quiet reflection.

After 99 years in this world, his soul departed.

Nearly a decade earlier, he departed from communal life with the all-too recognizable, sorrowful, incremental withdrawals into the hazy, murky, mysterious world of the Alzheimer's sufferer.

In eulogy of the great teacher, great man, great Jew that Rabbi Plaut was, I reproduce excerpts of a column about him that appeared on this page on Feb. 28, 2008 and of the editorial in *The CJN* on Dec. 11, 2003. The words that were written then about Rabbi Plaut are especially apt today.

* * *

In a sermon delivered on Erev Rosh Hashanah, Sept. 22, 1968, on the subject of "The Counterforce in Human History," he said: "The world cries 'Zionist' and we know they mean us and we are proud of it, we do not shrink back from it. The world cries 'Jew' and we respond, yes! God says to us, 'Where are you, My people?' On this eve of another year, we respond with one voice, 'Here I am: Thy ways are dark, the road uncertain, but I believe – and here I am." Quoted from *One Voice: The Selected Sermons of W. Gunther Plaut*, edited by Rabbi Jonathan V. Plaut, (Dundurn Press, 2007).

Rabbi Plaut's voice is now silent, but he still has the power to stir our hearts. Sometimes we feel enveloped by darkness, but his words are a light that still shine. I have no doubt that many of us will turn to the pages of this anthology from time to time, seeking, as we inevitably must, the strength and the courage to contend with the struggles and travails in our own lives.

* * *

From the editor's desk...

It is a rare occasion when an editorial is written about a columnist who retires. This week is such an occasion because the retiree himself is a rare individual. This newspaper, along with the entire community, owes him an irredeemably impossible debt. In keeping, therefore, with our people's long tradition of *hakarat hatov*, acknowledging the good that others have done for us, we pay homage to and thank Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut.

After an association with this paper that has spanned more than three decades and almost a quarter-century as a regular contributor, Rabbi Plaut is putting away his *CJN* pen.

In truth, however, the retirement is not entirely voluntary.

It has, alas, been forced upon him, upon us, by the cruel, incremental wearing away at his skills and abilities by Alzheimer's disease. In his typically elegant and eloquent way, Rabbi Plaut has now made that fact known to the world. He will contend with the disease as he has contended all his life with other malevolent deniers of humanity – frontally, with courage and with all his strength.

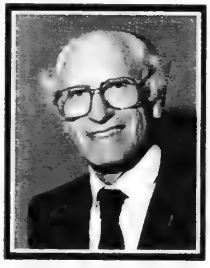
We, his community and his friends, have been the great beneficiaries of that courage and strength – and of a great deal more.

One anecdote will illustrate. It involved the widely respected Torah sage, Halachist, posek and scholar, Rabbi Gedalia Felder.

Some years ago, after Rabbi Felder had suffered a debilitating stroke, a tribute honouring the stricken rabbi and showcasing his many publications was held at the Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto synagogue in Thornhill. Though confined to a wheelchair, Rabbi Felder politely and courteously greeted the hundreds of attendees at the doorway. Rabbi Plaut was also there. When he arrived, Rabbi Plaut walked immediately over to Rabbi Felder. The two men embraced like two brothers recalling lost parents, holding each other close, lest the moment and the shared recollection slip away.

For some people, the effusive embrace was surprising. After all, the two men were very different, ideological opposites in terms of the practice of their faith. And yet, the respect and affection they felt for each other were palpable and demonstrable for all to see. And perhaps that was part of the point of their embrace. Despite their differences, these two great men embraced – for all to see.

When we wish to express our gratitude for having benefited from the countless bounties of God's wondrous and wonderful world, we usually recite a blessing. It is appropriate therefore that we thank God for giving us the gift of the example, the sagacity, the heart and the weekly columns of Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut.



Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut

"Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe who has shared of His wisdom with those who revere Him and who has given of His wisdom to [his creations of] flesh and blood."

* * *

Now that we mourn the loss of Rabbi Plaut, it is, alas, appropriate to add may the memory of this righteous individual be for blessing.

MBD

SeeJN

GRASS HEADS

Lyla Adler and Joseph Winter hold their sprouting "Grass Heads" made from soil, grass seeds and nylon as part of a unit called "Life in the Environment" and the holiday of Tu b'Shvat, in which Grade 1 students at Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School learned about change and cycles in nature.

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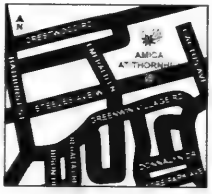

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New Reform synagogue set to open downtown

Frances Kraft
Staff Reporter

Two months after her Nov. 30 retirement as director of Kolel: the Adult Centre for Liberal Jewish Learning, Rabbi Elyse Goldstein is hyped about her current project: a new shul in downtown Toronto.

The City Shul, to be launched on the High Holidays, will be the first Reform congregation south of Holy Blossom Temple. It will serve people in the area bounded by St. Clair Avenue, Queen Street, Yonge Street and Dufferin Street. Its location is yet to be determined.

Paul Leszner, president of the Canadian Council for Reform Judaism and chair of the URJ Canada steering committee, told *The CJN* that downtown Toronto, with its many young adults and empty nesters, has become "increasingly in need of a Reform congregation.

"With all the new condos, it has become an area that people are moving to."

According to UIA Federations Canada's 2009 National Task Force of Jewish Demographics, downtown Toronto's Jewish population numbers more than 16,000 people.

Leszner noted that there are "a tremendous number" of unaffiliated Jews in the area.

"We're constantly looking to build Reform Judaism," Leszner said, adding that in the United States, the Reform movement is the largest Jewish denomination, but it is the smallest in Canada.

Rabbi Elyse Goldstein

The City Shul will be the second Reform congregation to open in the GTA in a short period. Neshamah Congregation opened in Thornhill Woods last summer.

Jeff Cipin, who has attended Rabbi Goldstein's High Holiday services with his wife Aviva for the past 15 years, is on the leadership team of the new shul. He has lived near St. Clair and Christie Street since the mid-1980s. "I was one of those people who was always hoping [Rabbi Goldstein] would do something like this, but it was a non-starter because of her commitment to Kolel.

"Her services are very laid-back, lots of fun, very enjoyable, very participatory," he said. "And it's obvious she's a learned person. There's a scholarly side to her."

For Rabbi Goldstein – who was ordained 28 years ago and spent three years as assistant rabbi at Holy Blossom and five years as a congregational rabbi in Boston before establishing Kolel 20 years ago – it would be more typical to go to an established congregation at this stage in her career.

But the 56-year-old rabbi, a spinning class afficionado with a mass of greying curls, describes herself as "a starter" who likes grass-roots projects. "God has blessed me with a lot of energy," she said.

In addition to her current project, she serves as a volunteer rabbi in Guatemala three to four times a year, leads Jewish tours to Israel and abroad, and is working on a book about spirituality and senility.

Rabbi Goldstein, who grew up in Queens, N.Y., also has a passion for downtown living, having moved with her husband and family to the Annex three years ago. "It's like I'm 10 years younger. I bike everywhere. I walk everywhere. I love it. I'm sorry I didn't do it 20 years ago."

Three things influenced her decision to return to the pulpit: her move downtown, her youngest child's departure for university, and her sabbatical in Israel a couple of years ago.

While there, she was inspired by the small, intimate Reform congregations that she attended. She describes them as "amazing... soulful, with singing and real learning going on. You felt the sense of community."

She sees the new shul as a "model of engagement that people will be creating together."

Among the first items on her agenda will be empowering people to lead services and putting together a cadre of people who will be able to deliver divrei Torah.

Her vision includes a monthly service for adults, followed by dinner and Torah-related discussion.

As well, she envisions family services, with "lots of activity, lots of music and real engagement of the kids." Plans for the younger generation include an afternoon school, with Hebrew taught separately in "cluster groups" for people who live near each other, and a bar and bat mitzvah program that the rabbi would teach.

"We're like a chavurah meets an adult education centre meets a Jerusalem Reform synagogue... it's a marriage of a lot of ideas."

An informational meeting will be held March 1, at 7:30 p.m. at the Wolfond Centre for Jewish Campus Life, 36 Harbord St.

As well, the shul, together with the Al Green Theatre, will hold a concert March 5 as an "awarenèss raiser" at the theatre. The event, titled "Jewish and Arabic Music in Dialogue," will feature Lenka Lichtenberg and Roula Said. Tickets are $20. For details, go to algreentheatre.ca or call 416-924-6211, ext. 0.

There will also be a family Purim Megillah reading March 7 and an adult Purim seudah March 8 at the Wolfond Centre, as well as two sample Shabbat services in May.

For more information, visit cityshul.com, e-mail thecityshul@gmail.com, or call 647-799-3557.

Beth Tikvah implements Torah egalitarianism

Frances Kraft
Staff Reporter

Women took part in the Torah service at Beth Tikvah Synagogue this past Shabbat for the first time ever at the Conservative shul.

The change was timed to coincide with the congregation's annual Sisterhood Shabbat, after congregants voted in favour of implementing "Torah egalitarianism" at a special general meeting last week. The move allows women to participate in all aspects of the Torah service, including aliyot (except the first two), hagbah (lifting the Torah) and gelilah (tying and dressing), and leading the Torah service.

Rabbi Howard Markose

The decision was the culmination of a process that began last year, when the 1,100-family congregation asked Rabbi Howard Markose for his position on women's ritual participation. The process continued with a congregational survey, town hall meetings, educational sessions and focus groups.

Last September, Rabbi Markose became the congregation's interim senior rabbi and, as such, its halachic decisor. Rabbi Wayne Allen is on sabbatical and will retire in June.

In January, the synagogue's board of governors adopted resolutions in favour of implementing Torah egalitarianism, as recommended by its ritual committee, and the congregational vote was held at a special general meeting Feb. 7. There were 230 people at the meeting, and 83 per cent of the 224 voters were in favour of the change.

Arlene Anthony, Beth Tikvah's immediate past sisterhood president, said the shul has been examining the role of women and ritual for many years.

In 1981, an adult education series on women and ritual was organized under the auspices of Rabbi Avraham Feder, the shul's first rabbi. As a result, some changes were implemented, including Saturday morning bat mitzvahs.

Over the years, various speakers have addressed the issue, which arose again last year because of the change in rabbinic leadership.

"We were hoping this would all happen in time for Sisterhood Shabbat," Anthony said. Betty Rumberg, age 100, was scheduled the first of three women to receive an aliyah to the Torah.

Merle Goldman – a past president of the congregation, and its first female president – said she is very excited to see Torah egalitarianism at Beth Tikvah. Goldman was part of the 1981 committee that organized the first adult education series on women and ritual.

"If we're going to survive as a Conservative synagogue in Toronto, we had to do this," she added.

Rabbi Markose told *The CJN* in a phone interview from Israel that he advised the congregation last year that it is permissible for women to have aliyot, to read from the Torah and to take part in all aspects of the Torah service.

However, he said that counting women in a minyan or having them lead a service is forbidden.

Rabbi Markose said that anything forbidden or obligatory is not open to debate, but if something is permissible, the congregation has a responsibility to determine whether to implement it.

He said that Torah participation by women is found in the Talmud and also in later rabbinic works. It wasn't his mandate to make the change or encourage women's participation, he said, just to provide a halachic ruling that would allow the congregation to make a decision. He also educated congregants on the issue in a variety of forums.

"I'm happy that the will of the community was done, because this is something they wanted and we were able to find a halachic way."

The argument of *kavod hatzibur* (respect due to the congregation), often used to justify women not participating, is "one that the congregation can determine itself how it understands it," the rabbi said.

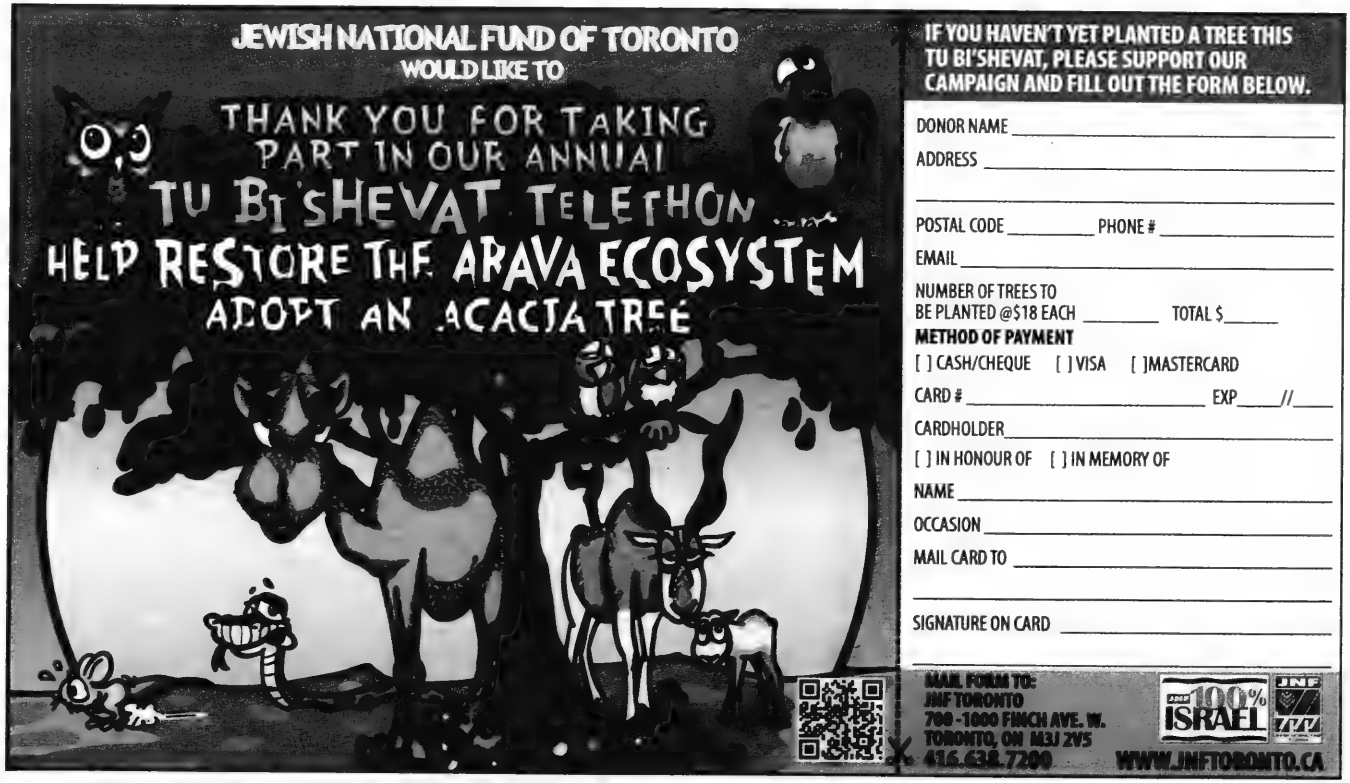
In 21st-century Canada, he noted, men and women have equal opportunities for Torah learning, and day school is open to both boys and girls from a very early age. The argument of *kavod hatzibur* "does not obtain in our day for Beth Tikvah."

When it comes to being counted in a minyan, however, "even though there have been responsa written by my colleagues in the Conservative movement, I have not found a way to see the full halachic validity in their tshuvot," Rabbi Markose said.

Although more than 80 per cent of the voters were in favour of Torah participation – the same percentage as in a congregational survey last summer – others have expressed disappointment that women will not be counted in the minyan, or – conversely – that things are not staying as they were, the rabbi added.

Robert Weill, Beth Tikvah's president, said the survey was sent to each individual member, and almost 40 per cent responded, "a very large return."

"Sisterhood Shabbat is a very appropriate time to do it," he said. "And if we're going to do it, why delay?"



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Abbas harms his own

Mahmoud Abbas harms his own people. Time and again, the Palestinian Authority president shows a truer ambition than the faux aspiration he pretends with western leaders of wanting to peacefully end the conflict with Israel. The latest evidence of his transparent, anti-negotiation scheming should overwhelm the skeptic. Two events last week are persuasive. The question for those of his people who wish to see through his charade and are themselves tired of Abbas' constant dissembling is whether the current impasse with Israel that he has created can be surmounted.

Speaking to a gathering of foreign ministers of the Arab League in Cairo on Sunday, Abbas effectively put an end to the bilateral talks with Israel that the members of the Quartet imploringly encourage. Again, he railed against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and reiterated his mantra-like demand that Israel freeze all construction in the settlements and agree, *before* they sit across the table, to negotiate based on 1967 borders. Yet he knows that Israel cannot start negotiations from a point that, a priori, cedes control to him of a unified Jerusalem. And he also knows that Netanyahu did indeed recently agree to freeze new construction outside the existing communities.

Abbas issued his tired, but deadly, ultimatum that unless the Jewish state accedes to his two preconditions, he will renew unilateral efforts to obtain statehood in the United Nations. Such a step, he also knows, violates every commitment he and his predecessor have ever made to Israel and the United States. One week earlier, Abbas signed an agreement in Doha with Hamas leader Khaled Meshal to bring the terrorist organization into the PA fold.

Meshal however gave quite the illuminating insight for agreeing to reconcile with the Fatah faction of the PA. He told Al Jazeera television that the Palestinians wanted to accomplish unity and move forward "to *resist* the enemy [Israel] and achieve our national goal" (our emphasis). His meaning is entirely without ambiguity. He did not even couch his meaning in code. While Meshal was making his ambitions clear to the world in Doha, his co-leader of Hamas, Ismail Haniyeh, told Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in Tehran that Hamas would never recognize the State of Israel.

How can Israel merely shrug its shoulders at this latest tactic by Abbas and accept the mischief and the mendacity? How can the countries of the West that consider Hamas to be a terrorist organization shrug their shoulders and merely accept what Abbas did last week?

Once again, Abbas has embarrassed and humiliated an American president, one perhaps more inclined than any of his predecessors to be the wind at the back of the Palestinian sails to statehood. Once again he has harmed his own people. Once again, Abbas has set back the cause of Palestinian independence.

25 years ago in *The CJN*

Four leading Jewish groups – the Canada-Israel Committee, Canadian Jewish Congress, B'nai Brith Canada and the Canadian Zionist Federation – signed a joint statement expressing regret that the opposition Liberal party had elected Montreal MP Marcel Prud'homme, 52, a longtime outspoken supporter of the Palestine Liberation Organization, to chair the party's parliamentary caucus in Ottawa.

Dry Bones
AMERICA AND THE WEST ARE SUPPORTING THE ANTI-ASSAD FORCES
RUSSIA AND THE CHINESE ARE BLOCKING THAT SUPPORT
WE DON'T KNOW WHAT IS REALLY GOING ON BUT...
IT'S MORE THAN AN ARGUMENT OVER HUMANITARIAN AID.
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Hate speech as 'free speech' (1)

I was at the "talk" by Zafar Bangash ("Wiesenthal Center objects to McMaster speaker," Feb. 2) The McMaster University administration has nothing to be proud of in cowardly defending hate speech as nothing more than inoffensive "free speech." We witnessed Bangash equating Zionism with Nazism, threatening that things could become uncontrollably violent against Jews in Canada were war to break out between the West and Iran, and defending the totalitarian state of Iran. Iran is a country that oppresses minorities and supports terror groups targeting Israel and the West. It is a country that has killed and tortured Iranian protesters wanting freedom from the tyranny of the mullahs. It is a country that is developing nuclear weapons despite Bangash's sycophancy, denials and unnatural loyalty to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Gary Gerofsky
Dundas, Ont.

* * *

Hate speech as 'free speech' (2)

At McMaster University, pro-Iranian, anti-Israel speaker Zafar Bangash spewed his propaganda and afterward took questions, turning it into a Q and BS event, if he even bothered to answer inconvenient questions pointing to his hypocrisy and lies ("Wiesenthal Center objects to McMaster speaker," Feb. 2). That is the true threat that many people either don't grasp or gloss over – the freedom to propagate lies and spread hate. Such lectures are ideal venues for disseminating hateful and distorted narratives. In order for truth to prevail, there has to be an opportunity for informed response! Universities have shirked their responsibilities by hiding from conflict under the false banner of "freedom of speech," while not doing anything whatsoever to ensure that what is being said is factual, not hateful and honestly open to be challenged. That is a lazy, cowardly and immature way of governance from those responsible for mentoring young minds.

Steven Werner
Hamilton, Ont.

* * *

Disingenuous article

I found the perspectives piece "Why do some Jews think Obama is evil?" (Feb. 2) totally disingenuous. The writer attributes, through third persons, all sorts of hideous characteristics to U.S. President Barack Obama. For example, "'I think Obama's overriding goal is to have Israel destroyed,' said Randy Silver, a businessman from Glenview, Ill." Who is Silver that makes him quotable? There are other similar quotes attributed to faceless individuals, on whether Obama is a Muslim (please, can we put that canard to bed already?), whether he hates Jews and so on. Just pure garbage. This article was not worthy of publication. If you are going to publish this type of tripe, at least say that your newspaper does not necessarily agree with the views of the author.

Peter P. Farkas
Toronto

* * *

LET THEM GO...

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz

What men are saying

In the article "Siddur from 1471 reveals gender flexibility" (Jan. 19), the point of reference is the morning prayers, including the blessing for not having made me a woman. At the beginning of prayer, we say blessings for having not made me a gentile, for having not made me a slave and for having not made me a woman. Women, because of family responsibilities, aren't bound by obligations that are controlled by time. They still have an obligation to pray, but not necessarily with a minyan. What men are actually saying in these beginning prayers is not thank goodness that they have not been made these despicable creatures, but that they are so happy that they have an obligation to pray.

Arnie Niederhoffer
Toronto

* * *

Yorkshire article brought back memories

What a wonderful surprise to read Melody Wren's beautiful article "Explore the charm of Yorkshire" (Jan. 19). Cockney-born and bred in Stepney, London (U.K.) East End, I was invited at the end of the war in Europe, in 1945, to visit a dear friend living in Leeds. Heartfelt thanks, Melody! You brought back marvellous memories, and you are so right – being driven through Yorkshire's moors and dales was breathtaking, and it's the best way to experience and enjoy the "must-see" Fountains Abbey, Helmsley, White Chalk Horse, Whitby, Robin Hood's Bay and Boggle Hole. How timely and welcome to read your descriptive article, full of cheer, love and warmth – so needed on this cold and frosty day.

Monty Mazin
Toronto

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cjninfo@gmail.com

'Chazak v'ematz'

Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut's last words to *The CJN* readers

This was Rabbi Gunther Plaut's last regular column for The CJN. Dec. 11, 2003. He was a columnist for The CJN for 23 years and associated with the paper for more than 30.

One of the fundamental experiences of being human is being subject to physical and mental problems. Rabbis are no exception. I don't hesitate to tell you that last month I celebrated my 91st birthday, which means I still have a long way to go if I am to equal my mother's journey.

From her I learned that getting old does not necessarily mean wilting away like a dying flower, but now that I am old, I realize that I once took for granted that the youthful alertness of my own mind would last forever, and hopefully be paralleled by my physical capacity. I had passed my 90th birthday, and at first everything seemed to remain the same. But then, one problem after another began to assail me. But that was minor, of course, compared to what happened to my beloved Elizabeth, my mate of 65 wonderful and productive years. As you know, she became ill several years ago and was finally claimed by the Angel of death only a few months ago. Her illness, and now her death, has left me in a state of desolation that I have never before experienced.

In addition, I have come to feel in this last while that I was strangely debilitated. Not only did I have physical problems – I had expected them - but my mind too was not functioning with its usual alacrity. I did not seem to be able to make decisions, and when I finally made them, I often did not carry them out. I did not know why this was happening, and therefore sought medical help.

The diagnosis was that I now suffer, like many people my age - and some younger - from Alzheimer's disease. And I want you, my friends and readers, to know this straight from me.

So, like everyone else, regardless of age or health, I now face a basic question: how exactly, can I do my best in waging a battle against Alzheimer's disease and, of course, for life?

The answer, simple though it may seem, is best expressed by the brief Hebrew expression *chazak v'ematz*. I will attempt to be as strong as possible and muster up as much courage as possible, knowing that much has been given to me in life and knowing, as well, that much is in the hands of the Almighty.

And, my friends, I would say the same to you, in whatever battle you must wage for life and for health: *chazak v'ematz*, be strong and be of good courage, and may you and I be granted the privilege of living for as long as our strength and God afford us.

'The greatest danger to human rights is... indifference'

The following teachings by Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut are excerpted from *A Rabbi of Words and Deeds: Esssays in Honour of the 90th Birthday of W. Gunther Plaut*, edited by John Moscowitz and Natalie Fingerhut (Holy Blossom Temple, 2002).

On belief in God

I believe that God's possibilities of connecting and caring are endless in space and in time. There is an essential mystery here that will always lie beyond my comprehension. If I cannot fathom how a piece of silicon can perform its tasks, how much more reason do I have to stand in awe before the presence of the One who made the world and its resources and put them at our disposal! This sense of awe and wonder, said Abraham Joshua Heschel, should be the basis of one's religious outlook. It is of mine.

The God who suffered and wept with us during the Holocaust is my God. To say this is a statement of faith and admittedly not grounded on scientific proof. But that does not make it any less real.

(Excerpt from *God, Where Were You? Keeping Faith After Auschwitz*)

On the importance of defending human rights

Diversity is an affirmation of individual human rights, of pride in one's heritage.

Racism is the very opposite of this sentiment, and the more frankly we confront it, the better our national health will be...

It must be clear that the state, as the collective entity of the people, has a vital role to play. It guards the political and human fabric of Canada, and our nation itself has traditions that need to be respected. In this role it must guard the human rights of all, of those who have been here and of those are arriving. It is meant to emphasize that our human-rights legislation on the federal and provincial levels are cornerstones on the moral edifice that is Canada.

Nov. 10, 1938, [Kristallnacht] saw the modern breakdown of human rights and Dec. 10, 10 years later [the signing of the International Declaration of Human Rights] saw the international resolution to entrench them once and for all. But we cannot put our trust in the mere existence of the document that we are celebrating today. Without our resolve to give it flesh and blood, it will be little more than a pious and pretentious exercise.

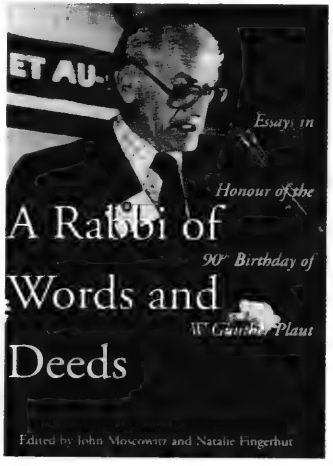
Let it not be forgotten that in 1938 there were millions of "good people" in the world. By their collective outcry, they could have curbed the rapacious beast the Nazis had loosed on humanity. Alas, they said little and did nothing. The same is true for Germans who saw the evil perpetrated before their eyes, yet chose to look the other way. A few gathered their strength and helped the victims, but they were the rare exceptions.

Do we not find the same scenario when it comes to standing up for the underprivileged in our society? The German burghers claimed that they did not know what was going on – a rather shallow excuse at best. But when it comes to the poor, no one can say that he/she does not know of poverty's gruesome embrace, of the unending and repetitive cycle that is producing a permanent underclass. Still, most of us do nothing and look away, somehow deluding ourselves that the state will jump into the breach and take up the slack left by our own indifference.

One of our former national leaders, annoyed by the persistent reminder that the weak had to be protected, called those of us who had nagged him "soft-bellied do-gooders" or something to that effect.

"Do-gooder" was meant to be the ultimate put-down. Not in my book – and I'd like think not in the book of the majority of Canadians, either. Making the social weal one's concern is not the sole prerogative of the politician; it is the duty of every citizen. When human rights are abridged or trampled under foot, the blame lies not alone with the offenders. It lies also, and to no small degree, with those who could have stood up for human rights but didn't.

In fact, to put it bluntly, perhaps the greatest danger to human rights is the indifference of decent people. Our collective experience should teach us this basic, though uncomfortable, truth. Solidarity in defence of human rights in all their forms and guises is the best safeguard of democracy and social peace. It is as simple and as complex as that.



(Excerpt from *Our Collective Experience in Human Rights and Solidarity: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*)

Haredi draft deferment a ticking time bomb

Nothing infuriates average Israelis more than the exemption most haredi men get from military service. While other high school graduates spend several years in the IDF, often endangering themselves for Israel's security, most similarly aged haredi young people continue their lives uninterrupted.

This arrangement is based on an understanding reached during Israel's early years between David Ben-Gurion, our first prime minister, and the heads of leading haredi yeshivas. It allowed yeshiva students to defer military service until concluding their studies, essentially exempting them from service.

The haredi rationale is that while soldiers might fight and die for the country, yeshiva students are the Jewish nation's true torchbearers. Throughout history, it's only because of them that Judaism has survived, and since history is cyclical and there's no guarantee Israel will continue to exist, they alone ensure that Judaism will outlive Zionism.

This thinking doesn't sit well with non-haredi Israelis. They view haredim as freeloaders. They not only refuse to contribute to state security, but their way of life makes them welfare cases. They don't work, have countless children and live off the state's coffers.

Over the years, the country's leadership, whether left or right, has avoided changing the status quo regarding haredi enlistment in the IDF, recognizing the issue as a political hot potato. The only changes made were forced upon governments by the courts.

The most significant legal battle on the matter took place more than a decade ago, as it became clear the number of yeshiva students receiving deferments was skyrocketing.

Yair Lootsteen

in Jerusalem

When Ben-Gurion agreed to deferments, military service was delayed for no more than a few hundred students. In 1999, almost 4,000 yeshiva students received delays, roughly nine per cent of all potential enlistees for that year, bringing the total number of students with deferments to more than 30,000.

Moreover, the deferment system had negative socio-economic ramifications for the haredi community. It kept many in yeshivas and out of the workforce, even after exhausting their Torah studies, because they were neither willing nor able to join the IDF at a later stage in life. Instead, they lingered in yeshivas and kept getting government handouts.

Based on the numbers and the arrangement's societal effects, Israel's Supreme Court found the situation to be no longer acceptable. Simply stated, the principle of equality requiring all able-bodied persons to participate in Israel's security outweighed the freedom of religion claimed by haredim. As such, the court found the deferment system no longer reasonable and, therefore, illegal.

However, the court understood it could not annul the existing arrangement immediately. Instead, it gave the government and Knesset a year to incorporate haredim into the military.

As is often the case, a committee was established, headed by retired Supreme Court Justice Zvi Tal. In April 2000, it produced a voluminous report that led to what is known in Israel as the Tal Law. It did not do away with yeshiva students' right to continue studying. Rather, it created a year-long window of opportunity for 22-year-olds, allowing those who stopped studying to choose to enlist into the IDF for a shortened term of service or to return to yeshiva.

The law also created a civilian service as an alternative to the military. Anyone serving for a year in this service (in a variety of needed positions) would get a permanent exemption from military service.

Acting on the Tal committee's recommendations, the law's validity was limited to five years, requiring the Knesset to re-evaluate it periodically. Although challenged in the courts in 2007, the law was extended for another five years. It's scheduled to end in this coming July.

During the past decade, the law has only been partially successful in integrating more haredim into the IDF and Israeli society in general. While several thousand have joined the army or civilian service during that decade, in 2010 alone, more than 5,000 new yeshiva students received deferments and their total numbers reached 60,000.

With reserve soldiers already protesting the Tal Law's extension, and with the issue threatening to dismantle his coalition, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu delayed a government debate on it, choosing instead to send it to the Knesset and announcing there would be amendments to the law before July.

With stats showing 28 per cent of Jewish first-graders enrolled this year in haredi schools, someone had better start being more creative. There's no time to waste.

'Critical solidarity' - Israel bashing by another name

I have heard many excuses for crude anti-Israel propaganda, but the term "critical solidarity" is new. This is the phrase that Germany's Heinrich Böll Foundation used in the effort to justify channelling money to a particularly poisonous web magazine that goes under the name "+972" – the international dialing code for Israel.

Many of the posts on the site exploit the odious "apartheid" analogy that is central to the 2001 Durban strategy, designed to promote the "complete international isolation of Israel" – in other words, annihilation by political warfare.

Published in English, few Israelis read +972 and many of the writers are from the tiny fringe anti-Zionist sect of Israelis and Jews who have failed to gain attention and influence through the democratic process and resort to inflammatory rhetoric to attack Israeli policies.

In one typical example, in January 2012, Haggai Matar wrote "Dozens of Popular Committee activists gathered in Jericho for a 'freedom ride': an attempt to drive their cars to Ramallah on the fast lanes of the apartheid roads meant for Israelis only." Similarly, Noam Sheizaf, uses +972 to declare his religious belief that the IDF is the "main institution in promoting, maintaining occupation, apartheid." And Joseph Dana, who masquerades as a journalist, proclaimed, "I am opposed to the exclusive nature of Zionism and the privilege that it affords one people in this region." No wonder that Ali Abunimah, the head of Electronic Intifada and a leader of hate-filled anti-Israel events on North American campuses, is a big supporter.

This website is not the only form of anti-democratic manipulation and warfare funded by the German Böll Foundation. Its Israeli partners include Ta'ayush, an anarchist group that provokes violent confrontations in the West Bank. Another partner is Yesh Gvul, which is involved in lawsuits in Europe targeting Israeli officials that are responsible for counter-terror operations against Hamas. In the European Parliament, the group has sponsored highly biased presentations on "anti-democratic trends in Israel." And in January, it sent a letter to members of the Israeli Knesset opposing very preliminary proposals that would have placed limits on their and other foreign government funding for political advocacy NGOs. Apparently, the officials of these foreign foundations think that they're the real democrats, and not the elected officials chosen by the Israeli public.

What is a German political institution (the Böll Foundation is associated with the Green Party, and is funded by taxpayers) doing supporting this modern version of colonialism and antisemitism?

Their official response is that this funding was a form of "critical solidarity with Israel." George Orwell would have been proud – the phrase implies that hate speech and calls for the destruction of Israel are actually signs of support for and solidarity with the Jewish nation-state.

Gerald Steinberg

in Jerusalem

Böll also said it did not want to "censor" +972, as if censorship, and not funding, was the issue. By this warped logic, money given to any cause, no matter how marginal and immoral, is justifiable – there are no limits. It is hard to decide what is worse – the activities and funding or the absurd and insulting explanation.

Böll officials might also argue that they are only following the other German organizations and European governments, such as Norway and Sweden, in this form of "critical solidarity." Tens of millions of taxpayers' euros are given to fringe anti-Israel groups that work against the peace efforts that the governments claim to support. These groups are also active in promoting the demonization of Israel, and their publications repeat the libels of Israeli "apartheid," "genocide," "colonization," "massacre," and "ethnic cleansing."

If officials from Germany's Heinrich Böll Foundation and the rest retain any sense of decency and self-respect, they will end this immoral funding immediately and apologize for the damage done to Israel by their "critical solidarity." Europeans, in general, and German groups, in particular, have no right to manipulate Israeli democracy or to preach to Israelis on any issue.

Peace remains elusive

With Israeli President Shimon Peres having recently warned that not much time remains to reach a peace agreement with the Palestinians, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has expressed pessimism about the prospect of such a breakthrough.

Days after Israeli and Palestinian negotiators ended their fifth and apparently final round of exploratory talks in Amman, Jordan, without any discernible progress, Netanyahu glumly observed, "As things stand now, the signs are not particularly good."

He issued his comment about a month after Israel's foreign minister, Avigdor Lieberman, claimed that Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA) are at least a decade away from making peace, that the PA is trying to "flee direct negotiations" and "internationalize" the Arab-Israeli dispute, and that Israel should pursue conflict management rather than conflict resolution.

Unsurprisingly, the Palestinians are not hopeful either.

PA President Mahmoud Abbas has blamed Israel for the unsuccessful outcome of the talks in Jordan, which were sponsored by King Abdullah II. In the meantime, Abbas' aides have dismissed Israel's proposals for border and security arrangements within the context of a two-state solution as a non-starter.

At the recent discussions in Jordan, Israel's representative, Yitzhak Molho, told his Palestinian interlocutors that the guiding principle of Israeli policy is to delineate a border based on the route of its separation barrier, some parts of which jut deeply into the West Bank. Israel unilaterally seeks to retain settlement blocs near Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, maintain control of eastern Jerusalem and keep a garrison in the Jordan Valley.

The Palestinian position is far different, as its chief negotiator, Saeb Erekat, noted: "Our starting point is the 1967 borders, with minor [territorial] swaps."

Since the Palestinian view is supported by the Quartet – the United States the European Union, Russia and the United Nations – Israel is isolated on this issue.

The talks in Amman, which began on Jan. 3 and turned out to be yet another exercise in futility, were convened as a result of efforts by the Quartet to reinvigorate the moribund peace process.

The previous round of negotiations, ceremonial in nature and little more than an ostentatious display in public relations, broke down in the autumn of 2010 following Netanyahu's refusal to extend Israel's 10-month partial settlement freeze in the West Bank.

Netanyahu feared that his right-wing coalition, some of

Sheldon Kirshner

in Toronto

whose ministers oppose territorial compromise, would collapse if he agreed to renew it.

Digging in their heels, the Palestinians served notice they would not resume formal negotiations unless Israel abided by two conditions: a total settlement moratorium in the West Bank and eastern Jerusalem, and a new border based on the pre-1967 lines.

Netanyahu urged the PA to resume talks without preconditions, even though Israeli preconditions run the gamut from preserving settlement blocs to maintaining possession of eastern Jerusalem.

Much to Israel's satisfaction, the Quartet supported its call for an unconditional resumption of talks. However, the Quartet asked Israel for two confidence-building measures – the release of Palestinian prisoners and a complete halt to West Bank settlement construction, which is widely regarded as an obstacle to advancing peace.

Last October, the Quartet urged Israel and the PA to produce substantive proposals within three months. According to reports, the Palestinians submitted a detailed paper, but Israel has yet to do so.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon

At the moment, Israel is preoccupied by Iran and the spectre of an Iranian nuclear arsenal. To Netanyahu, the Palestinian question seems secondary by comparison.

The foreign minister of the European Union, Catherine Ashton, has called for a continuation of the Amman talks so they can develop into "genuine negotiations."

And while Israel agrees with her approach, few observers are hopeful that the current Israeli government would be willing, or even able, to match concessions offered in 2008 by Ehud Olmert, Israel's former prime minister, before he was forced to resign in a cloud of scandal. Olmert's far-reaching concessions turned on a massive Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and a division of greater Jerusalem.

It is highly doubtful whether Netanyahu would be able to realistically offer such concessions. They would be at odds with his intrinsic views and hasten the fall of his government. Netanyahu's other conditions also pose problems. He wants the Palestinians to recognize Israel as a Jewish state, even though the PLO has already recognized Israel, and he wants the PA to cancel last week's Fatah/Hamas pact to form an interim unity government in advance of elections. The PA is unlikely to budge on either issue.

Peacemaking is also inhibited by two additional factors: the uncertainty unleashed by the so-called Arab Spring – the series of rebellions that have rocked the Arab world since 2011 – and the Palestinians' ability to fire rockets into Israel at will from the Gaza Strip.

Netanyahu argues that Arab revolts necessitate the need for upgraded Israeli security guarantees to offset the risk of the land-for-peace formula. Meanwhile, Defence Minister Ehud Barak says Israel cannot afford to vacate much of the West Bank unless Israel develops credible anti-missile capabilities.

In the face of these harsh realities, the PA is adopting "new measures" in pursuit of statehood. Abbas, having described Netanyahu as the most inflexible Israeli leader he has ever met, acknowledges that the PA is preparing a diplomatic campaign to place Israel under "a real international siege" at the United Nations and other forums.

The PA intends to ask the UN Security Council to take up the matter of Israeli settlement activity in the West Bank. Last September's bid by the PA for full UN membership has bogged down, having been sidelined by the United States. But the PA's latest gambit concerning Israeli settlements may fall on fertile ground.

Two weeks ago, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon urged Israel to "refrain from future construction" in the West Bank. Shortly afterward, the United States criticized plans by Israel to subsidize construction in 70 settlements.

Israel is paying no heed to these motions. In the wake of UNECSO's decision to grant the PA membership, a stinging setback and rebuke to Israel, Netanyahu announced that 2,000 housing units would be constructed in eastern Jerusalem, Gush Etzion and Ma'aleh Adumim.

This announcement buoyed Likud stalwarts who are not eager to make meaningful compromises and served notice on the PA that Israel will respond aggressively to Palestinian unilateralism.

A year and a half ago, in an upbeat mood, Netanyahu enunciated an ambitious agenda, saying he hoped to sign a "historic" framework accord with the PA within a year. But this deadline has come and gone, and now an agreement seems beyond the reach of Israel and the PA.

Observers do not expect the stagnation to touch off a third violent Palestinian uprising. In a disavowal of violence, Abbas has called on Palestinians in the West Bank to engage in peaceful protests through the medium of "popular resistance." Abbas' probable successor, Marwan Barghouti, facing the prospect of spending the rest of his life in prison after being convicted on charges of terrorism, has been converted to a belief in non-violence.

In a remarkable comment that may be the harbinger of a new Palestinian strategy, he declared that the Palestinians committed a grave error by resorting to force during the second intifadah.

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UJA campaign ahead of last year's pace

Frances Kraft
Staff Reporter

UJA Federation of Greater Toronto has raised more than $50 million in unrestricted gifts and almost $54 million total, in its 2012 campaign, Gilbert Palter, UJA Campaign 2012 co-chair with Barbara Bank, announced at last week's campaign closing.

The campaign is "almost $2 million ahead of where we were last year at this time." Palter told an audience of more than 700 people. The event, held Feb. 9 at Events on the Park, featured comedian Richard Lewis of *Curb Your Enthusiasm*.

Bank noted that, this year, the campaign has 1,500 new donors and donors who had not made gifts in recent years. Together, they provided more than $1.7 million to the campaign.

Palter said one of the most profound things he learned this year is that "the high quality of Jewish life that we all enjoy in Toronto exists largely because of the strength of our UJA campaign.

"UJA helps people in need here in Toronto, in Israel and around the world, and builds the Jewish identity of our youth." As well, he added, it provides them with Jewish education, and advocates for Jewish and Israeli causes.

Co-chairs for the 2013 campaign will be Sarena Koschitzky and Bruce Leboff.

Speakers at the closing included Alison Himel, chair of Campaign 2012 operations; Felicia Posluns, outgoing chair of UJA women's philanthropy, who also introduced Lewis, and Elizabeth Wolfe, chair of the board of UJA Federation.

A brief tribute was paid to Reform Jewish leader Rabbi Gunther Plaut, who had died the previous day.

Felicia Posluns, who will chair Women's Philanthropy for the 2013 campaign, introduced Lewis, whose hour-long act featured a disclaimer on the program. "While we have made every effort to ensure this event is suitable for all ages, please keep in mind that UJA has no control over the content of Richard Lewis' program," it read.

The New York-born, Hollywood-based actor/comedian, 64, recalled meeting *Curb* creator Larry David as a 12-year-old at a summer sports camp. They hated each other, he said.

The enthusiastic audience applauded at *Curb* references, and also when Lewis, a self-admitted drug addict and alcoholic, said he's been sober for 18 years.

His stream-of-consciousness routine included numerous Jewish references. He also made a point of mentioning that his wife, who he married in his late fifties, is Jewish.

"Judaism is so beautiful," he said. "I don't have a big family, so to be with a lot of Jews... I like it. I can't always share anecdotal stories."

As well, Lewis incorporated material on aging – some parts more family-friendly than others. "I've been really restrained up here. You have no clue," he said.

"If you're young, have a blast," he advised those in their 20s and 30s. "It really flies."

Richard Lewis, left, with Campaign 2012 co-chairs Barbara Bank and Gilbert Palter *[Caley Taylor photo]*

> ***The campaign has 1,500 new donors and donors who had not made gifts in recent years***

The family of the late
FRANCES GOODMAN PELLATT
acknowledges the many cards, donations, meals, visits and kind sentiments expressed by family, friends and colleagues who reached out to us at this difficult time. Your thoughtfulness and incredible generosity is greatly appreciated and will always be remembered.
Ralph, Karyn, Jordan, Jarrad, Ned, Jeff, Roz and their extended families.

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"I've always believed in peace and coexistence but until I was introduced to President Shimon Peres' approach and The Center For Peace he established, I hadn't fully appreciated the importance of also pursuing dignity and building a civil society. That is the mission and vision of The Peres Center For Peace with its innovative humanitarian projects and programs. That's why I have accepted to lead its Canadian Center."

– Dr. Michael Dan, President, Regulus Investments Inc. and Gerdau Power Corp.

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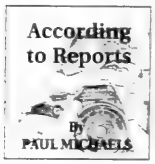
The bizarre lexicon of Mideast reporting

Last week in Doha, Qatar, Fatah and Hamas officials announced that they had finally reached an agreement on the formation of a "unity" government. Despite the intense focus on the ongoing massacres in Syria, abetted by Russia and Iran, this development captured quite a bit of media attention.

Much of the coverage failed to explain the inconsistencies (even contradictions) in the agreement itself, including the place of the two factions in the international community and the opposing views they hold toward relations with Israel.



For instance, the Feb. 7 *Toronto Star* carried a *Washington Post* report which noted: "The European Union, one of the major financial backers of the Palestinian Authority, said it looked forward to continuing its support, provided the new government was committed to non-violence, recognized Israel and accepted previous agreements and a negotiated peace settlement with Israel" – conditions long ago set out by the Mideast Quartet, of which the EU is a member.

"Hamas, which for years carried out deadly suicide bombings and has fired rockets into Israel, rejects those conditions. Hamas is considered a terrorist group by Israel, Canada, the U.S. and the EU," the *Post* report said.

How, then, can such an alliance hope to function?

Some have tried to square the circle by assuming that the new government will be solely composed of politically independent "technocrats," with Hamas having no direct role. The *Post* piece notes, for instance, that "Yasser Abed Rabbo, a senior aide to Abbas, said the joint government would be 'a technical government more than a political one' and that diplomatic affairs would 'remain with the presidency and the Palestine Liberation Organization.'"

Few, including very few Israelis, buy into this notion.

As to what motivated PA President Mahmoud Abbas to strike an agreement with Hamas, consider this explanation from Ibrahim Barzak and Karen Laub in their Canadian Press report (Feb. 7): "Abbas appears to have concluded that he has a better chance of repairing relations with Hamas, shunned by the West as a terror group, than reaching an agreement with Israel's hardline prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu."

This is a constant refrain in major western media circles. Netanyahu is depicted as "hardline" whereas Abbas is (as implied here) the "moderate" peace-seeker. According to other reporters, Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal is a "relative moderate." This lexicon is bizarre. Whatever the criticisms against Netanyahu (who has been challenged by some mainstream Israeli observers for getting entangled with U.S. President Barack Obama over the issue of the 1967 borders), the Israeli prime minister has repeatedly accepted the notion of a two-state solution to the Palestinian-Israel impasse based on "two states for two peoples." It is Abbas who has consistently and adamantly rejected the concept of Israel as the state of the Jewish people (while he accepts "Palestine" as the state of the Palestinian people).

The reason is clear. Abbas, like Yasser Arafat before him, insists that Palestinian refugees have the "right" of return to Israel. On this point, he's not prepared to yield, which is the reason he rejected former Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert's offer of Palestinian statehood during the Annapolis talks in 2008, four short years ago. This is old, forgotten history now.

The real issue is not the question of how sincere Netanyahu is about returning to the negotiating table without preconditions (despite his offers, and Abbas' refusals). Rather, the issue is that Abbas is conceptually incapable of breaking through the barrier – long ago shattered by successive Israeli leaders – of acknowledging the legitimate political rights of both peoples. On this core rejectionism, Fatah leaders are ultimately no different from Hamas leaders, who also refuse to recognize Jewish sovereignty.

For this, among other reasons, Jeffrey Simpson should reconsider the meaning of "moderate" when he claims, as he did in his Feb. 4 *Globe and Mail* column, that Abbas represents "the most moderate leadership in Palestinian Authority history," and that Israel bears responsibility for the lack of movement in the peace process.

Paul Michaels is director of research and media relations for the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs.

Why I joined The Canadian Peres Center For Peace...

"I joined because I believe, like former Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin once said, 'that in seeking a true, full peace between the Jewish people and the Arabs, we must not permit memories of the past to stand in our way.'"

– Dr. Karen Mock
Psychologist and Human Rights Consultant

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Israel's Meir Medical Centre gets $1-million plus gift

Paul Lungen
Staff Reporter

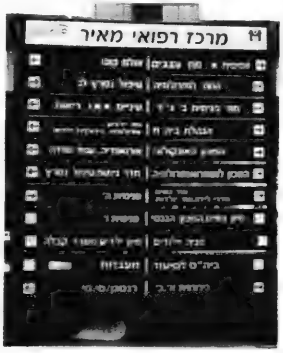
The Meir Medical Centre in Israel recently upgraded its cardiology unit thanks to a $1.18-million donation from an anonymous Canadian source.

The funds, which are expected to exceed all other donations in 2012 combined, will support cardiac treatment for the general hospital population, including an upgrading of a children's cardiology unit, said Arie Raif, president of the Canadian Friends of Meir Medical Center.

The one-time donation was used to purchase advanced medical equipment that puts the Meir Center on par with the most up-to-date hospitals anywhere, Raif added.

"To us it's a major, major achievement. We have now ultra-modern cardiology equipment – the latest – and some was purchased from Israeli companies," he said.

Raif would not identify the philanthropist, saying only, "It's not your traditional philanthropist. It's a Jewish person not traditionally involved in the Jewish community."



The service directory at the entrance to the hospital.

The donor was attracted to the hospital's open door policy, under which patients of all backgrounds are treated. "What motivated him was the fact that the Meir Hospital has doctors who are Israelis and Arabs, nurses who are Israelis and Arabs and patients who are Israeli and Arabs," Raif said.

"He believes that the reconciliation process starts in a place like a hospital, because the philosophy of a hospital is that once you are a patient, everybody is equal."

Former Likud defence minister Moshe Arens, who has repeatedly emphasized coexistence and reconciliation between Jews and Arabs, also influenced the philanthropist. "He believes, like [President] Shimon Peres, that people build relationships and peace, not governments," Raif said.

Raif, who also serves as vice-chair of the Peres Center for Peace Foundation, said the Canadian Friends group receives donations in Canada from a wide variety of individuals, including Israeli Arabs.

The Meir Medical Center serves a population of around 800,000 in a densely packed area north of Tel Aviv, including residents of Ramat Hasharon, Kfar Saba, Herzliya, Raanana and Netanya. With 717 beds, the hospital offers a pediatric surgery ward, an intensive care unit and a spine institute. It is also known for cancer research, orthopedic surgery, geriatric care and head and neck surgery.

Raif said the Canadian Friends group, established about six years ago, has set a target of raising $5 million over the next three years to go toward completion of a dedicated children's wing.

Its next major event is scheduled for April 22, when the friends group will present its "Medal of Merit" to businessman Michael Dan and his wife, Amira, Mary Jo Haddad, president and CEO of the Hospital for Sick Children, and Bernie Farber, former CEO of Canadian Jewish Congress.

Advocate for your own care, Dr. Oz urges

Sheri Shefa
Staff Reporter

Cardiothoracic surgeon, best-selling author, and Emmy-award winning television host Dr. Mehmet Oz was in Toronto on Sunday giving his doctor's orders about how to live a healthier life.

Thousands of enthusiastic fans gathered to take in his lecture, titled "All about you: Revitalizing your life with Dr. Oz," which was delivered in support of the newly established MukiBaum Accessibility Foundation, the fundraising arm of the MukiBaum Treatment Centres.

Founded by Israeli-born Dr. Nehama Baum in 1979, the centres have helped hundreds of people who cope with a combination of developmental disabilities, and emotional and psychiatric disorders – such as autism, Down syndrome, schizophrenia and bipolar disorder – become contributing members of society.

"We are judged in society by how we treat the weakest among us," said Oz, who began his presentation by calling attention to the important work being done by the staff at the non-profit centres.

Having toured the facilities hours before taking to the stage at the Sony Centre for the Performing Arts, Oz said, "I understand first hand the unique things that Dr. Baum was able to accomplish... that so many of us thought would not be possible."

The Dr. Oz Show host, who became a household name in 2004 when he began making regular appearances on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* in his scrubs, has forged a successful second career motivating his millions of viewers to live healthier lives.

The author of six *New York Times* bestsellers including *YOU: On a Diet*, and *Healing from the Heart*, puts the onus on the individual to ensure they get the best medical care possible.

"You are the advocate for your best care," he said, adding that people need to be familiar with their medical history, do their homework to find the best doctor, and not be afraid to get a second opinion.

But he stressed that the best defence against health problems is preventing illnesses with healthy habits, which include a proper diet and exercise.

"The battles for health care... will be won in your houses, your kitchens, your bedrooms."

Baum, who welcomed Oz to the stage, shared her story about why she wanted to bring the influential doctor to Toronto and how she pulled it off.

"This is a man who is not just talking the talk, he is a man who is walking the walk," Baum said.

She explained that after catching one of his shows, she realized that his philosophy is similar to MukiBaum's mission.

"The message of 'you' puts the responsibility on us to take care of ourselves," said Baum, who strives to teach the people she serves to become more independent and healthier.

The self-proclaimed "dreamer" said she wrote a letter to Oz that detailed the ways her centres make nutrition and fitness a priority, and asked him to be involved in the fundraising event.

"I think he liked [the letter], because he's here today."

For more information, visit mukibaum.com.

MukiBaum Treatment Centres' founder Dr. Nehama Baum, left, took Dr. Mehmet Oz on a tour of the facilities. ***[Nikki Leigh McKean photo]***

Correction

The article "Living a gluten-free life," on page B8 of the Feb. 2 edition of *The CJN*, should have stated that Lisa Cantkier worked in education for 10 years, until she had her second child.

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Women will lead us

Rabbi Zushe Silberstein

This article is dedicated to the thousands of Chabad shluchot, rebbetzin emissaries who together with their husbands are changing the world and preparing us to welcome the Mashiach. This Shabbat, more than 2,000 shluchot will gather in New York City at the annual international shluchot convention.

In 1988, after the passing of his wife, the Rebbetzin Chayah Mushkah on the 22nd of Shvat, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, stated that a new phase in the imminence of the coming of Mashiach had begun, pointing to the unique role of women in making the redemption a reality. For women – to a certain extent more than men – have the potential to transform the Redemption from the realm of theory and expectation into actual reality.

To understand the role of Jewish women in preparing the world for the Redemption, let's backtrack a bit. God created the world so that He would have a dwelling among mortals. A home is a place where one can be one's self. Outside of one's home, a person may feel inhibited or restricted. At home, by contrast, all inhibitions disappear. Similarly, God desired a place among mortals where He could manifest Himself without any restrictions or barriers.

The ultimate home is where there is total harmony in the efforts of husband and wife. The woman is more directly involved with creating the home atmosphere. It is in that vein that our rabbis interpreted the term *Akeret habayit*, homemaker, as *Ikro shel bayit*, the essence of the home.

The consummate perfection of the dwelling for God in this world is achieved not only through revelation and influence radiated from Above, but through man's labour in refining his environment and revealing its Godly nature. Mankind's role is thus a womanly role – i.e., creating an atmosphere within God's home,

Rabbinic Reflections

making sure that the physical setting is imbued with meaning, depth and purpose.

In *Shir Hashirim* – the *Song of Songs*, King Solomon describes the bonds of love that connect God to the Jewish people. Just as in any relationship, where both partners have to contribute, so, too, our relationship with God is interactive. Each positive step we take in coming closer to God brings Him closer to us. The perfection of this relationship brings about the final redemption.

The Rebbe stated that all the Divine services necessary for God to "feel at home" in this world have been accomplished and all that is left for us to do is to prepare ourselves to welcome Mashiach. Welcoming Mashiach means internalizing the message of the imminence of the Redemption on a personal level. Relate to it not as a hope for the future, but as a reality that permeates and manifests itself in our way of life. Women have the capability to transform faith into a concrete reality and down-to-earth behaviour. Our sages tell us the final redemption will have many similarities to the Exodus from Egypt. After the miracle of the splitting of the Red Sea, the prophet Miriam led the Jewish women in joyous song and dance with the tambourines they prepared while they were still in Egypt. The tambourines were the symbol of their unwavering concrete faith even during the most perilous moments.

Presently, while we experience moments of great confusion or instability, the women of valour of our generation inspire us all with their powerful faith and selfless dedication. It's this complete faith that will lead us to the time when we will all join together, singing the *Shir Chadash*, the new song of Redemption.

Rabbi Zushe Silberstein is spiritual leader of Chabad Chabanel and chaplain for the Quebec Ministère de la Sécurite.

'KOSHER' LABEL IN ADVERTISING

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency Guide to Food Labelling and Advertising reads as follows:

"In the labelling, packaging and advertising of a food, the Food and Drug Regulations prohibits the use of the word kosher or any letter of the Hebrew alphabet, or any other word, expression, depiction, sign, symbol, mark, device or other representation that indicates or that is likely to create an impression that the food is kosher, if the food does not meet the requirements of the Kashruth applicable to it.

The terms "kosher style" and "kind of kosher" are not allowed, unless they meet the requirements of the Kashruth. "Jewish-style food" or "Jewish cuisine" are not objected to, although the foods may not necessarily meet the requirements of the Kashruth.

Rationale: "Kosher style" is considered to create the impression that the food is kosher, and therefore the food must meet the requirements of the Kashruth. "Jewish style" food may not necessarily create this impression."

The CJN makes no representation as to the kashruth of food products in advertisements.

Knowledge comes but wisdom lingers

What is wisdom? Where is it to be found? Who is wise? The answers, of course, are varied.

William James observed that the art of being wise is the art of knowing what to overlook. The Talmud states that a wise person is one who learns from everyone. Elbert Hubbard wrote, "A wise man is a damn fool for at least five minutes every day; wisdom consists in not exceeding that limit." Alfred Tennyson asserted that knowledge comes but wisdom lingers.

Psychologist Joan Erikson maintained that wisdom must come from life experience. It must be well digested. It's not what comes from reading great books. When it comes to understanding life, experiential learning is the only worthwhile kind. Everything else is hearsay.

Over the centuries, thoughtful minds have recognized the gap between formal education and wisdom. Five centuries ago, Montaigne made this distinction while ridiculing a student of Dionysius: "His Latin and Greek have made him more conceited and arrogant than when he left home. He should have brought back his soul full. He brings it back only swollen; he has only inflated it instead of enlarging it."

Robert Sternberg, a professor of psychology at Yale University for 40 years, developed a comprehensive theory of human intelligence.

He wrote, "When I looked at people like Ghandi and Martin Luther King Jr. and Mother Theresa and Nelson Mandela – take your own pick – and if you compare them to Stalin and Hitler and Mao, they probably didn't differ much in IQ. It seemed that what differentiated them was wisdom. What matters is not only how much knowledge but how you use that knowledge."

Bookmarks

Bernard Baskin

Sternberg is distressed that we are culturally conditioned to think of wisdom in Lincolnesque or Solomonic terms. "Actually," he writes, "it is hard to imagine a greater achievement on life's stage than to have been a wise parent."

Does wisdom increase with age? Most investigators fail to find any convincing evidence that wisdom increases much from the age of 20 to the age of 90. However, there is good news. Many older people can significantly rejuvenate their cognitive skills through practice.

In his book *From Philosophy to Neuroscience*, Stephen Hall wonders whether wisdom is really desirable. "Lets face it: Who in his or her right mind would want the burden of apparent wisdom? The role of sage in any age deserves hazardous-duty pay. They sentenced Socrates to death. Nobody would hire Confucius, and nobody could protect Martin Luther King Jr. They mocked Pericles and despised Churchill and assassinated Ghandi."

He is certain that if there actually were wise people in our midst today, they would be dissected, eviscerated, macerated and ridiculed on cable television and talk radio before we ever had a chance to figure out if they were truly wise.

Thinking about wisdom almost inevitably inspires us to think about ourselves and our relationships with the larger world. With diligence (and luck) it might even make us think how both can be made better.

Trampling on academic integrity

The role of a university in today's world is diverse and nuanced. However, embedded in the mission statements of most institutions of higher learning, as an overarching principle, is an allusion to the pursuit of excellence, a respect for scholarship, and the promotion of truth and intellectual curiosity.

Included in the goals of Princeton University is the development (in its undergraduates) of "such core values as honesty, integrity and fairness." Harvard College encourages its students "to rejoice in discovery and in critical thought," while Cornell University pledges to "foster initiative, integrity and excellence in an environment of collegiality, civility, and responsible stewardship." One of the University of Toronto's stated objectives is to imbue in its students "the ability to think clearly, judge objectively, and contribute constructively to society." McMaster University's vision is "to achieve international distinction for creativity, innovation and excellence."

It's fitting that the mission statements of the academy speak to motivations that are both ambitious and principled. To a greater or lesser extent, university faculty are guided by such expectations and, in so doing, they undertake to conduct themselves with a degree of academic integrity that is becoming of them, their students and the institutions they represent.

What's therefore so galling is when faculty, or more particularly university administrators (who are themselves adherents to their mission statements), are perceived to be compromising their values by allowing into our lecture halls interlopers who have no record of scholarship and who, through polemic, bigotry and mendacity, trample on the very essence of civility and rational enquiry that governs acceptable behaviour on our campuses.

My View

Lawrence Hart

A case in point is the recent visit to McMaster by Zafar Bangash, an imam from York Region. While well known as a brazen apologist for the Iranian regime, Bangash will also be remembered for his pernicious rant outside Queen's Park in August of last year, at a so-called "al-Quds Day" rally. His intimidating demeanour, his recourse to historical fabrication, and his offensive messages were again manifest throughout his McMaster speech. Embellishing his depiction of Zionists as "parasites" and "barbarians," as recorded during his Queen's Park outburst, he deliberately interposed a reference to Nazism while describing "Zionists as racists" when he responded to a question at his McMaster presentation. But even aside from such slurs, his visceral anti-Americanism, his denigration of Canadian policy and his implied wthreats of retribution against Jews if Iran were to be attacked crossed many a red line.

The specifics of his propagandist diatribe needs to be more carefully analyzed, but the more generic issue relates not so much to what he said but to why reputable universities, such as McMaster, feel obligated to provide him, and his ilk, with a forum to spread their toxic, anti-intellectual views in the first place.

Why is it that there is such a disconnect between the high level of academic discourse demanded of university faculty while speakers invited from outside are allowed to ignore any semblance of scholarly construct, without scrutiny or penalty, both to them and to the groups that bring them to campus? Until this flagrant double standard is properly addressed, the worthy ideals embodied in our university mission statements will continue to be tarnished.

Israel goes to the Oscars – Pt. 2

As Oscar night approaches, we continue our look at Israel's nominees for best foreign-language film over the years. This year's *Footnote* is Israel's 10th film to be nominated for this Oscar – more than Denmark (8), Netherlands (7), Canada (6), Greece (5) and dozens of other countries. **[http://bit.ly/oscarisrael15]** On the other hand, Israel has yet to crack the winner's circle. Here are some of the films that tried.

Me'Ahorei Hasoragim (*Beyond the Walls*) (1984): From the film website Rotten Tomatoes: "The jailers of an overcrowded prison conspire to keep Israeli and Arab inmates at odds. When the prisoners come to the realization that their racist attitudes are self-destructive, they unite in a daring escape plan." **[http://bit.ly/oscarisrael16]** This page at YouTube links to several lengthy excerpts in Hebrew only. **[http://bit.ly/oscarisrael18]**

Beaufort (2007): Israel had to wait almost a quarter-century for its next foreign-language nomination. Director Joseph Cedar's *Beaufort* tells the story of an Israel Defence Forces unit stationed at a Crusader castle toward the end of Israel's 18-year occupation of southern Lebanon. The *New York Times* wrote, "Even if it does not entirely rise above cliché, *Beaufort* has an earnest, sober intelligence that makes it hard to shake. It suggests that, for those who fight, the futility of war is inseparable from its nobility." **[http://bit.ly/oscarisrael19]**

Vals im Bashir (*Waltz with Bashir*) (2008): In this movie, writer and director Ari Folman grapples with his inability to remember much of what he lived through and the horrors he witnessed during the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. From Roger Ebert's review: "Folman is an Israeli documentarian who has not worked in animation. Now he uses it as the best way to reconstruct memories, fantasies, hallucinations, possibilities, past and present. This film would be nearly impossible to make any other way." **[http://bit.ly/oscarisrael21]** The trailer is available online (with English subtitles and narration). **[http://bit.ly/oscarisrael27]**

Jewish & Digital

Mark Mietkiewicz

Ajami (2009): Co-directed by Scandar Copti, an Israeli-Arab Christian, and Yaron Shani, an Israeli Jew, the film is set in the Ajami neighbourhood of Jaffa, and tells several stories about people caught in a cycle of violence, drugs and revenge. **[http://bit.ly/oscarisrael22]** You can watch the trailer on YouTube (Hebrew subtitles) **[http://bit.ly/oscarisrael23]** (And for the moment, the entire movie is also available on the same YouTube page in chapters. Hebrew and Arabic only.)

He'arat Shulayim (*Footnote*) (2011): Joseph Cedar returns to the Oscars this year. *Footnote* focuses on the rivalry between father-and-son talmudic scholars and what happens when the father is accidentally told he has been awarded a prestigious prize destined for his son. The *Jerusalem Post* called it "brilliant and audacious." **[http://bit.ly/oscarisrael24]** Official website: **[http://bit.ly/oscarisrael25]**

Footnote won the best screenplay award at the 2011 Cannes Film Festival. So maybe it will be 10th time lucky for Israel at the Oscars, although it does face stiff competition this year from Poland's *In Darkness*, Canada's *Monsieur Lazhar*, Belgium's *Bullhead* and Iran's favoured, *A Separation*. **[http://bit.ly/oscarisrael26]**

Congratulations to everyone who will be walking down the red carpet on Feb. 26.

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Missionary desecrates a Torah scroll

Guest Voice

Rabbi Michael Skobac

When a YouTube video of a notorious missionary desecrating a Torah scroll surfaced on the Internet recently, it took only a few days for it to go viral and receive widespread media attention.

On Jan. 29, "Messianic Rabbi" Ralph Messer visited the New Birth Missionary Baptist Church near Atlanta and "coronated" Bishop Eddie Long by wrapping him in a Torah scroll, fitting him with a tallit and parading him around in an uplifted chair.

Messer claimed that the scroll used in this bizarre ceremony came from the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. The credibility of this has been questioned, along with the credibility of virtually everything he said about Judaism during his offensive spectacle. This included referring to the Torah's cover as a "foreskin" and asserting that the Jewish kings were wrapped in Torah scrolls. Long himself is currently embroiled in scandal after being accused of sexual misconduct by five young men.

The entire Jewish community was justifiably outraged at this deplorable violation of the most sacred ritual object of Judaism being used as a prop in a Christian worship service. Numerous Christian leaders also expressed their disgust over the disrespect and insensitivity shown toward Jewish tradition. Long as well expressed regret and apologies for the incident.

For Messer, a non-Jew and leader of Simchat Torah Beit Midrash, a "Hebrew-Christian" congregation and school based in Colorado, this was not his first wrapping of a besieged church leader in a Torah scroll. In a video he released on the Internet after the controversy broke, Messer unapologetically offered a rambling hour-long explanation and justification for his Torah travesty.

But the most ironic reaction to the growing scandal came from the so-called "messianic Jewish" community. Numerous leaders and organizations were quick to try and distance themselves from Messer, claiming that he wasn't a legitimate rabbi and that he perverted and misrepresented Jewish symbols and Jewish tradition. As one messianic leader lamented, "Judaism is not a toy box for Christians to rifle through".

Of course, there is tremendous truth to the old adage that when you point your finger, you have three pointing back at yourself. When messianic Jews give their ascent to every single doctrine of evangelical Christianity, can they honestly claim that their leaders are legitimate rabbis? When the messianic movement routinely perverts and distorts Jewish traditions, as their insistence that the three matzot at the Passover seder symbolize Christianity's Trinity, how can they in all good conscience distinguish themselves from Messer? Methinks the missionaries doth protest too much!

David P. Gushee, a professor of Christian ethics at Mercer University, observed that "one problem with messianic Judaism, in which leaders attempt to fuse Jewish and Christian traditions and symbols, is that it can easily stray into profound insensitivity."

Yehudah Ilan, who converted to Judaism after a long involvement in the messianic movement, astutely observed that Messer's wrapping of a Christian in a Torah scroll is actually an act that most aptly embodies the very modus operandi of messianic Judaism – the wrapping of Christianity in the cloak of Torah.

Rabbi Michael Skobac is the director of education and counselling for Jews for Judaism, Canada.

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Land Rover announced that the all-new 2012 Range Rover Evoque has been named the 2012 North American Truck of the Year. The announcement was made at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit on Jan. 9, 2012. The 2012 Range Rover Evoque was selected over two other finalists: the BMW X3 and the Honda CR-V, based on the following categories: value for the dollar, innovation, handling, performance, safety and driver satisfaction. Additionally, the car has been named Motor Trend's 2012 Sport/Utility of the Year, Autoweek's "Best of Best" Truck, Road & Travel's International Truck of the Year.

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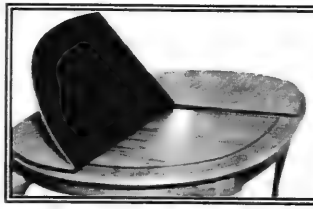

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Icons of Loss: The Art of Samuel Bak Comes to Toronto

Internationally Renowned Artist Made the Holocaust Subject of His Work

By Daniel Horowitz

Television has been referred to as a "vast wasteland". But for 86-year-old Torontonian and Holocaust survivor Gerda Frieberg, television recently served as a portal into the past.

The year was 2009. It was 5 a.m. when Gerda, a past chair of Canadian Jewish Congress Ontario Region, a member of United Jewish Appeal's Atarah Division and, in 1985, the founding chair of UJA Federation's Holocaust Education Centre - now the Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre - unable to sleep, turned on the set to help pass the time from dark to light. It was then that she began flipping from channel to channel when, suddenly, she saw a face - a face that took her back more than 60 years.

It was the face of renowned artist Samuel Bak, now 78, a man who Gerda had first met during her time in a Displaced Persons Camp in the German town of Landsberg from 1945 to 1949.

She still remembered Samuel as the fresh-faced young boy of 12 or 13 who accompanied his mother on her regular visits to Gerda – the camp's consummate seamstress - who made many of her clothes.

With every visit to Gerda, Samuel's mom expressed how she yearned for him to be able to showcase his remarkable gift as a painter. She worried that he might never have the opportunity to fully tap into his talents as the times were uncertain, to say the least.

"She was always talking about her son," remembers Gerda. "She would tell me how talented he was and how she was determined to get Samuel into an art school in Munich. Nothing was more important; she just knew he would become a great artist given the opportunity. I often wondered over the years what ever happened to her son."

Now, thanks to the show on WGBH Public Television early that morning, which highlighted Samuel Bak and many of his paintings depicting the Holocaust, Gerda's questions were finally answered.

But it was one painting in particular that caught Gerda's attention. One of the last paintings shown was, as Samuel explained to the host, from that same Landsberg DP Camp where Gerda first met little Samuel.

Samuel Bak

"This is when I first realized that the artist on this television show could be the son of my old customer," recalls Gerda. "That prompted me to wait for the credits to roll where I found the artist's name and the gallery that represented him."

For more than 40 years, many of Bak's works have been on display at the prestigious Pucker Gallery in Boston, Massachusetts.

"Would you by any chance be the young boy I met in Landsberg?" Gerda wrote in a letter to Samuel after seeing the show. "If so, then your mother's dream came true: she must have been so proud of you, as any mother would be. I would very much like to hear from you…."

That summer, soon after sending the letter, Gerda was on a plane to Boston to connect with the successful artist.

"I had always thought about Samuel, and wanted to reconnect with him after all these years," says Gerda. "But, until that television show, I couldn't remember his last name. Every time I saw a painting depicting the Holocaust, I thought it might be his. I was never sure, but always curious. Now, I finally knew for sure." Gerda, so impressed with her friend's work, began campaigning to have Bak's exhibit brought to Toronto. And, thanks to Gerda's energy and tenacity, she has turned her dream into a reality. From March 1 to April 30th, 2012, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto presents *"Icons of Loss: The Art of Samuel Bak"* at The Columbus Centre's Joseph D. Carrier Art Gallery (901 Lawrence Avenue, West.)

This is the first major exhibition of Bak's work in Canada.

The unique exhibit consists of several dozen important paintings with roughly half of them based upon the May 16, 1943 photograph depicting a little boy at gun point during the liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto. The other half of the works explore a different icon – Albrecht Durer's 1514 engraving Melancholia I. Bak wishes the viewer to dwell on the little boy and the Angel – representing all children and all angels – who, according to Bak, are "our brothers and sisters who have died at the hands of oppressors."

Gerda, for her part, wishes the viewer to think about "One Child." In this case, the life of Samuel Bak, that special child she met in the camp. He lived and went on to create a monumental body of work, both artistic and historic in its dimension.

"Imagine, she reflects, "if more than 1.5 million children had not been murdered in the Holocaust. Think of what they could have accomplished for our common humanity."

For more information about "Icons of Loss: The Art of Samuel Bak" contact Shai Abraham at sabraham@ujafed.org or 416.635.2883 ext.5153. Admission to the exhibit is free.

Legacy of Life: Marilyn Green z"l

By Monique Gottlieb

It was Marilyn Green's z"l lifelong dream to empower Israeli women through education. While Marilyn did not live to see her dream fulfilled, her legacy will live on and help future generations through her fund at the Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto.

For as long as she could remember, Marylin had wanted to spend time in Israel. As a burgeoning young writer, with a small contract from a Canadian Jewish newspaper in hand, she flew to the land of her ancestors, settling in Jerusalem for several months.

Through numerous helpful contacts, she met many devoted individuals who lived useful lives, contributing to the well-being of all Israelis, no matter what their religion or background. In particular, she was attracted to those involved in education, whether in the universities or at grassroots level. "Education, it appeared to me, was the key to lifting people out of their ordinary, often difficult lives, giving them more independence and feelings of self-worth," expressed Marylin. While visiting a small college for international students in Haifa, she learned of new and original opportunities for working with youth, and, later, she accompanied a female Druse community leader from village to village, where she provided basic social assistance to families. From these experiences Marylin became aware that women were responsible for much of the innovative and experimental educational activities in modern-day Israel.

Through these experiences, Marilyn resolved to leave a legacy through the Jewish Foundation that would merge two of her most passionate concerns: the advancement of women, and the well-being of Israel.

As an educated young woman in a time when women's education was less than fashionable, Marylin firmly believed that women were capable of great achievement, but were still not afforded the same range of opportunities as men. She left her legacy to help Israeli women achieve greatness by providing them with higher education through her scholarships. Her dream was for these women to emerge as the future leaders of Israel and contribute to positive change in the region. "I hope that my legacy may, in due course, affect not only Israel, but also the Middle East and the world as a whole," expressed Marilyn.

Marilyn Green z"l

Marilyn Green's legacy highlights the confidence donors and their professional advisors place in the Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto as knowledgeable, responsible stewards of charitable assets. Through her legacy, Marilyn's generous spirit will endure and help future women follow in her footsteps.

To learn more, visit: www.jewishfoundationtoronto.com or contact the Jewish Foundation at 416-631-5703 or jewishfoundation@ujafed.org.

Pioneer music therapist honoured

Cynthia Gasner
Special to The CJN

Fran Herman, a pioneer music therapist for children with special needs, will be honoured by the Canadian Music Therapy Trust Fund (CMTTF) next month.

The reception for Herman, who's known worldwide for her innovative work, takes place on March 2 at Arta Gallery in Toronto's Distillery District.

The CMTTF was created to support research and to promote the use of music therapy in schools, hospitals and other facilities in Canada. A non-profit, it has raised more than $4 million dollars. The fund offers financial assistance to students, and over the past 12 years, it has funded more than 375 projects.

Until recently, Herman served as the fund's chairperson, and a scholarship is to be established in her name.

One of the projects of the CMTTF is the Music Therapy Centre, a street-front clinic on Bloor Street West in Toronto, which was founded by Herman in 2001. It offers a broad range of programs that are delivered by accredited healthcare professionals.

For more than half a century, Herman, 84, has been in the forefront of integrating all forms of expressive arts into music therapy. She has dedicated her life and her talents to making music therapy available to children regardless of their physical or emotional challenges.

"I believe that all the expressive arts can enhance what you do with music," Herman says. "If artistic pursuits are of fundamental importance to all persons, they are critical for those with special needs."

She has changed the lives of thousands of people throughout Canada and beyond, working in rehab with children who have cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, post- polio injuries, asthma, cystic fibrosis and other illnesses and conditions.

Born and raised in Cobalt, a small northern Ontario mining town, she met Carl Herman in Toronto and they married in 1962. An ardent advocate and supporter of her work, he died in September 2007.

Music therapy has received widespread recognition. It was used to restore the use of language by U.S. Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, who was shot in the head by a deranged gunman and lost her ability to speak.

Universities and medical centres throughout the world are becoming more aware of the rehabilitative powers of music as treatment for many diseases and conditions, says Herman.

In 1955, she became involved with music therapy for children with physical and emotional disabilities when a doctor whose son had died of muscular dystrophy contacted her.

He had heard of Herman's work in music therapy and asked her to try to work with children with muscular dystrophy, as many of these children are not able to participate in most activities.

She was hired to work with 42 children. She created a program involving music, art, poetry, writing, drama and wheelchair dancing, which later evolved into the Wheelchair Players, a group of children with disabilities who present musical shows.

Music therapist Fran Herman is the author of the books *Accentuate the Positive* and *Creatability*, both co-written with James C. Smith. *[Cynthia Gasner photo]*

Herman's books and films are used as teaching tools worldwide, and she has organized and participated in workshops in many countries. She lectures on the use of music therapy for those with a wide range of diseases and special needs.

"Music," says Herman, "is a tremendously powerful tool that we can use for change. The effect that music can have on those who are in need of its spiritual and magic can be staggering."

Herman has served as president of the Canadian Association of Music Therapy (CAMT), which is dedicated to fostering the use of music therapy in clinical education and community settings.

In 2009, she was recognized by the Music Industries Association of Canada with their inaugural MIAC Award for advocacy for music for children.

Amy Clements-Cortes, a senior music therapist at Baycrest and an assistant professor at the University of Windsor who has conducted studies on the use of music in palliative care and treating Alzheimer's, says that "Herman is a pioneer in the field of music therapy."

For more information about the CMTTF, visit www.musictherapytrust.ca or call 416-535-0200.

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'Webinar' series aims to unite community

Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf
Staff Reporter

A new online lecture series titled "Unity not Uniformity" was recently launched by the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) to provide a forum for community members to hear disparate views on controversial matters such as Halachah and Israeli public policy.

The "webinar" program launched Feb. 1 with the first of a two-part dialogue on religious pluralism and the role of women in Israel in the aftermath of the events in Beit Shemesh earlier this year. Two speakers addressed this topic: Anat Hofman, executive director of the Israel Religious Action Center, and David Weinberg, CIJA's Israel bureau director.

Hofman gave a talk from the Reform perspective on Feb. 1, while Weinberg gave his rejoinder on Feb. 7 from an Orthodox viewpoint.

Shimon Fogel

Shimon Fogel, CIJA's CEO, said the series is still a work in progress, but the decision to make it an Internet-based, virtual forum was done to take advantage of existing and emerging technology, which is both cost-effective and has great outreach potential.

The series isn't meant to replace live presentations. "There is a role for those, and we'll have those as an element on our menu of educational initiatives" going forward, he said.

Fogel said the initial series was joined by nearly 300 participants online.

He added that CIJA's goal with this series is not about "trying to direct people to one perspective or another. [Rather,] it's to provide them with the kind of information that would allow for a clear consideration of the issues, so they can arrive at their own conclusions."

The next webinar will happen in March and will deal with the settlement issue, Fogel said. There will again be two speakers, one pro-settler and another who opposes settlement activity.

"Both fall within the Zionist continuum," he said, adding that speakers with anti-Zionist reputations or backgrounds will not be booked.

CIJA is trying to "be responsive" to what the community says it wants to hear or talk about, Fogel said.

He acknowledged that a common misconception about his organization has been that it lacks a domestic focus and spends most of its time focusing on issues in Israel.

"For example, one of the issues we're contemplating for an upcoming webinar will focus on the issue of poverty in the Canadian Jewish community," he said.

This is not a subject that the community typically talks about, Fogel said.

Poverty is a pressing problem within the community, he said. "Not only do we have an obligation to raise awareness of it, but [we must] find ways of addressing it."

CIJA said it welcomes feedback from webinar participants to help determine what format works best for the series.

"It's important for us to signal [to the community] that we don't have a parochial perspective," Fogel said.

* * *

In related news, Fogel noted that CIJA is deciding whether to apply for intervener status in an upcoming end-of-life case that could come before the Supreme Court of Canada this year to present a Jewish perspective on the issue.

The case involves doctors at Toronto's Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre who want to disconnect a Muslim man, Hassan Rasouli, who is in a permanent vegetative state, from life support without his wife's consent.

Rasouli has been in a coma since 2010.

The issue, Fogel said, is whether religious considerations should play a role in determining whether a patient in such a condition should be removed from life support or "whether medical considerations trump all else."

CIJA is consulting with rabbinic authorities and looking at precedents to inform its decision.

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Lviv resident on mission to save the past

Aims to preserve cemeteries, grave sites in Ukraine

Sheldon Kirshner
Staff Reporter

Meylakh Sheykhet is on a mission to preserve Jewish cemeteries and grave sites in Ukraine.

"We are obliged to do this," he said in an interview last week while on a visit to Toronto to raise awareness about his work. "We're one people, with one destiny, and if we don't do this we will not be forgiven."

For the past 25 years, Sheykhet, a 58-year-old resident of Lviv, has scoured Ukraine in an attempt to save its Jewish heritage from neglect and abandonment.

Thanks to financial assistance from foundations and private sources, he has preserved about 180 cemeteries and grave sites in Ukraine, whose registered Jewish population stands at around 120,000.

Yet he has only scratched the surface.

In his estimation, there are 2,000 Jewish cemeteries and from 5,000 to 6,000 grave sites in this vast country, which attained independence in 1991 and suffered through a Soviet and a Nazi occupation.

During the Nazi period, 600,000 to 750,000 Ukrainian Jews were murdered, either locally or in concentration camps, and some were buried in mass graves. Cemeteries were bulldozed and headstones were used as paving stones to build roads.

Under Communism, particularly after World War II, a number of Jewish cemeteries were razed and used for a range of different purposes.

Public and private buildings were constructed, and vegetable gardens and grazing land for cattle sprang up. In one bizarre case, a cemetery was flooded to make way for a fish farm.

"The Soviet system was not better than the Nazi system," claimed Sheykhet, a representative of the Union of Councils for Jews in the Former Soviet Union who lives close to the historic Golden Rows Synagogue in Lviv. "The Soviet system implemented a spiritual Holocaust."

Born in a small town near Zhitomir, Sheykhet, a telecommunications expert by training, was raised in a traditional Jewish household in Lviv when atheism was the state religion.

"You could be fired from your job if you were openly observant," said Sheykhet, who became visibly Orthodox in mind and body after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Sheykhet's parents escaped to safety during the Holocaust, but 20 of their relatives were killed.

He was driven to action after stumbling upon the remnants of forgotten Jewish cemeteries in the Ukrainian countryside that had been violated by the Nazis and the Communists.

Meylakh Sheykhet
[Sheldon Kirshner photo]

Working with teams of surveyors, scientists and historians, Sheykhet preserves cemeteries by erecting protective fences around them.

Whenever possible, he arranges for a monument to be erected on a site.

His work has taken him to such fabled towns as Tarnapol, Brody, Berdichev and Belz, where long-established Jewish communities once existed.

He has also travelled to lesser-known places such as Sosnivka, Mikulince, Tartakow Miasto, Lutsk, Olesko, Olyka, Turka, Stratin, Yampol and Sambor.

Last year, in Lviv, he found 200 mass graves.

Outside Ukraine, he has been involved in projects in Belarus.

Sheykhet works with a group of 20 experts and an annual budget of about $60,000, which he described as "a drop in the ocean."

In an ideal world, he observed, he would have access to much greater funds to hire many more experts to work in every one of Ukraine's 25 regions.

He doesn't receive funding from the Ukrainian government. "They haven't given us a penny," he said.

The central government, however, has passed decrees designating Jewish cemeteries and Nazi killing sites as protected areas.

The problem is that regional authorities don't enforce these decrees.

"The official bureaucracy opposes us, acting against government edicts," he noted, suggesting that land grabs take place when individuals seize cemeteries or decrepit synagogues falling apart.

Ukrainian organizations in Canada and the United States have responded sympathetically to Sheykhet.

"We have a good dialogue with them," he said. "They're supportive. But everything comes down to money."

In Canada, Sheykhet has forged relations with Mark Freiman, the last president of the now-defunct Canadian Jewish Congress, and Janet Kerekes, a Toronto researcher who has visited Ukraine.

Speaking in a tone of regret and disappointment, he claimed that Jewish organizations in Canada have lost touch with their eastern European roots.

As he put it, "It's a shame to say they don't feel connected."

Jewish cemetery in Staryi Sambir in 2008 ***[Wikipedia photo]***

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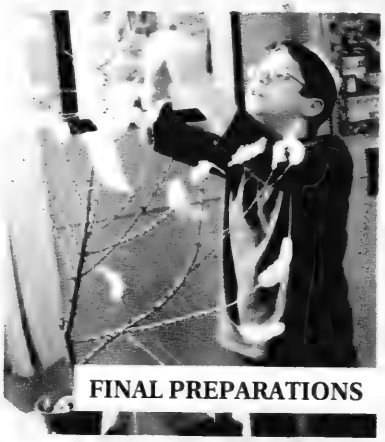
UJA Federation of Greater Toronto

This INTERTALK program funded with support from UJA Federation of Greater Toronto

TREE CRAFTS

Kyla Pugen, left, and Chloe Beron from Temple Sinai Nursery School create trees with pink and white blossoms, just like the almond trees in Israel, as part of their study of Tu b'Shvat.



FINAL PREPARATIONS

Griffin Baird, 13, from Beth Isaiah Talmud Torah in Guelph, Ont., puts the finishing touches to an ornamental almond tree done in his class. This and other student-made trees decorated the table at a Shabbat dinner/Tu b'Shvat seder on Feb. 10.

FRUIT PUPPETEERS

Grade 2 students at Netivot HaTorah Day School participated in a program in which they acted out a play and made their own fruit puppets in celebration of Tu b'Shvat. Pictured, from left, are Shoshana, Raina, Tehilla, Hannah, Jack and Gavriel.

Mazel Tov

מזל טוב

Mazel tov Al & Helen Waisglass on your 65th anniversary. Wishing you continued good health and happiness. All our love, your children and grandchildren.

Fern & Jeff Clausner and Grace & Moti Renkosinski are thrilled to announce the engagement of Jeremy & Natalie. Mazel tov from the entire family!

Michael & Gail Campbell and Michael & Susan Stern along with their respective families are thrilled to announce the engagement of Erin & David.

Irwin & Audrey Lampert of Moncton, N.B., are pleased to announce the marriage of their daughter Mindy to Derek Applebaum, son of Barry & Terry Applebaum.

Mazel tov on your bat mitzvah Jordyn Bailey, daughter of Michael & Fara Forman. You did a great job and made us so proud.

Mazel tov Shimi on your bar mitzvah. Love and kisses from your proud family!

Email your digital photos to cblackman@thecjn.ca or go online to www.CJNews.com and click the "Family Moments"

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Deadline reminder: Feb. 17 is the deadline for the issue of March 1. Feb. 27 is the deadline for the issue of March 8. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; e-mail whatsnewcjn@gmail.com, or fax 416-391-0829.

Friday, Feb. 17

TOT SHABBAT
Temple Kol Ami hosts a Shabbat service for young children at 6 p.m. For more information, visit www.templekolami.ca.

KABALAT SHABBAT LIVE
Beth Radom Congregation hosts a musical celebration of Shabbat. Refreshments, 6 p.m.; services and children's activity, 6:30 p.m. RSVP info@bethradom.com or 416-636-3451.

Sunday, Feb. 19

THE LOVE OF GOD AND VIRGINS
Pamela Peled discusses her new novel, *For the Love of God and Virgins*, 7:30 p.m., Kehillat Shaarei Torah, 2640 Bayview Ave.

SHAAR SHALOM DANCE
Shaar Shalom Brotherhood hosts a dance to the music of DJ **Dave Jones**, 7:30 p.m. $18 per couple. Call **David**, 416-224-9494.

Monday, Feb. 20

LIBRARIES OPEN
Bathurst Clark Resource Library, Maple Library and Pierre Berton Resource Library will be open 1-5 p.m. with special activities for Family Day.

Tuesday, Feb. 21

JEWS FOR JUDAISM
Jews For Judaism presents a counter-missionary seminar, 8 p.m., Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St. 416-789-0020 or toronto@jewsforjudaism.ca.

Wednesday, Feb. 22

SOUTH AFRICA AND ISRAEL
Na'amat Canada presents **Pamela Peled** speaking about her new novel, *For the Love of God and Virgins*, about growing up in South Africa and life in Israel, 7:30 p.m. Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell Ave. $18/ $10 for students and seniors. 416-636-5425 or www.naamatevents.com.

Other News

HEBREW READING II
Hebrew reading Level II for adults starts Feb. 26, 9:15 a.m., Beth Emeth Synagogue. The 6-week course is for people who have completed Level 1 or have a basic knowledge of Hebrew. 416-633-3838

JEWISH MEDITATION
Shaarei Tefillah Congregation presents Jewish meditation classes with **Chashi Skobac**, Mondays starting Feb. 27, 7 p.m. Register at 416-787-1631 or office@shaareitefillah.com.

PARENTING CLASS
Goldie Plotkin teaches a parenting class Saturdays, starting Feb. 25, 10:45 a.m., Chabad of Markham, 83 Green Lane, Thornhill. RSVP 905-886-0420, ext. 227.

BABYSITTING CLASS
Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation youth department is offering a babysitting course for anyone 11 and over, Feb. 26. Call **Rich Winkler**, 905-886-3810, ext. 135.

Continued on page 25

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Continued from page 24

INTERCULTURAL FAMILIES

Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism presents **Rabbi Eva Goldfinger** discussing "Engaging Tots to Tweens in Jewish Culture," Feb. 26, 10 a.m., St. Andrew's Junior High School, 131 Fenn Ave. Discussion and Purim kids' program for intercultural couples and their children. RSVP 416-385-3910 or roby@oraynu.org.

NEW REFORM SHUL

An information meeting for The City Shul, a new downtown Reform congregation led by **Rabbi Elyse Goldstein**, will be held March 1, 7:30 p.m., at the Wolfond Centre, 36 Harbord St. www.cityshul.com or 647-799-3557.

TEEN DEPRESSION

Psychologist **Sylvia Kemenoff** discusses "Signs and Symptoms of Adolescent Anxiety and Depression: When To Worry? What To Do?" March 1, Adath Israel Congregation, 7 p.m. Tickets $20 per person/$36 for 2. 416-368-4896, ext. 2804, or CBailie@youthdale.ca.

TEATRON THEATRE

Teatron Toronto Jewish Theatre presents *Can I Really Date A Guy Who Wears A Yarmulke*. Feb. 29-March 11, Toronto Centre for the Arts. 416-781-5527 or www.teatrontheatre.com.

SHABBAT ACROSS CANADA

Am Shalom Synagogue, 767 Huronia Rd., Barrie, holds services and dinner as part of Shabbat Across Canada, March 2. Call 705-792-3949.

CONNECTED PARENTING

Lev Zahav Chapter of CHW presents **Jennifer Kolari** discusses "Connected Parenting," March 6, Holy Blossom Temple, 7:30 p.m. For tickets, 416-630-8373 or www.chw.ca/toronto.

VENDORS WANTED

Uptown Chabad Market seeks vendors for March 18 at 15 Hove St. Call **Sandy**, 416-631-8261, or sgordon.uptownchabad@gmail.com.

KINDERCAMP & TORAH TOTS

Register for Torah Tots, September 2012, at Chabad of Markham. Discount for kindercamp registration until March 1. **Goldie**, 905-886-0420, ext. 227. www.kindercamp.ca.

HARBORD REUNION

If you ever attended or taught at Harbord Collegiate Institute, you're invited to its 120th birthday party, April 26-27. To register, www.HarbordClub.com.

HOUSING REGISTRY

Are you looking to rent your basement apartment or an extra room in your house? List it free with the accommodation registry at UJA's Jewish Information Service of Greater Toronto. The registry can also help people looking for a place to live. 416-635-5600 or jinfo@ujafed.org.

THE WALK-IN CLOSET

The Walk-In Closet, 114 Neptune Dr. (white door), a Jewish charity, offers designer clothes, shoes and outerwear for women and children. This month, fill a bag for $5. Open Sunday 2-4 p.m.; Monday 7-9 p.m. Call 416-780-1333.

BRIDGE CLUB

The bridge club at Forest Hill library is now open twice a week. Call **Lea**, 416-487-7630.

JF&CS GROUPS

Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or www.jfandcs.com. All programs require pre-registration. All programs are held at the Lipa Green Centre, unless otherwise noted.

You're About to Separate, What to Tell The Kids: A workshop for parents, Feb. 16, 9:30 a.m., Promenade Mall, Suite 313.

High-Conflict Divorce: A workshop for parents, Feb. 22, 6:30 p.m.

BEREAVED PARENTS

Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer** at JF & CS, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or bfeffer@jfandcs.com.

FOR SENIORS

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park. (60+). **Valerie**, 416-395-7881. Casino Rama, March 14. Tuesdays, gentle exercise, 10 a.m., first class free; Wednesdays, duplicate bridge, 12:30 p.m.; Thursdays, line dancing, 10 a.m.; social bridge, 12:30 p.m. Non-members welcome.

National Council of Jewish Women, Aviva branch, is looking for women over 70 for their group. Call 416-633-5100.

LZA Seniors Cultural Club meets Tuesdays, 10 a.m., Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell. 416-630-9444.

New Horizons is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club that offers kosher food, casino trips. 416-256-1892.

Adath Israel Congregation. Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub. Refreshments $2. Call **Pearl**, 416-635-6317, or **Sheila**, 416-665-3333.

Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue welcomes new players for mah-jong and Rummikub Monday and Wednesday afternoons. 416-633-3838.

Bernard Betel Centre 416-225-2112. Feb. 21, **Mitch Mandel** discusses "The Power of Humour and Joy," 10 a.m. Feb. 23, **Jenny Lyttle** discusses "Meal Planning in the Winter Months," 1:30 p.m.

Active Seniors, Miles Nadal JCC, 416-924-6211, ext.155. Feb. 16, psychologist **N. Khatree** talks about factors affecting mood as we age and strategies to change patterns of thinking, 1:30 p.m. Feb. 23, "Jewish Genealogy and the Holocaust: How to Search for Survivors and Trace the Fate of Victims Using the Internet," 1:30 p.m.

Active 55 Plus Speakers Series, Feb. 23, Two experts on "Stress and Its Effects," 6:30 p.m. Ext. 526.

PROSSERMAN JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com.

Bridge classes for beginners Mondays, 1 p.m.; bridge classes for advanced beginners, 10 a.m.

Grandparents and grandchildren brunch, Feb. 19, 10 a.m. **Monique Shapiro**, ext. 4012.

Join **Anne Harari** at the Shabbat party program, Fridays 10 a.m.

Spring, summer theatre trips are on sale now. Call ext. 4235.

Make chocolates for Purim, March 6, 2:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Call **Staci**, ext. 4472.

David Cravit, of Zoomer Media, discusses "How Boomers Have Influenced the Economy and What Lies ahead," Feb. 21, 7:30 p.m. Call ext. 4235.

Spaces available for Tic Tac Two program for September 2012. Call **Kailah Rubin**, ext. 4351.

Register now for Centre Camp, locations in Toronto and Vaughan, centrecamp.ca

Family Day activities free at the JCC, Feb. 20, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

MILES NADAL JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org.

Toronto Jewish Film Society screens *A Kid for Two Farthings*. Feb. 19 at 4 and 7:30 p.m. Free for children with adult admission. Ext. 606

Hebrew book swap, Feb. 21. Bring books in by 12 p.m., swap 6-9 p.m. Ext. 326.

Tickets on sale for pianist **Yitzhak Yedid**, March 1; **Lenka Lichtenberg** and **Roula Said**, March 5; Night Without a Moon:Jewish Women's Cabaret, March 25. Call ext. 0.

Adult daytime choir meets Tuesdays, 1 p.m. gillians@mnjcc.org.

Klezmer ensemble meets Tuesdays 7:30 p.m. music@mnjcc.org or ext.0.

The Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursday at 7:15 a.m. and Sunday at 8 a.m. Call **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200.

BOWLING FOR CHILDREN: Yaldeinu: The Marcos Soberano Society for Jewish Education and Camping's third annual Bowl for Our Children raised more than $50,000 for Jewish education and camping opportunities for children in Israel and developing countries. Standing from left is the winning team: Moshe Hadida, Moshe Berdugo, Jack Benarroch (holding Noah Benarroch), Isaac Oziel, Aaron Hadida, Michael Ettedgui, founding director of Yaldeinu, and Romy Pilarski, event chair. In front, from left, are Michelle Hadida, Vanessa Benarroch and Hannah Benarroch.

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 28

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FRIDAY REWARDS

'A forceful advocate on behalf of the Jewish people'

Continued from page 1

Among the many distinctions and community honours that were bestowed upon him, he was made a companion of the Order of Canada, received the Order of Ontario and 19 honorary degrees from universities around the world, including the University of Toronto and York University.

Rabbi Plaut, a *CJN* columnist for 20 years until 2003, was the author of 26 books, including *The Torah: A Modern Commentary*, the standard text used today for prayer and study by the Reform movement.

His son said that Alzheimer's disease turned his father from a learned scholar and loving father to a man who was totally dependent.

"Asked why I would make the trip [so often] to visit him when he did not know us, [I replied] that the answer was simple. We knew him. We celebrate his life and legacy.

"He was gifted with the mind and talent to pursue scholarly work, and he was a person who had tremendous love and respect for humankind."

Everything had its place, though, he said. "[To my father], family came first. He was a wonderful problem solver, and he gave us his full attention, even if circumstances distracted him. When we left a discussion, we felt supported and knowledgeable that he was a caring person."

Members of the community praised Rabbi Plaut and acknowledged the significant contributions he made.

Rabbi John Moscowitz, Holy Blossom's senior rabbi, said that Rabbi Plaut preached responsibility to oneself and to others. "He lived what he spoke, his word was his deed. He had faith, but understood those who didn't. He reached across many divides."

Donald Carr, the president of *The CJN*, who sat on several community committees over the years with Rabbi Plaut, called him a tower of strength. "He was intellectual, and could also be down among the people. When he got sick, it was a tremendous loss to the community, a loss that has not been replaced."

Rabbi Gunther Plaut attending a rally in Toronto *[File photo]*

David Koschiszky, chair of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, said in a release, "Rabbi Plaut served as a forceful advocate on behalf of the Jewish people for decades. He held a particular, pre-eminent place in Canada's Jewish community, for which his leadership will be missed."

Bernie Farber, former chief executive officer of Canadian Jewish Congress, called him "a defender of human and civil rights at a time when many didn't even know its meaning. We stand on the shoulders of such men."

Federal Liberal Leader Bob Rae said, "Gunther Plaut was a friend to many, and a teacher and leader of great distinction. As the senior rabbi at [Holy Blossom] for many years, he was a source of inspiration and guidance to the Jewish community and the wider Canadian community. A brilliant scholar, he was an active adviser to provincial and federal governments on human rights, interfaith understanding, and social justice and international affairs."

Rabbi Eric Yoffie, president of the Union for Reform Judaism, said in a tribute to Rabbi Plaut posted on the URJ website that as a spokesman for Jewish values and tradition, Rabbi Plaut "was usually ahead of the pack. He said things that others did not want to hear, or were not ready to hear. He articulated unpopular beliefs, and he fought for those beliefs. But Gunther knew no other way. He spoke the truth as he [saw] it, with no apologies and no excuses, but always in a voice uplifted by faith and by hope for the ultimate redemption of the world."

Rabbi Plaut was predeceased by his wife of almost 65 years, Elizabeth. He is survived by his son Jonathan, daughter-in-law Carol, daughter Judith Plaut, grandchildren Daniel and Amy Plaut, Deborah and David Elias and two great-grandsons.

OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Lawrence Mintz	Jan 27/12	138 Pears Avenue
Sophie Cooper	Jan 28/12	100 Canyon Avenue
Ruth Shuster	Jan 28/12	6200 Bathurst Street
Clara Dichter	Jan 28/12	3560 Bathurst Street
Syd Greenspoon	Jan 29/12	44 Stubbs Drive
Robert Baxter	Jan 31/12	866 Sheppard Avenue, W.
Shirley Feldman	Jan 30/12	631 Briar Hill Avenue
Faye G. Maitman	Feb 1/12	37 Blue Forest Drive
Claude Habert	Jan 31/12	5 Kenneth Avenue
Harvey Cooper	Jan 31/12	3560 Bathurst Street
Thelma Willer (Pritzker)	Feb 1/12	23 Elm Ridge Drive
Frances Basen	Jan 31/12	355 St. Clair Ave. W.
Madzia (Mattel) Erlichma	Jan 30/12	3560 Bathurst Street
Ann Wortzman	Feb 2/12	784 Centre Street
Jule Nusbaum	Feb 2/12	143 Timberliine Trail
Charlotte Goldlist	Feb 3/12	139 Strathearn Road
Harvey Kauffman	Feb 4/12	87 Willett Cres.
Ruth Young	Feb 4/12	369 St. Clair Ave. W.
Betty Skolnik	Feb 3/12	500 Avenue Rd.

HEBREW BASIC BURIAL

Hyman Feldman	Jan 28/12	3560 Bathurst Street
Jay Hershberg	Jan 28/12	15 London Green Court

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Lewin, Harry Zvi (Herman)	Jan. 27/12	10 Torresdale Ave
Shemtov, Rafi	Jan. 28/12	18 Flowervale Rd
Zimmering, Magda (Magdolna)	Jan. 29/12	
Reytblat, Fira	Jan. 30/12	541 Finch Ave. W
Lockshin, Sylvia	Jan. 29/12	60 Lyndhurst Ave
Katz, Bernard	Jan. 30/12	2075 Bayview Av
Steen, Michael Harold	Jan. 31/12	784 Centre St
Speisman, Tammy Sharon	Jan. 31/12	333 Clark Ave. W
Levit, Yakov	Feb. 3/12	42 Eminence Rd
Rudgoz, Mihail	Feb. 2/12	Private
Weidberg, Fanny	Feb. 1/12	90 Prue Ave
Cohen, Stephen Stanley	Feb. 3/12	50 Disera Dr
Malinsky, Sandy	Feb. 4/12	20 Shallmar Blvd
Meyer, Murray	Feb. 2/12	12 Baytree Cres S
Schneiderman, Reva	Feb. 5/12	205 Cummer Ave
Belzycki, Joseph	Feb. 5/12	170 Red Maple Dr
Rotgolz, Mihael	Feb. 6/12	Private
Barsky, Edith	Feb. 5/12	7300 Yonge St
Mann, Bertha	Feb. 5/12	170 Red Maple Rd
Kline, Dr. Hubert Jack	Feb. 6	19 Lower Village Gate

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Heather, Shael and Chay

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Clement warns of Iran's growing threat

Janice Arnold
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Iran "poses the most significant threat to global peace and security today," Federal Treasury Board president Tony Clement said in a closed-door meeting with Jewish community and other pro-Israel representatives in Montreal.

Tony Clement

"We continue… to work with the growing list of like-minded countries in a bid to limit Iran's ability to undermine [global security]," he told the Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee (CJPAC), according to a text released after the Feb. 3 meeting.

"And we are deeply disturbed by the information contained in the most recent International Atomic Energy Agency report on the state of Iran's nuclear program."

Clement said he is proud that Canada is "a leader in the global fight against antisemitism," noting that his maternal grandmother from Syria was Jewish.

Clement was born in Manchester, England (his father was a Greek Cypriot) and the family immigrated to Canada when he was four years old. Clement, who represents the Ontario riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka, is Christian.

"Canada has lived up to the promise that encouraged my parents to decide to seek their lives here… That promise is embodied in the values that I learned at an early age – hard work, tenacity and a constant optimism that a great land like Canada always instills."

Clement boasted that Canada has weathered the global economic and financial crisis better that most other countries, noting that in October, *Forbes* magazine ranked Canada "the world's best place to do business."

"Indeed, more Canadians are now working than before the downturn. Almost 600,000 more Canadians are working today than when the recession ended, resulting in the strongest rate of employment growth during the recovery by far among G7 countries," he said.

Both Canada and Israel have made "tough choices and done the hard work" necessary to create strong, stable economies, he said.

Clement said the aim of the upcoming federal budget will be to reduce the deficit by decreasing government spending and "keeping taxes low" in an effort to achieve a balanced budget.

On another issue, Clement said the government will increasingly use Internet-based technology to communicate with Canadians and to make its operations more efficient, including through online "town hall" meetings.

He hosted the first government of Canada Twitter chat, where he invited live questions on making government more open.

The Open Government initiative was launched by the government last spring to increase the availability of government data to the private sector and non-governmental organizations and to encourage Canadians to express their opinions on government policies and priorities.

Ordinary Canadians are also supposed to have greater access to government information, as it is released.

"This initiative allows the government to be more connected to, and collaborate more with, Canadians than ever before in our history," he said.

In March, the government plans to publish its "open government action plan," which will be presented at the International Open Government Partnership conference in Brazil in April.

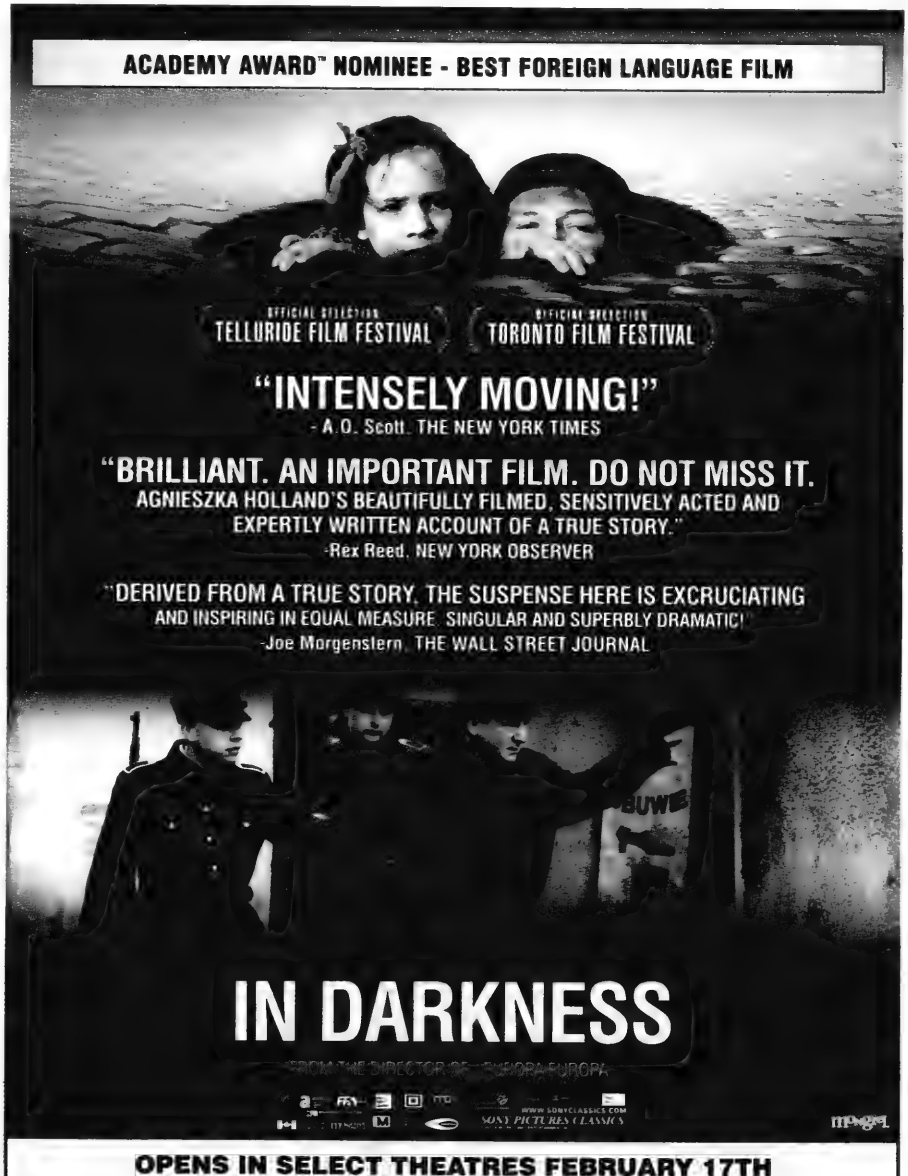
"In this important area for economic development and government transparency, Canada is on the same path as Israel," Clement said. "Israel, too, is promoting the policy of open government, and has joined the International Open Government Partnership."

CJPAC describes itself as a pro-Israel independent, grassroots organization that encourages young people especially to get involved in the political process through the party of their choice.

Pro-Palestinian film in the works

Compiled by CJN Staff

MONTREAL — Quebec director Denis Villeneuve, whose movie *Incendies* was nominated for a 2011 Academy Award for best foreign language film, will adapt for film American Joe Sacco's sympathetic journalistic comic book about the deaths of Palestinian civilians during the 1956 Suez Crisis.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British Muslim Zionist pulls no punches

Equates Saudi Islam to Nazism

Myron Love
Prairies correspondent

WINNIPEG — Kasim Hafeez has seen the truth and, in an address to a largely Jewish audience at the Asper Jewish Community Campus on Feb. 6, he pulled no punches.

Wahhabism, the Saudi Arabian version of Islam, is little different than Nazism, Hafeez said.

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas should be facing war crimes charges at the International Criminal Court at The Hague, he said.

Anti-Zionism is code for antisemitism, he said.

The Islamic concern for Jerusalem is purely political, he said. Until the creation of Israel, Jerusalem was unimportant to most Muslims.

And often, he noted, those who claim to be pro-Palestinian are just anti-Israel.

Hafeez, 29, a British-born Muslim of Pakistani origin, knows of what he speaks.

Until just a few years ago, he was part of that Jew-hating Muslim world. He was even ready to go to Pakistan to train as a terrorist.

His worldview began to change after stumbling across a copy of Alan Dershowitz's book, *A Case for Israel*. "I figured it was just Zionist propaganda," he said of the book. "I thought I would read it and be able to refute it all."

Instead, Hafeez found that Dershowitz's arguments challenged all of the myths about Israel and the Jews that he grew up with. And, he said, he couldn't find any Muslim sources who could refute Dershowitz's points.

He decided pursue this new line of research and read books by Sir Martin Gilbert and other pro-Israel authors. Then he decided he had to go to Israel to see this "apartheid, fascist" and "racist" country for himself.

Not surprisingly – considering where he was coming from ideologically – he was immediately detained after landing at Ben-Gurion Airport. "Although I was held back for eight hours, I was treated with respect," he recalled. "The guard kept apologizing and offering me coffee and pastries. I understood that he was just doing his job."

After leaving the airport, he found that people were friendly and helpful. He contrasted his reception in Israel with the religious pilgrimage that he and some members of his family had made to Mecca some years earlier.

"I had never faced such racism before," he said of his Saudi experience. "Because of our skin colour, we were purposely ignored. At checkpoints, our group was held up in the heat longer than others. My aunt was pushed away from an ATM machine by a Saudi woman who told her that Pakistanis can wait. And, if we had had Pakistani passports, our treatment would have been worse."

Kasim Hafeez
[Myron Love photo]

In Israel, Hafeez's epiphany came when he stood before the Western Wall. "I watched Christians, Muslims and Jews peacefully and freely going to their places of worship and I burst into tears. I finally realized what Israel is all about – the only Jewish state in the world. It is about the survival of the Jewish People, their religion, culture and heritage.

"I fell in love with the place."

It's far from easy being a Zionist Muslim in England. Hafeez said he's been marginalized by his community, and most of his family won't talk to him any more (his sister, an aunt and his mother being the exceptions – although, he added, his mother is embarrassed by him).

Nonetheless, he feels compelled to speak the truth and cut through the lies. That truth is that of the two narratives concerning Israel/Palestine, one is the truth and the other is a pack of lies, he said.

"It was the Arabs, not the Jews who rejected partition in 1948," he said. "It was the Arabs who attacked the new Jewish state. While I have sympathy for the Palestinian people, you can't take their expressions of peace seriously when they are constantly showing maps of the land of Israel as greater Palestine."

He urged his audience to get the facts about Israel out, especially on university campuses, to be proactive rather than reactive. "Hold regular events that promote Israel in the best possible way," he said. "And show people that Israel is much more than just the conflict. Show all the ways that Israel is helping humanity. Be proud of Israel, not apologetic."

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JGH successfully removes pancreatic tumour robotically

Compiled by CJN Staff

MONTREAL — The Jewish General Hospital (JGH) has become the first hospital in Canada to perform robot-assisted surgery in a delicate operation to remove a pancreatic tumour.

The Whipple procedure, as it is known, was conducted by having the robot gain access to the tumour through a series of small punctures. This eliminated the need for large incisions in the abdominal wall.

"The advantage of the surgical robot is that it permits greater precision in performing the surgery, as well as improved functional and cosmetic results," said staff surgeon Dr. Tsafrir Vanounou.

Sarah Canzer's tumour was discovered following a routine ultrasound of her kidneys. She is in her 20s and was shocked by the diagnosis, but said she was glad when Vanounou proposed the less-invasive robotic procedure.

The da Vinci robot provided him with a three-dimensional perspective of the operating field through a special digital viewer.

The patient also has less pain afterward, and the recovery time is dramatically reduced, shortening the hospital stay.

Vanounou said the risk of complications is lower and external scars are minimized.

"Every effort is made at the JGH, not only to keep abreast of the most up-to-date surgical techniques, but to be at the forefront among hospitals in Quebec and Canada in developing new procedures to make essential surgery more available to a wider array of patients," said executive director Dr. Hartley Stern.

"In the beginning, I was completely unaware that this type of surgery was possible robotically," Canzer said. "But I knew I was in good hands at the JGH, and Dr. Vanounou and his team took care of me at every step of the process, from initial diagnosis, through treatment, and finally through my recovery."

Since Canzer's surgery, two other successful robot-assisted Whipple procedures have been successfully completed by Vanounou.

Creating an exceptional life

When I heard that Louise Hay and Cheryl Richardson were partnering to write a book, I was very excited. A longtime fan of Hay's book *Heal Your Body, Heal Your Life*, I knew that Hay was not only one of the founders of the self-help movement but also one of the originators of looking at the mind, body and spirit connection.

Through her healing techniques and positive philosophy, Hay has helped millions to create more of what they want in their lives. She was able to put some of these philosophies into practice when she was diagnosed with cancer, and instead of drugs, she turned to affirmations, visualizations and nutritional cleaning, and had a complete recovery from her illness.

Life Coach Corner

Judy Siblin-Librach

When I heard that Hay was co-authoring a book with Richardson, also a bestselling author, I was intrigued. Richardson is the author of *Take Time For Your Life* and was a regular guest on *The Oprah Show*.

Hay and Richardson's book, *You Can Create an Exceptional Life* (what a fabulous title!), is a series of candid conversations between these two women. The book empowers you and gives you some tools to create the exceptional life you've always dreamed of.

There is a beautiful quote that summarizes how important it is to begin by thinking good and positive thoughts: "The formula is simple: think thoughts that make you feel good, make choices that make you feel good and take actions that make you feel good. Then surrender the outcome, trusting that Life will bring you what you need to grow and be happy."

Hay is a huge believer in affirmations and in journaling, so Richardson began keeping a journal every morning and finished her journal entry with a list of spontaneous affirmations.

At the back of *You Can Create an Exceptional Life*, there is a wonderful list of affirmations for every occasion. They really do work. Here are a few samples.

- "All is well. I have time for everything I need to do today."
- "My life is so blessed."
- "I am showered with good thoughts all day long." (Great one to say in the shower!)
- Throughout the day: "I love my life." "I love this day." "Life loves me." "I love it when the sun shines." "Changing my thoughts is easy and comfortable."
- "I work in creative collaboration with smart, inspiring people on projects that contribute to the healing of the world."
- "This job is deeply fulfilling, and it is a joy for me to go to work each day."

You can even try to write your own personal affirmation. This can be very powerful.

If you are having a difficult time with someone in your life or at work, you can use your mind to change the situation. Says Hay, "Try: 'I have a wonderful relationship with everyone at work, including.....' Every time that person comes into your mind, repeat the affirmation." She continues, "Whenever they come up in your mind, especially the ones you have trouble with, focus on what's right with them instead of what's wrong. You will be amazed by how the relationship improves."

How you start your day is how you live your day. So begin each day with a sunny, positive attitude, full of hope and love, and chances are your day will unfold in very much the same way.

Judy Siblin-Librach is an Adler-trained coach. You can reach her at her website www.findingyourbliss.com or on her TV show, Finding Your Bliss, *Wednesday nights at 7 p.m. on Rogers TV, channels 10 in Toronto and 63 in Scarborough.*

The Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre Nursery School took part in a "Hop, Skip and Jump" Challenge. The event raised $3,700 to be combined with the proceeds from the centre's Cycle for the Centre on Feb. 26. Funds from both initiatives will go to assist under-served children and seniors in the community. Pictured, front from left, are Dylan Perlis, Charlie Carriere, Billie Damelin, Brandon Adler, Jonathan Wosnick, Lily Scott, Judah Kriss, Soldano Rapp-Perrone, Laura Kirsch and Olivia Winters, and, rear from left, marketing planner Tawnya Zwicker and Cathy Indig, the centre's director of early childhood education.

שישאר בינינו

גידי קורן וחברים

ישראל בפברואר 2012

חורף גשום מהרגיל, הכינרת עלתה מעל לקו האדום שלה. בגלל מחיר החשמל רוב האנשים אינם מחממים את בתיהם באופן סדיר, ועליהם לשבת בין ארבע קירות כשהם לבושים בסווטרים. בין כל הסקנדלים של הדרת נשים ופרשות כמעט יומיות של סקנדלים ושחיתויות, ישראל נראית כמו נורווגיה לעומת הטבח בסוריה והפרעות במצריים והאיום האטומי מאיראן. עוד אני בנמל התעופה בדרכי לטורונטו, מכריזים העיתונים שקבוצת ניו אנרג'י של יצחק תשובה וקבוצת דלק הכריזו בבורסה על גילוי שדה גז ענק שמגמד את קודמיו. כמה זמן תשרור הרגיעה והיציבות הזו- לאלוהים פתרונים. בפטפטת ישראלית טיפוסית- מחווים כל המאצו' הפוליטיים את דעתם איך צריכה ישראל לתקוף את איראן. וכל מילה של סגן ראש הממשלה יעלון, שאיש לא שאל את דעתו, מרעידה את סיפי מדינות העולם המערבי. אבל שישאר בינינו.

יהורם גאון- איש ללא גבולות

הָזמינו אותנו להצגת הבכורה של "ביקור הגברת הזקנה" בתיאטרון הבימה במשכנו המחודש. זוהי הדרמה הקלאסית על מיליארדרית שחוזרת לעיר נעוריה המרושלת ופושטת הרגל, והתושבים מקווים שהיא וכספה יביאו להיפוך הגלגל ולשגשוג , כפי שהיו בעבר. הגברת הזקנה (בביצוע גילה אלמגור) מוכנה לתרום מיליארד דולאר לעיר מולדתה בתנאי שהם יוציאו להורג את אהוב נעוריה (בביצוע יהורם גאון) שזנח אותה בת שש עשרה כשהיא בהריון, נאלצת לרדת לזנות. לבית המשפט הוא הביא אז שני חברים שהעידו עדות שקר שהעלמה שכבה איתם.

יהורם גאון, חתן פרס ישראל, עשה כמעט הכל בקאריירה הארוכה שלו, כולל היותו זמר לאומי, כוכב מחזות זמר וסרטים, שדרן רדיו וחבר מועצת עיריית ירושלים. אבל ידעי דבר מדווחים לי שזו הפעם הראשונה שגאון מככב בדרמה קלאסית, והוא עושה זאת, מה להגיד לכם, בצורה מדהימה.

דמותו הדרמאטית והטראגית מכסה על כל האחרות, כולל גילה אלמגור, הגברת הזקנה, שעושה תפקיד די בינוני ובלתי משכנע.

מה לומר, הקהל יצא מגידרו ואנחנו הצטרפנו לזכרון קולקטיבי של האיש שאין גבול לכשרונו. אם יוצא לכם לבקר בארץ- שימו את יהורם גאון ו "ביקור הגברת הזקנה" ברשימת החובה שלכם.

הרפואה הישראלית וכסאות המושב לתינוקות

הישראלים מתלוננים באופן קבוע על רמת הרפואה שלהם. לעניות דעתי ואחרי עשרות שנות השוואה מקצועית, הרפואה הציבורית בישראל עולה על רוב ארצות העולם, כלל קנדה, ובגדול. הינה סיפור קטן בנושא זה:

במשפחתנו נולדו תאומים לאחד מדחני. נפגשנו עם הסבא והסבתא המאושרים, ובין כל הפרטים הרבים ששמענו, הם סיפרו לנו שעליהם להתייצב במחלקת היונקים ביום השחרור של התינוקות ולהציג לאחיות את כסאות המושב המיועדים לאוטו. בלי בדיקה זו- לא ישוחררו התינוקות. מה אגיד לכם-לבי גאה בגאווה. אבל שישאר בינינו.

משפט שרק טכנאי שירות ישראלי יכול להגיד

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Journal seeks to make Jewish thought accessible

Sheri Shefa
Staff Reporter

Karin Nisenbaum, executive editor of the University of Toronto Journal of Jewish Thought, said she hopes the online publication will make complex scholarly topics more accessible to people who are interested in exploring some of life's most difficult questions.

"We don't want the journal to be one that only speaks to an academic audience. The idea is to show... how Jewish works and ideas can answer questions that arise in the course of reflecting on human life," said Nisenbaum, a philosophy PhD candidate at U of T who hails from Mexico.

"When we introduce the articles, we try in some way to connect it to questions that are relevant to our readers."

The journal, which was founded in 2009, is run entirely by graduate students.

Nisenbaum said that she proposed the idea of an online journal in 2008, when religion professor Hindy Najman, the former director of the Centre for Jewish Studies, asked students for "ideas about how to reinvigorate the activities of the centre... She was very supportive of the idea."

The journal is funded by the Tikvah Fund, an organization that offers grants to promote Jewish scholarship, and it's supported by the Centre of Jewish Studies.

The editorial board is made up of Jewish studies faculty such as Najman, philosophy professors Paul Franks and Robert Gibbs, and religion professor David Novak.

"Each year, the journal is structured around specific themes," Nisenbaum said.

"The first issue was about religion and reason, the second issue was on the concept and practice of repentance, and the third issue that we're working on now is on the notions of divine love in Jewish thought."

Karin Nisenbaum

The third issue, which Nisenbaum is currently working on with associate editors Jessica Radin and Alex Green, is set to come out in May.

Each issue, comprised of articles, book reviews, poems and a feature interview, covers a broad range of disciplinary fields, including philosophy, theology, history and literature.

Submissions come from scholars from all over North America, Europe and Israel.

Nisenbaum, who spoke to *The CJN* from Yale University, where she's working with her PhD supervisor Franks, said she's thrilled about the interview subject for the upcoming issue.

"This year, we're very excited because we're interviewing professor Warren Harvey, who is professor emeritus of Jewish thought at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem."

She added that late last month, Harvey, a leading expert on the subject, delivered the first annual Toronto Journal of Jewish Thought lecture, titled "Notions of divine and human love in Jewish thought."

"About 50 people showed up for the lecture, which is unheard of at U of T," she said.

Nisenbaum said she's also encouraged by the attention the journal's Twitter account is getting, as nearly 100 people are following its tweets.

"Every year I think more attention is being drawn to the journal."

The journal is currently only available online, but she said the goal is to produce a print edition for future issues.

To access past issues, visit www.cjs.utoronto.ca/tjjt/.

University library globes removed

Ron Stang
Special to The CJN

WINDSOR — The University of Windsor has removed three globes from its Leddy Library after complaints that the State of Israel had been defaced on them.

Peter Zimmerman, the library's head of information services, said the university is "investigating" whether the globes can be repaired. The university's human rights office was also alerted.

Zimmerman called the defacement, which was reported in January, "disturbing" with its "obvious undertones."

Zimmerman said the word Israel had been scraped off the globes, but not the actual geographical state, as "the word [Israel] typically appears in the Mediterranean next to two of the actual countries."

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Israeli diplomat's wife wounded in explosion

Barak Ravid and Amos Harel
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — The wife of an Israeli diplomat was wounded on Monday when a car bomb exploded outside of Israel's embassy in the Indian capital of New Delhi.

The woman, Tali Yehoshua-Koren, is the wife of the defence ministry's representative to India.

The incident came one day after the fourth anniversary marking the assasination of Hezbollah's deputy leader Imad Mughniyah, which the Islamist organization blames on Israel.

Also on Monday, a Georgian worker employed by the Israeli Embassy in Tbilisi alerted police after noticing a strange object attached to a car assigned to the Israeli envoy to the country.

Israeli embassies have been put on high alert around the time of the anniversary of Mughniyah's assassination in 2008, fearing Hezbollah retribution over the Damascus attack against the group's military leader, which they attribute to Israel.

According to a report by Real TV, Israeli Ambassador Yitzhak Gerber's driver, Roman Khachaturian, discovered a black plastic bag attached to the car's bottom. He then notified police, with local officers dismantling the bag and finding an explosive device made up of a hand grenade.

The charge was then neutralized, with the car transferred to closer examinations by Israeli security officials.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, on Monday, said that Iran is behind the car-bomb attack in New Delhi as well as the thwarted attack in Tbilisi, adding that Israel would continue to act against the international terror Iran produces.

"In the last few months we have witnessed several attempts to target Israeli citizens and Jews in a series of countries, such as Azerbaijan and Thailand. In all of these cases we were able to thwart these attacks in co-operation with local forces," Netanyahu said.

He added that "the Israeli government and its security services will continue, with local security, to act against the international terror which Iran produces."

Israel's Foreign Ministry has instructed all of its diplomats to stop using their vehicles until they are checked by security officials.

Avigdor Lieberman

Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman said that Israel would not tolerate an attack on its officials abroad, adding that Monday's incidents show Israel and its citizens face a daily threat of terror, both "physical and diplomatic."

In February 2011, Israeli embassies throughout the world received several suspected terror threats that coincided with the third anniversary of Mughniyah's death. The threat was believed to be directed at embassies in Africa, Southeast Asia and Caucasus

Israel's Counterterrorism Bureau cautioned the Israeli public at the time that because of the increased threat of terror attacks against Israelis abroad, travels to certain destinations should be avoided, including Egypt, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia, Côte d'Ivoire, Mauritania and Venezuela.

The bureau said that the initial warning from the head of security at the Transportation Ministry regarding increased security in European countries took place more than three weeks ago.

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Hamas PM vows armed resistance against Israel

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The only path in the Palestinian struggle against Israel is the path of armed resistance, Hamas Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh said during a visit to Iran on Monday, adding that the "gun is our only response to Zionist regime."

Haniyeh's comments came following recent reports of a change in Hamas' declared strategy in the fight against Israel, with some of the group's officials indicating that Hamas was headed toward a path of non-violent resistance.

Speaking on the issue in an interview late last year, the Islamic group's leader, Khaled Meshal, said that Hamas would focus on popular protests to unify Palestinians.

While not completely renouncing the use of violence against Israel, Meshal told AP that popular protests have "the power of a tsunami," pointing to the recent waves of demonstrations across the Arab world.

"Now we have a common ground that we can work on... the popular resistance, which presents the power of people," he said.

In addition, a top Haniyeh adviser, Ahmed Youssef, told Egyptian media in December that Hamas had to "create popular resistance that draws the world to our struggle, and that doesn't give the Israelis the justification to hit us hard."

"The non-violent approach is part of a strategy for our present situation to draw world sympathy to our cause," the top aide said, adding that the possible change in strategy was also a result of Hamas' "vulnerable situation against the Israelis, who have a huge propaganda machine."

But according to the Iranian semi-official Fars news agency, on Monday Haniyeh said that "we have come to understand that we can obtain our goals only through fighting and armed resistance and no compromise should be made with the enemy."

The Hamas PM also referred to the possible effects a recently signed reconciliation deal with Fatah could have on its policies, adding that the path "of resistance continues and if we make any compromise, it is for resistance and obtaining Palestinians' rights.

"[The] presence of Zionist regime inside Palestine is the root of all regional problems, and this presence poses a threat not only to Palestine but also to the whole region," Haniyeh added.

Ismail Haniyeh

On Sunday, Iran's leaders urged Haniyeh to continue the Islamic militant group's resistance against Israel and promised support, state TV reported.

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei told Haniyeh that Iran would always stand by the Palestinian "resistance" against Israel and warned him against "compromisers." President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, for his part, said it was Iran's "duty" to stand by the Palestinians.

The hardline remarks come as Iran watches with concern attempts by Hamas to move closer to wealthy Gulf Arab states. Widened support for Hamas in the Arab world may come with demands that the Islamist movements moderate and not embarrass its new patrons.

Israel and Iran consider each other arch-enemies. Israel has not ruled out a strike against Iran's nuclear program, which it says is aimed at developing weapons technology. Iran denies this and says the program is for peaceful purposes. Khamenei, who has final say on all state matters, was quoted as telling Haniyeh that people expect Palestinian resistance to continue.

"People do not expect anything except endurance from Palestine's resistance," Khamenei said. He added that the movement "should be watchful about influence of compromising elements... since the outbreak of sickness is gradual."

Khamenei said the late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat lost his popularity because he distanced himself from resistance. "Resistance attracts people, and it is a big resource that should be protected," he said.

The Supreme Leader said Iran would always "stand by the people of Palestine and the resistance movement." Khamenei on Feb. 3 affirmed that Iran had provided support to Hamas – a well-known policy, but one that Iranian leaders rarely state explicitly.

Haniyeh, for his part, was quoted as saying that Iran was a "strategic reserve" for the Palestinians, and that Hamas would continue a strategy consisting of the "liberation of all the Palestinian lands, the pursuit of resistance and the rejection of peace talks."

Haniyeh also met Ahmadinejad on Sunday. The president was quoted as saying that support for Palestine was a task for all Muslims. "As its duty, the Iranian nation has stood next to the oppressed nation of Palestine."

Poland changes restitution process

Roman Frister

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WARSAW — The Polish government's decision to make the courts responsible for the restitution of Jewish communal property has sparked harsh criticism from Poland's Jewish community.

The change, Jewish community leaders say, will slow down and complicate the process of adjudicating the estimated 3,000 outstanding claims.

Piotr Kadlcik, president of the Union of Jewish Religious Communities in Poland, told the cabinet member responsible for restitution that the change is not acceptable to the country's Jewish institutions.

Since 1997, the restitution process has been governed by public committees in which the government worked together with the Jewish community to efficiently return nearly 2,000 assets that had been seized by either the Nazis or the Communists.

The Polish government is seeking to win the support of the country's Jewish community rather than push through legislation the community opposes, but Kadlcik said Jewish institutions would not willingly sign away their right to apply to the existing committees, as the government was hoping they would do.

Under the new procedure, all restitution claims would need to go through the courts, which, critics say, will require claimants to prove land ownership in property registries that were burned during World War II or to procure testimony from witnesses who are no longer living.

The Jewish community would also be required to put up a guarantee of three per cent of the value of the property being claimed – a sum that will be returned only if the claim is accepted.

Four non-Catholic churches also oppose the change in the restitution process, but observers expect the Polish House of Representatives to approve legislation handing restitution authority to the courts as early as March.

Netanyahu/Abbas talks break down

Barak Ravid

© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Sunday that Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has turned his back on peace, after the Fatah leader warned that negotiations cannot resume without an Israeli settlement freeze.

Abbas spoke Sunday before the foreign ministers of the Arab League in Cairo and harshly condemned Netanyahu. He effectively issued an ultimatum, saying that if Netanyahu would not agree to freeze all construction in the settlements and agree to negotiate based on 1967 borders, the Palestinian Authority will renew its unilateral efforts to obtain statehood in the United Nations.

Abbas said he will send a letter to Netanyahu with his demands for resuming negotiations. If the response is negative, Abbas said he will restart the campaign for UN recognition of a state of Palestine.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

Abbas said Netanyahu did not present any serious proposal during the talks in Jordan, and blamed Netanyahu for failing to take any significant steps to build trust with the Palestinians. Netanyahu did offer to impose another settlement freeze, Abbas said, but one that only includes a freeze on new state tenders and not a halt of private construction in the settlements.

"Ninety per cent of the construction in the settlements is private," Abbas said. "To call that a settlement freeze is just false. Today, there is no place in the West Bank and east Jerusalem without settlements. I once told my advisers that one day, we will find a settlement at the heart of the Muqata [administrative offices] in Ramallah."

A senior Israeli source confirmed that Netanyahu offered to halt new tenders, but not construction that has already been approved.

Netanyahu issued a statement sharply criticizing Abbas' speech, accusing him of bonding with a terror group, and effectively embracing Iran.

"Abbas' speech showed he is turning his back on peace," Netanyahu said. "Instead of engaging in negotiations that would bring an end to the conflict, Abbas prefers to link to the terror organization Hamas – the same Hamas that embraces Iran."

A senior diplomatic source in Jerusalem added, "Israel agreed in recent weeks to be more flexible and offered Abbas a package of serious gestures, but he decided to reject them, to again pose preconditions and to work toward reconciliation with Hamas," he said.

"We wanted to begin a long-term diplomatic process, but every time we get to the moment of truth, Abbas flees. It's a pattern with him."

Is this my Israel? A cri de coeur

Special to The CJN

Opinion

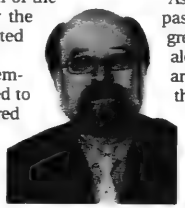
As an Israeli with great love for the Jewish homeland, it pains me to raise my voice in anger at the state of the nation. It would pain me more to stay silent in the face of recent developments there.

Something foul is afoot. Without ignoring the very real threats Israel faces from outside her borders, a danger no less pernicious lurks at home. The country's very democratic fabric is at stake. And I choose my words carefully.

Agreed, Israel is still a work in progress but it's too easy to leave it at that. Between certain legislative initiatives by the Netanyahu government, hostile actions by right-wing messianic extremists and anti-secular, anti-women, anti-Zionist conduct by haredi zealots, internal negative forces bedevil Israel.

I'm worried. After serving in the military, government, and in three wars, after losing friends and loved ones in battle, my conscience compels me to speak out.

With dubious objectives, the government put forward legislation to curtail the involvement of international NGOs in Israeli life; amend certain laws of defamation to prevent journalists from reporting on investigations against public figures and alter the nomination process to the Supreme Court that could effectively turn the court into a political apparatus. At the time, President Shimon Peres was highly vocal in his criticism of the weight of all of the proposed legislation. For the president to speak out on such matters reflected the overall importance of doing so.



Arie Raif

"These proposals deviate from the basis of democracy," says Peres. "A government is not elected to rule, but to serve. Every leader must be measured in one way – is he serving us or are we serving him? For a government or leader to 'rule' the nation is a sign of a dictatorship while 'serving' is a sign of democracy. The government was elected to serve the people, and if you serve the people, you serve everyone – both the majority and the minority, Jews and Arabs."

Equally disconcerting is the growing number and increased assertiveness of religious fanatics who try to subjugate women to a humiliating second-class status by forcing them to sit at the back of public buses, ordering them to walk on separate sides of the street, insulting and spitting on young girls they consider immodestly dressed, and, of course, to say nothing of the widespread haredi disdain for the state itself, despite receiving heavy subsidies from the state to sustain their separate lifestyle.

As if that wasn't enough cause for alarm, in recent months we've also witnessed multiple right-wing Jewish assaults on mosques and even – once unthinkable – an attack on Israeli soldiers at an Israel Defence Forces army base.

Such erosion in public morality and behaviour is deeply disturbing. I ask myself, both in sadness and in anger, where does this originate? I'm convinced much of what ails Israel stems from the chronically dysfunctional electoral system. It results in small, narrowly based, sectarian parties wielding disproportionate power with which they hold the larger, main parties to ransom when they cobble together a coalition government. Lamentably, the main parties have not resolved this problem.

Of course, the roots of this malaise predate the current administration. But Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's foreign and domestic policies have aggravated the situation. He has helped create a climate in which right-wing Jewish nationalists feel sufficiently emboldened to victimize Palestinians and haredi radicals to flex their muscles in trying to impose their view of the world and of human life. While not advocating or even supporting these actions, Netanyahu has nevertheless failed to stand up firmly against the dark forces of intolerance and hatred that act out their agendas to the detriment of the country as a whole.

The coalition of the current government was forged – like most predecessor governments – with backroom dealings, concessions and compromise with small sectarian party partners, Zionist and non-Zionist, most of whom support Jewish settlements in the West Bank. As such, these parties have invariably been an obstacle to Israel reaching a peace agreement with the Palestinians. Although only a small per cent of Israelis are actively involved in the settlements, the settlement-supporting parties exert an inordinate amount of influence on the political system, in the process showing little respect for perspectives different from their own.

As a secular Zionist, I seek a state that encompasses a domestic and political framework far greater than that sought by the religious groups alone. Those who dream of a Greater Israel and are caught in their messianic dreams should read the words of awakening by none other than the "father of the settlements," former prime minister Ariel Sharon.

"Controlling 3.5 million Palestinians cannot go on forever," Sharon told a meeting of stunned Likud leaders, including Netanyahu, in May 2003. "You might not like the word but what is happening is occupation. It's bad for Israel and bad for the Palestinians and bad for the Israeli economy."

The only way of freeing Israel from the yoke of occupation is the two-state solution, for which Netanyahu has expressed support. But alas, it appears he may never have meant to implement it for fear of alienating his coalition partners. He clings to the mantra: there is no Palestinian partner for peace, while continuing settlement expansion and portraying Israel as being in danger of annihilation despite its formidable military prowess. Given such calculations, it's hard not to be cynical. His lack of leadership has robbed much of the country of the one quality so important for its future: hope.

Former Mossad chief Meir Dagan is leading a movement to reform the electoral system. He knows what we all know. Time is of the essence. Let's pray he succeeds. The future of Israel is at stake.

Arie Raif is an Israeli political activist and former Israeli diplomat.

Israel Briefs

Peres fetes Canadian

Canadian activist Judy Feld Carr was among the recipients of Israel's first President's Prize. The new initiative, spearheaded by Israeli President Shimon Peres, honours individuals who have made a significant contribution to Israeli society and the country's global image. Joining Feld Carr in receiving the award were former U.S. secretary of state Henry Kissinger, Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra director Zubin Mehta; attorney Uri Slonim for his charitable and volunteer work, including representing the Israeli government in negotiations to release captive Israeli soldiers; Talmudic scholar Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, and the Rashi Foundation, which assists underprivileged youths. Feld Carr masterminded the rescue of thousands of Syria's Jews to freedom in the West and Israel.

New Supreme Court head

The Knesset's judicial selection committee approved Justice Asher Grunis as the new Supreme Court President Feb. 10.

FMs meet

Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman reconfirmed his commitment to a two-state solution during a meeting last week with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton in Washington. After the meeting Lieberman "thanked [Clinton] for the determined stance of the United States on the Iran issue and said the steps taken in recent weeks send an important message to the entire region."

Files from JTA and Ha'aretz

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Family business leaves College Street after 74 years

Paul Lungen
Staff Reporter

The outdoor mall in Downsview doesn't have quite the same haymishe character as the College Street neighbourhood that Exclusive Paints called home for 74 years.

Then again, how many mom and pop businesses can survive for that long, let alone thrive, and have the confidence to try a new location?

The Shiewitz family is still moving into its premises at Chesswood Drive and Sheppard Avenue, but it's business as usual as the familiar cast of characters continues serving customers. Behind the counter sits Esther Shiewitz, pretty much as she did back in the store's heyday in the 1970s, as revealed in vintage photos from the era. Joe Shiewitz, who's run the family business since 1978 but who started there in 1959, is pleased to share his knowledge of paints, mixes and tints.

There's son Aron, the third generation to work in the store, and you can't forget Habib Azulay, a sales consultant and paint specialist who has been with the firm since fleeing from Tangiers, Morocco, 47 years ago.

Daughter Cheryl, who works in real estate, acts as the family's media contact and informal family historian, relating tales from the days her zaide, Izzy Reingewertz, started the business in 1938.

Between them, they provide the kind of personalized attention you're not likely to find at a big-box store. And they know more about paint than those upstarts starting out with a small store and barely any inventory.

Still, in an era of Home Depot, Lowes, Rona and Canadian Tire, making a living selling what the big boys do is a challenge. Sales drop pretty much every year, by something like 10 to 15 per cent, Joe concedes. They've gone from $2 million a year to something like $600,000. When you have one outlet, it's hard to compete with the multiple locations other companies offer.

The key to retaining clientele and enticing new ones is personalized service and expertise, explained Joe Shiewitz. "I have personal relationships, and we know what we're doing," he explained.

Clients appreciate the company's ability to order specialized paints from boutique suppliers in New York, as he did for one designer client. And they are attracted to Exclusive's ability to match colours better than anyone else.

More than once, customers have come into the store asking for help matching a colour. Big-box outlets aren't nearly as accurate in rendering colours as we are, Joe stated. Some of the new computerized mixing machines are way off. Better to rely on the tried and true method he and Habib mastered years ago. Shiewitz said they could eyeball a colour in a piece of fabric, a cushion or some other object, and match it accurately, using equipment that preceded computerized machinery.

"I am old school," Shiewitz stated.

At the very least!

Shiewitz was born in eastern Europe in 1940 – not a good time or place to be a Jew. During the war, his family escaped the Nazis by fleeing to Siberia. Afterward, he landed in Toronto and went to work for Izzy at his first paint store on College.

"The paint store was always a Jewish hub in the community," Cheryl writes. "Often people would come by for a free cup of coffee, a shmooze and the potential to get some work.

"My grandfather helped people in any way he could, either it was helping them find work, lending them money or giving them product on credit."

One of them was Frank O'Dea, a down-on-his-luck individual who would work in the shop and who eventually turned his life around and founded the Second Cup coffee business.

Joe started working in the paint shop after it was well established. There he met his future wife, Izzy's daughter. They were married and Joe worked as a painting contractor. When his father-in-law took ill in 1979, he took over the business.

Like his father-in-law, he's a gregarious individual who relied on personal relationships to create business. But unlike his father-in-law, he wasn't willing to extend credit to people on a whim, or to load up on so much paint he had to scramble to find a warehouse to store it in. When he took over the shop, he was faced with boxes of bad cheques from contractors and customers, who had received paint and supplies from Izzy.

"They saw my father-in-law as a pushover. He got them a big job and they paid him with a fake cheque," Joe said.

Another change he implemented was moving the store to a larger location on College Street, going from an 18-foot frontage to 54 feet and more than 10,000 square feet.

The big accounts kept coming in and, of course, the store catered to local walk-in clientele as well.

It continued as a community hub "for many people to come and share stories, shmooze and, of course, buy paint," said Cheryl. "It is a family owned and operated business, all three of Joe and Esther's children have worked in the store, as well as their daughter-in-law. It is truly a family and community centre."

Their new store is continuing the tradition. On a recent visit there, all the Shiewitz kids were at the store, helping to arrange the shelves and unpack product. Esther was at her post, behind the counter, and Habib was ready to assist customers.

Oh, and there isn't a Home Depot for miles.

Joe Shiewitz and his daughter Cheryl *[Paul Lungen photo]*

Store was Jewish hub in the community

Filmmaker looks at Sholem Aleichem and his world

Sheldon Kirshner
Staff Reporter

When Joseph Dorman's friend – a professor of Yiddish and Jewish studies at Rutgers University – suggested that a film about the life and times of Sholem Aleichem (1859-1916) might appeal to an audience, he was only faintly interested.

"My reluctance stemmed from my ignorance," said Dorman, an American filmmaker who has worked for PBS, CNN, CBS and the Discovery Channel, and has twice been nominated for Emmy Awards for outstanding cultural and public affairs programming.

He added, "I had no idea how great a writer Sholem Aleichem was, and how much his own work explored issues of Jewish identity that were of deep interest to me. Once I began to read his stories, my doubts melted away. Indifference soon turned into obsession. The only doubts that remained were whether I could make a movie about a 19th century writer. That also became the challenge, and I like challenges."

Dorman, who describes his subject as "a brilliant and sharply observant writer," met the challenge with verve. His 93-minute documentary, *Sholem Aleichem: Laughing in the Darkness*, was screened at last year's Toronto Jewish Film Festival and is scheduled to open here at the Empire Walk 10 Cinemas (5095 Yonge St.) on Feb. 24.

Dorman's film is an engaging biopic about a highly creative and imaginative Russian Jew whose stories captured the authenticity of the shtetl, the world of our forefathers, and formed the basis of the beloved musical *Fiddler on the Roof*.

Through archival footage, vintage photographs and interviews with experts, Dorman, the scion of Jewish immigrants from Lithuania, Latvia and Ukraine, reveals Sholem Aleichem's genius in exploring a society on the cusp of profound change.

"Sholem Aleichem's popularity and influence were so great that his stories became synonymous with east European Jewry," said Dorman, whose previous film was about a group of young Jewish socialists in New York who develop very different political ideologies. "The descriptive power of his stories and their ability to capture the essence of an entire Jewish civilization made him the perfect vehicle to explore that world."

Joseph Dorman

Sholem Aleichem

Dorman admits he knew nothing about the figure he celebrates. "I had him pegged as a popular writer of sentimental fiction. I don't come from a family of Yiddishists, so I had no idea that Yiddish was transformed by Sholem Aleichem and many other writers into a remarkable literary language."

Calling him a writer of complexity and depth, Dorman said he excelled in the short-story genre.

"His greatest novels – *Tevye the Dairyman*, *Menakhem Mendl* and *Motl the Cantor's Son* – are really serialized stories often told in monologue form. Yet within the span of eight to 10 pages and through the words of a single individual, he could distill a large theme: the journey of an entire people from a traditional world to a modern one, with all its attendant dislocation and confusion.

"He witnessed the birth of modern Jewry, and he did it through word portraits of uneducated and barely literate people. Like Freud, a contemporary, he was a master psychologist."

Dorman contends that Sholem Aleichem churned out his stories during a moment of catastrophe, when the forces of modernity and industrialization uprooted millions of people and touched off a wave of pogroms in the Russian empire. "He wanted to use his art to comfort his fellow Jews," he observed. "But he didn't choose the path of escapism. Rather, his stories confronted these catastrophes head on and drew humour from them. If you can laugh at something, you've somehow tamed it."

Deeply respectful of Sholem Aleichem, Dorman believes that he, as well as contemporaries such as Mendele Moycher Sforim and Isaac Leib Peretz, essentially invented modern Yiddish literature.

As he put it, "The first secular Jewish novels were written in Hebrew, but there was a serious problem with this. Only a small minority of well-educated Jews could read and understand a Hebrew novel. But everyone spoke Yiddish. The result was that Sholem Aleichem's work had a huge popular following. He, in turn, provided east European Jewry with its first true portrait of itself through his stories."

Sholem Aleichem: Laughing in the Darkness enabled Dorman to reconnect with his past.

"I went to Ukraine to shoot footage, and simply travelling through the country in search of former shtetls and signs of Jewish existence was a powerful experience. In general, I think I now possess a more integrated understanding of my family's past and of east European Jewry's past. As a man who loves history, that has given me a great deal of satisfaction."

Dorman, who is working on a film about the history of Zionism, believes his documentary on Sholem Aleichem will be useful and enlightening to Jews in North America whose ancestors hail from eastern Europe.

"North American Jewry has largely been cut off from its immediate past. Most of us know our parents, grandparents or great-grandparents come from the shtetl, but we have little idea what this means. The shtetl is a place that is at once mythic and yet one-dimensional.

"The Holocaust wiped this world off the map, destroying this culture and our connection to it. We became focused on the destruction of a civilization at the expense of remembering what was destroyed."

Dorman hopes that *Sholem Aleichem: Laughing in the Darkness* will redress this equation.

ISRAEL

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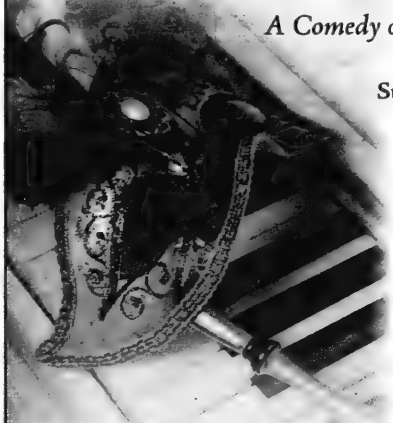

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TEATRON PRESENTS *CAN I REALLY DATE A GUY WHO WEARS A YARMULKE?*

Amy Holson-Schwartz's comedy *Can I Really Date a Guy Who Wears a Yarmulke?* was written by a "pretty committed Jewish atheist" who nonetheless feels "pretty sure I'm supposed to be with a Jewish guy," the New York-area playwright explained on her blog in 2010.

That's the contradiction at the heart of *Can I Really Date a Guy Who Wears a Yarmulke?*, the Canadian première production of which is being mounted by the Teatron Jewish Theatre Company of Toronto. PhD candidate Eleanor, fresh from a disastrous Birthright trip and a broken relationship, asks herself exactly that question when she meets Aaron, a Jewish doctor who is committed both to Judaism and Israel. Is reconciliation possible?

Directed by **Ari Weisberg**, with **Jada Rifkin, Jesse Nerenberg, Adrianna Prosser, Scott Leaver, Reva Lawry** and **Ron Boyd**. Toronto Centre for the Arts, 5040 Yonge St. $37 to $26; previews $19. Feb. 29 to March 11. www.teatrontheatre.com

* * *

***Zero Hour* Is Here:** Actor **Jim Brochu** won a New York Drama Desk Award for his uncanny impersonation of **Zero Mostel** in *Zero Hour*, which opened here last week for a month-long return engagement. Brochu's one-man show tells the essential "backstory" on Mostel's highly memorable performances in *Fiddler on the Roof* and other productions, as well as lesser-known episodes in his life. Bathurst Street Theatre, 736 Bathurst St., to March 11. $59, $69.50. 1-855-HIT-SHOW, www.ZeroHourShow.com

* * *

***In Darkness*: Agnieszka Holland**'s acclaimed film *In Darkness*, about a sewer worker and thief in Warsaw who helps hide Jews from Nazis, was an entry at last year's Toronto International Film Festival and opens commercially in Toronto this week. The veteran Polish director (*Europa Europa, Washington Square*) has made a gritty and compelling film that takes place largely in the darkness of the city's sewer system with the rats, stench and internecine bickering, noted the online magazine, Tablet. "At the end of the tunnel is a dazzling burst of daylight that is worth the wait," wrote reviewer **Daphne Merkin**.

* * *

Names in the News: Madonna will perform a concert at Ramat Gan Stadium near Tel Aviv on May 31, *Ha'aretz* reported last week. The concert launches her new world tour. Madonna has performed four previous shows in Israel, the last one in 2009, and all were sold out. The 53-year-old pop phenomenon, who has made no secret of her devotion to the Kabbalah, has also made numerous private visits to Israel with her children. Last week, she performed what NBC Sports asserted was the most-watched Super Bowl half-time show in history.

* * *

Arts in Brief

• **Lisa Rochon**, **Shawn Micallef**, **Sara Ferdman Tauben** and **David Kaufman** participate in a panel discussion presented by Makom (a community that builds traditional and progressive Jewish life in downtown Toronto) on "lost and found" places in Montreal, Toronto, Warsaw and Krakow. Kiever Synagogue, 25 Bellevue Ave., Thursday, Feb. 16, 7 p.m. $5 at the door. The Kiever is holding an open house, Sunday, Feb. 19, 2 to 5 p.m. Tauben will be at both events promoting her new book, *Traces of the Past: Montreal's Early Synagogues*.

• The Toronto Jewish Film Society presents the 1955 British film *A Kid for Two Farthings*, directed by **Carol Reed**. Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, Al Green Theatre, Sunday, Feb. 19, 4 and 7:30 p.m. Kids free with adult admission; with speaker **Mark Clamen**. $15, $10. 416-924-6211, ext. 606, film@mnjcc.org

• Russian pianist **Olga Kern** gives a public master class to three gifted students at Robert Lowrey Pianos, 943 Eglinton Ave. E., Wednesday, Feb. 22, 4:30 p.m. $15 in advance, $20 at the door. For more information, visit www.pianoexperts.com. Kern also performs with violinist **Vladimir Spivakov** at Koerner Hall, Thursday, Feb. 23, 8 p.m. www.showoneproductions.ca

• City Playhouse Theatre presents *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, the colourful **Andrew Lloyd Webber/ Tim Rice** musical about the biblical Joseph. City Playhouse, 1000 New Westminster Dr., Vaughan. Feb. 24, 25 and 26. $24, $20. www.cityplayhouse.ca, 905-326-7469.

Madonna at one of her 2009 Israel performances.

• The Al Green Theatre and Miles Nadal JCC present Israeli pianist **Yitzhak Yedid** in a solo concert titled Reflections on Chagall. The original compositions were inspired by six paintings "conveying images of beauty, prayer and Jewish tradition fused with sadness and strife." Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre, Thursday March 1, 8 p.m. $15. 416-924-6211, ext. 0; www.algreentheatre.ca

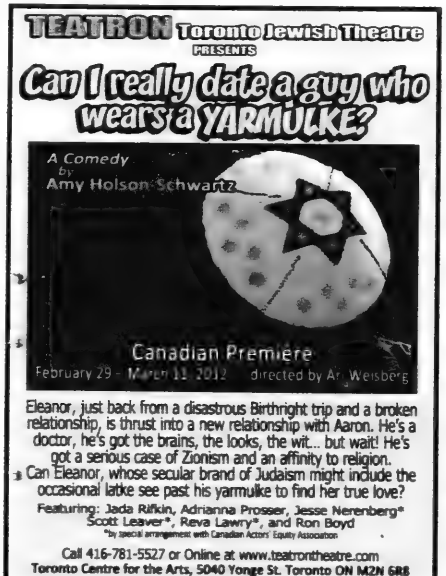
* * *

At the Galleries

• UJA Federation of Greater Toronto presents the first major exhibition in Canada of works by artist **Samuel Bak**, who focuses on Holocaust subjects. *Icons of Loss: The Art of Samuel Bak* is at the Columbus Centre's Joseph D. Carrier Art Gallery, 901 Lawrence Ave. W., March 1 to April 30. Admission is free.

• *Forest Paintings*, by Tel Aviv-based artist **Anat Betzer**, is a collection of images of ancient deciduous trees and dense forest. Presented with the Julie M. Gallery. Miles Nadal JCC Gallery to Feb. 29.

• A selection of contemporary works by a range of Israeli artists is featured on the new website, www.vialicentia.com.


TEATRON Toronto Jewish Theatre
PRESENTS
Can I really date a guy who wears a YARMULKE?
A Comedy by Amy Holson-Schwartz
Canadian Premiere
February 29 - March 11, 2012 directed by Ari Weisberg
Eleanor, just back from a disastrous Birthright trip and a broken relationship, is thrust into a new relationship with Aaron. He's a doctor, he's got the brains, the looks, the wit... but wait! He's got a serious case of Zionism and an affinity to religion. Can Eleanor, whose secular brand of Judaism might include the occasional latke see past his yarmulke to find her true love?
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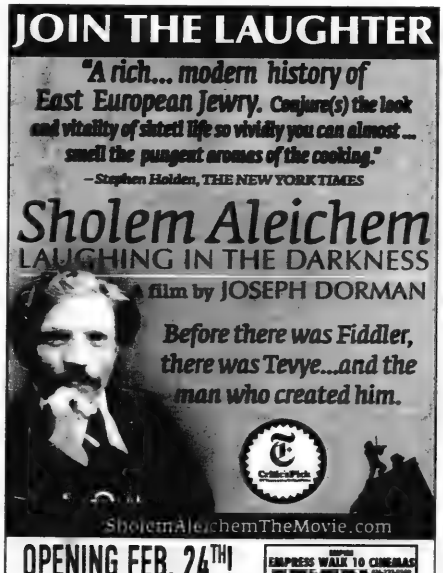
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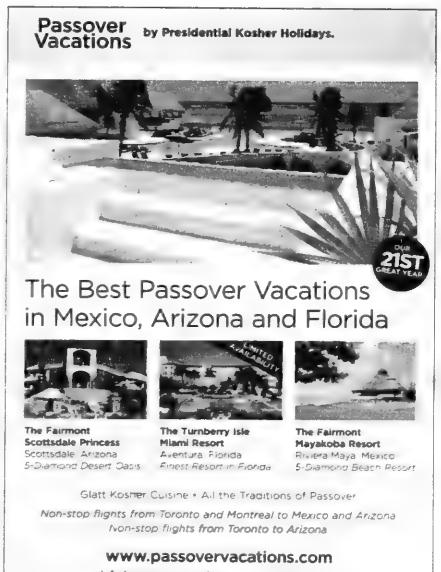
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British film evokes London's Jewish East End

Sheldon Kirshner
Staff Reporter

On the face of it, the outdoor markets, small shops and push carts of London's East End comprise the insular, working-class Jewish community in which British screenplay writer, playwright and novelist Wolf Mankowitz (1924-1998) was raised.

Mankowitz's most successful novel, *A Kid for Two Farthings*, published in 1953, was made into a film, directed by Carol Reed, in 1955.

The 96-minute movie, adapted for the screen by Mankowitz and set in the 1950s, is something of a fable. The Toronto Jewish Film Society will screen it on Feb. 19 at the JCC's Al Green Theatre at 4 p.m. and again at 7:30 p.m.

A Kid for Two Farthings turns on Joe (Jonathan Ashmore), a kind, impressionable, earnest boy who wants to help his struggling neighbours.

There is plenty of work around here for a Good Samaritan like him.

Avrom Kandinsky (David Kossoff), a Russian-Jewish presser-cum philosopher who rents a room above his shop to Joe's mother (Celia Johnson), needs a steam pressing machine, but can't afford one. Accustomed to having his hopes dashed, Avrom muses, "Life is all dreams."

Sam Heppner (Joe Robinson), an impoverished tailor with bulging muscles and pie-in-the-sky ambitions, aspires to be Mr. World in the bodybuilding fraternity. Sonia (Diana Dors), his blonde, busty, sensuous fiancé, is still waiting for an engagement ring.

Jonathan Ashmore stars in Carol Reed's *A Kid for Two Farthings*.

Joe's mother, a single mom whose husband vanished in Africa, is probably most urgently in need of help to rescue her from a life of drudgery.

After Avrom tells him that unicorns can grant wishes, Joe buys one from a vagrant. In fact, he has purchased a baby goat. But to Joe, the creature is a unicorn, a legendary woodland beast with a single horn that exists only in the realm of the imagination and folk tales.

With a "unicorn" at his beck and call, Joe the do-gooder sets forth on the path of righteousness. "Everybody here wants something," he says.

Thanks, perhaps, to the powers of his new pet, a local professional wrestling promoter (Lou Jacobi) arranges a match for Sam with a seasoned fighter (Danny Green) who has seen better days.

If Sam can win, he can go on to fight the fearsome Python Macklin (the hulking Primo Carnera, who was briefly the world heavyweight boxing champion in the early 1930s), and thus buy that elusive engagement ring for Sonia.

Joe is also instrumental in easing Avrom's life. Whether he can be of assistance to Joe's hard-pressed mother is another question.

Reed, probably best known for his 1949 film *The Third Man*, juggles these disparate scenes deftly, evoking a world in which Jewish immigrants and their British-born neighbours use all their wits to eke out a livelihood.

Mankowitz's lean, sometimes poignant script fleshes out their lives.

The lead actors, Kossoff and Ashmore, acquit themselves in respectable fashion. Johnson, who appeared in the iconic romantic drama *Brief Encounter* seems out of her element here. Dors – the British version of Marilyn Monroe – is little more than eye candy. Carnera is just there with his intimidating physical presence.

A Kid for Two Farthings is hardly a masterpiece, but its universal power-of-hope message stirs the heart.

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Hollywood courts local thriller writer

Barbara Silverstein
Special to The CJN

The buzz about David Rotenberg's new book, *The Placebo Effect*, has spread as far as California.

The Toronto-based writer says he recently went to Los Angeles because there was interest in turning *The Placebo Effect* (Simon & Schuster), the first book in The Junction Chronicles, into a television series.

He says he was "in conversation" with a producer of the Emmy Award-winning show *Justified*. But Rotenberg's containing his excitement, because "there no wedding yet," as he puts it, and he's been courted by Hollywood before.

David Rotenberg

Rotenberg, a master acting teacher and retired York University professor, is a prolific writer who also wrote the Zhong Fong detective series, which takes place in modern China. The five books were published in Toronto by McArthur and Company from 1996 to 2004, and his epic historical novel, *Shanghai: The Ivory Compact* (Viking Books, 2008), was a Canadian bestseller.

The Placebo Effect, the first book Rotenberg has set in Toronto, is an international thriller with much of the action taking place in the United States. New York landmarks figure prominently.

The story centres around Decker Roberts, a Jewish acting teacher with a special gift – he can determine if people are telling the truth.

While he has parlayed this gift into a lucrative sideline – he consults to big corporations for large fees – Decker keeps his identity a secret, sporadically making furtive trips to U.S. cities.

He's unaware that he's being tracked by a U.S. national security agency, as well as by an unscrupulous chief at the helm of a major pharmaceutical company.

Decker narrowly escapes death, when his home in the Junction area of Toronto is burned down. The fast-paced thriller continues as Decker tries to unravel why he's a target and who's trying to kill him.

So what gave Rotenberg the idea for this book?

He says publishing giant Simon & Schuster asked him to do a book that was not based in China.

One day, he was walking around his neighbourhood – he's lived in the Junction for 23 years – when he noticed there are more churches in the area than any other part of Toronto.

He checked into the area's history and discovered that when the Junction joined the city of Toronto at the turn of the century, some of the police records disappeared. "I thought, 'What awful thing happened here that some police records were lost?'"

He suggests that this amalgamation provided a convenient pretext for losing those records, because the police were probably "protecting some wealthy people who had done something wrong."

Rotenberg says he integrated these suspicions about the Junction with his interest in "synaesthetes," people who have special abilities due to a mixing of two or more functions in their brains. "They cross-reference sensory functions in their heads."

Decker, his protagonist, identifies with synaesthetes, because of his uncanny ability to detect the truth.

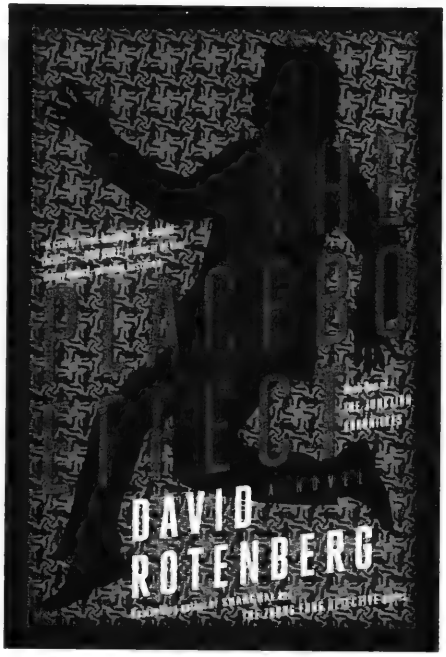
Many details of his personal life mirror those of Rotenberg's. For example, they are both acting teachers and both directed a couple of shows on Broadway.

I think you write about what you know," Rotenberg says. Decker also runs the Professional Actors Lab on Stafford Street in Toronto, which happens to be the exact name and location of Rotenberg's acting studio.

Known for his unique training style, Rotenberg has worked with a roster of well-known Canadian actors that includes Rachel McAdams, now a Hollywood star.

Rotenberg did a master's degree in fine arts, specializing in directing, at Yale University. He spent 14 years in the United States, directing shows in New York and working in regional theatres.

He also has an extensive academic career that includes a stint at Simon Fraser University and Tulane University in New Orleans.



But York University lured him back to Toronto with "an offer I could not turn down," he recalls.

He also wanted to live closer to his parents and three brothers, and he felt Toronto was a good place to raise children. His daughter Beth, 23, was born just months after he arrived in Toronto with his wife, Susan Santiago, and his son, Joey, who's now 26. "It was new house, new job, new child – all at once."

The move cost Rotenberg the bulk of his directing career, he says. But in 1994, he spent 17 weeks in Shanghai directing, in Mandarin, *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* by George Ryga. "I directed the first Canadian play people ever produced in the People's Republic of China."

In Shanghai, he says he stumbled upon a situation that inspired the creation of the Zhong Fong series: he accompanied a stranger to the hospital and this experience became the kernel of his first novel.

Penguin later approached him about writing a historical fiction on Shanghai. "They said, 'If you like James Clavell, could you do for Shanghai what he did for Hong Kong?'"

He says he found a children's book with a line about Silas Hardoon, an Iraqi Jewish opium trader, who married his Chinese mistress. "That line was the genesis of *Shanghai: The Ivory Compact*."

Hardoon and his heirs figure prominently in this fictional saga, he says, noting that they were a powerful force from the 1880s to the 1940s.

Since 1995, Rotenberg has written a novel every 16 months. The second book in The Junction Chronicles is already completed.

"I'm really excited about the series. There's big-time interest," he says. "When I think of the series, I think of doing six or seven books.

"I'm 62. It may not be the last big project I do, but it's close to it."

Rotenberg will be reading from The Placebo Effect *at Authors at Harbourfront Centre: Crime Showcase on March 21, 7:30 p.m.*

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'To get somebody like Mike is off the charts'

Continued from page 1

"It is tremendous for us to be led by a coaching legend," said Team Canada hockey chair Mark Goodman. "Mike has all of the attributes that we were looking for when we started this process, and the players will benefit greatly by having him around."

Voihanski, who also serves as director of hockey operations for International Scouting Services (ISS), learned of Keenan's availability through the Rangers. ISS has a relationship with the team, and Keenan is part of the MSG Network's broadcast crew for Rangers games.

Keenan was contacted and became interested in the Maccabiah Games position as he learned more about the event.

"To get somebody like Mike is off the charts," Voihanski said. Not only does it enhance the event's stature, but "it tells young guys it's a huge event."

Mike Keenan

Keenan said visiting Israel is something he has long intended to do. He was a close friend and colleague of Roger Neilson, who for years ran a summer hockey school at the Canada Centre rink in Metulla. "I was asked to go to Israel and participate in the camp with Roger Neilson, but I didn't have the time," Keenan said.

Both Neilson and Keenan coached the Peterborough Petes in the OHL at different times and worked together for the St. Louis Blues in the mid '90s. "We had a long-standing relationship and friendship, and we talked quite a bit about Israel," Keenan said.

Keenan said he has had ties to the Jewish community since the 1970s. He coached at Toronto's Forest Hill Collegiate for five years, and made contacts with members of the Jewish community. He remains friends with many. His first wife is Jewish, and his daughter was raised in the Jewish faith.

Keenan's former mother-in-law was a Holocaust survivor. He said he travelled to Poland in the 1970s and visited the Warsaw Ghetto and Auschwitz after hearing so many of his mother-in-law's stories about her wartime experiences.

Taking on the coaching position "is an opportunity to give back to a people I've been linked to for many years," he said.

Voihanski believes Keenan's presence will make it easier to recruit high-end talent. Keenan has lots of contacts in the NHL, and his recommendation about players could make the difference in some careers. "If I want to get noticed, being coached by a legend could open doors," Voihanski suggested.

Tryouts for the team will be held in Toronto, Montreal and probably Winnipeg, some time in June. The tryouts will be open to anyone, but it appears that successful candidates will have to be something more than good beer league players.

Voihanski has already compiled a list of 72 skaters playing in Europe, as well as in the AHL, ECHL, divisions 1 and 3 in the NCAA, and major junior and tier II junior players.

There's a wealth of hockey talent in the Jewish community, Voihanski said. "If I'm a player, young or old, I'd be chomping at the bit to become part of the team."

Some of the 72 who might expect invitations are the likes of the Henrich brothers, Michael and Adam, who are playing professionally in Italy; David Nemirovsky, who retired this year after a career in Moscow playing in the KHL; Jacob Micflikier, one of the leading scorers in the AHL with the Hershey Bears, and a couple of NHLers.

Voihanski believes it will be difficult to recruit NHL players because of insurance issues, but Trevor Smith (Tampa Bay) and Mike Cammalleri (Calgary) will likely be invited, he said.

In 1997 Canada sent a stacked team consisting of pro and major junior players. Coached by Stanley Cup winner Jacques Demers (who won in 1993 with the Montreal Canadiens), it defeated the United States in the gold-medal game.

Voihanski expects the Americans will once again ice a strong team of NCAA players. They'll be even stronger if several NHLers agree to play, among them Jeff Halpern (Washington), Mike Brown (Toronto) and Dylan Reese (New York Islanders). Mathieu Schneider, who's been retired for a couple of years, could be enticed to play for the Americans, he suggested.

Rounding out the tournament will be France, which should be able to put together a team with two good lines, as well as Israel.

Also on tap will be a masters tournament for players over 40 and a competition for kids 18 and under. Gary Kalk is in charge of the juniors, while Farrell Miller will put together the masters team, Goodman said.

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Super Bowl bet pays off

JTA

NEW YORK — The Jewish owner of a real estate company in New York is donating his $50,000 (US) winnings from a Super Bowl bet to charity.

Jona Rechnitz, 29, of New York, had wagered $1,000 on Super Sunday at the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas that the New York Giants would score first – on a safety.

With the odds at 50 to 1, Rechnitz earned a $50,000 payout.

Rechnitz, who is Orthodox, told *TMZ*, the celebrity news website, he would donate $5,000 to a charity chosen by New England Patriots' quarterback Tom Brady, who was penalized for intentional grounding in the end zone, causing the safety call. Rechnitz also will give $5,000 each to the charities of choice for four Giants' defensive linemen involved in the play. He also said he wants to take Brady out for a falafel dinner.

Rechnitz, owner of the year-old JSR Capital after having worked for Africa Israel, said he would donate the rest of his after-tax earnings to other charities.

The California native was visiting his parents and decided to watch the Super Bowl in Las Vegas. The Giants defeated the Patriots, 21-17.

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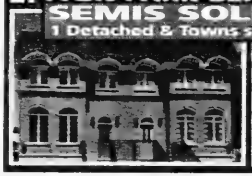

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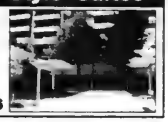

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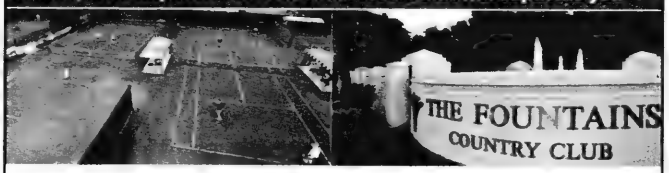

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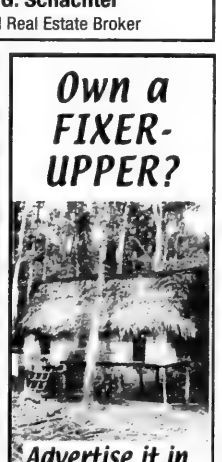

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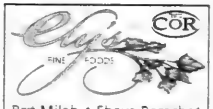

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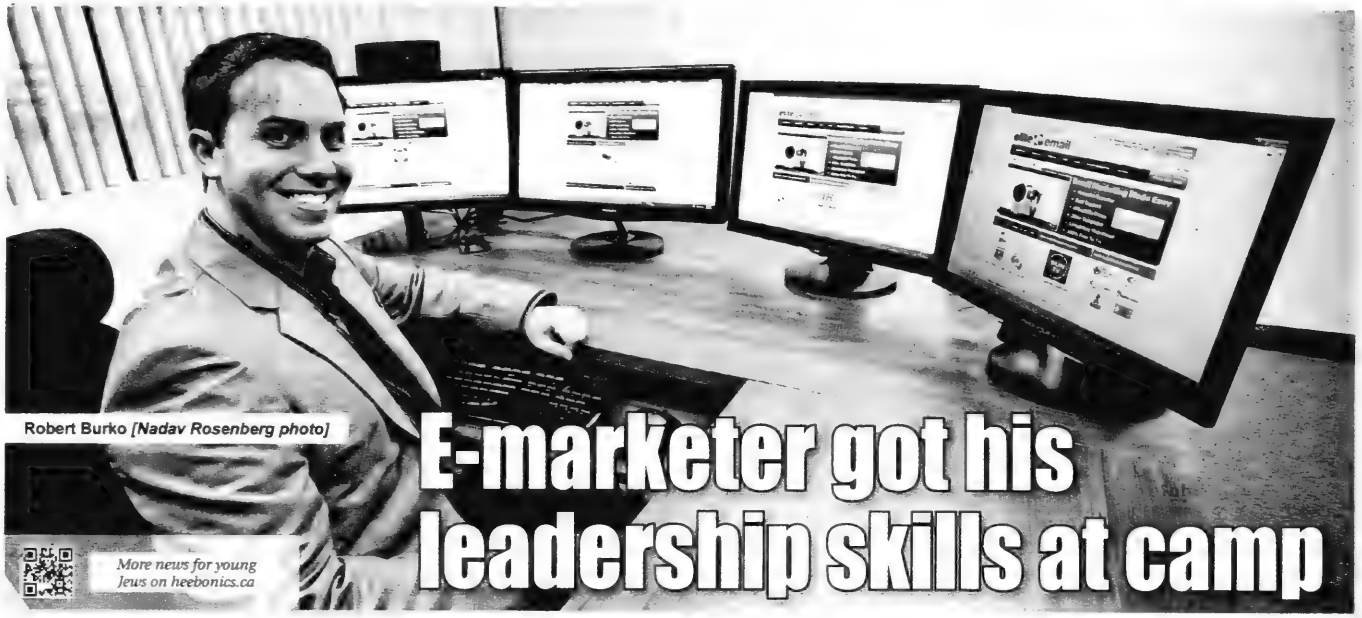

Robert Burko *[Nadav Rosenberg photo]*

E-marketer got his leadership skills at camp

More news for young Jews on heebonics.ca

Cara Stern
Special to The CJN

Robert Burko always remembers his days as a camp counsellor.

The successful young entrepreneur says the lessons he learned at Green Acres Day Camp in Markham, Ont., helped him grow his company out of his parents' basement to an award-winning business with staff around the world in less than 10 years.

"A lot of my communications skills, a lot of my leadership skills, I learned in that camp setting," he says. "If you can manage 30 children in a cabin, you can manage 30 adults in a job."

The Toronto native runs an e-mail marketing company called Elite Email. It helps clients create and target their mailing lists to maximize views.

"We can show you a map of the world and show you where people opened your e-mail," he says, adding that they can even narrow it down to the best times of days and days of the week to send out an e-mail.

Burko recently won the business-of-the-year award in the under-30 category at the Toronto Board of Trade Business Excellence Awards.

"It's great to be recognized in my own city," he says. "All that hard work and all those late nights and early mornings, it validates it in a sense."

Burko says he has always been drawn to technology, and although he was too young to take part in the Internet boom, he watched what succeeded and what failed and used that information to find his niche.

"I have the entrepreneurial spirit in my bones," he says, explaining his father, who started his own business, inspired him. "Ever since I was young, I knew I wanted to pave my own path instead of following someone else's path."

Burko describes himself as a leader and a motivator, explaining that he views his work ethic, drive and passion to succeed as contagious, and credits his parents' advice to always work hard.

Additionally, he says he remembers looking up to many successful people in the Jewish community and hearing that they began with very little, but studied hard and worked until they succeeded. Their stories inspired him to follow suit. As a self-described workaholic, he says he jumps between two modes: work or fun.

"There's no middle ground," he says.

It hasn't always been easy sailing for the company. Burko recounts spending months and even years building the company, and he remembers feeling that success was far out of his reach.

However, he pressed on, thanks to the positive attitudes of his family and friends, responding to their encouragement by pushing harder.

"They were so supportive around me that I was able to feed off that positivity," he says. "It was the quickest way to get me out of the rut."

He recalls the excitement of, for the first time, signing up a customer who wasn't a family member or friend.

Since then, he's served thousands more, located in more places than he can name on a map, he says. Additionally, he has hired staff in Canada, the United States, China, India and Finland.

He says it is due to the borderless nature of his business that he could expand internationally so successfully.

"All [our staff] needs is an Internet connection," he says. "When I hire for jobs, I can find the best talent possible. It doesn't matter where you're located."

Apart from his business, Burko co-founded Step by Step Africa, a charity aimed to fight HIV and AIDS in African countries. The organization focuses on women who have HIV or AIDS, and it aims to prevent the illness from being passed on to their children.

Burko says he's heard that about 10 children have been protected thanks to the program.

"I feel great about it and I'm so happy to help," he says. "We've changed lives."

He says he enjoys participating in the charity and watching those around him step up to the plate to help.

Despite all his success in business, he says his greatest achievement in life is his family. He married his wife, Michelle, three years ago, and they have been together for 13 years in total.

"[The company] could not have been here without her," he says, explaining that she doesn't work at Elite Email anymore, but was actively involved in every part of the business throughout its early stages.

As Burko reached each bit of success, he has aimed higher. He says that each time the company reaches a new milestone or wins another award, he takes a short break to celebrate before quickly moving onto the next target.

"We're at an all-time high, and I think in the future, things will get even bigger," he says, adding that he hopes to put Canada on the map as a leader in e-mail marketing.

For those young entrepreneurs looking to follow in Burko's footsteps, he says the best piece of advice he could give is to always be optimistic.

"You're going to run into problems," he says, "but as long as you stick with it, stay positive and work hard, good things will come."

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'Thank you' is mandatory

Dear Ella,

About six months ago my grandson Adam had a bar mitzvah. It was small and took place on a long weekend. Invitations were sent out, and I knew some people wouldn't be attending, since they had already made other commitments for the holiday weekend.

Some of the invited were relatives, and knowing my relations, I knew they would still send a gift anyway. I told my son and daughter-in-law this, and asked that they make sure all the relatives who send a gift get thank you notes, not just the ones that attend. In all fairness, that's the right thing to do.

"Oh yes, of course," they both said. Well, here it is four months later, and I got a call from one of my relatives asking me if Adam received her gift. She went on to say, "I know the cheque was cashed, but I'm not sure if Adam knows it was from me, as I never received any acknowledgement."

What should I do? Should I call my son and find out why nothing was mailed? I feel terrible and am quite upset. I'm ready to let them know how I feel, but I'm afraid of what the outcome will be if I open my mouth. I hope you can offer your opinion.

Inconsiderate

Dear Inconsiderate,

It's unfortunate that you've been put in this position. You may feel this reflects badly on you and are concerned that people will think poorly of your family. As a grandmother, that's the last thing you want. The fact is, it's not your gift-giving relative that put you in this position, it's Adam and his parents who need to shoulder the blame. It's the job of the parents of the bar mitzvah boy to make sure this child understands and appreciates what it means to receive a gift.

Often in families there is so much happening with school and extra-curricular activities that there's not enough time in a day to fit in mundane tasks such as writing personalized thank-you notes. What a horrible lesson to teach a child.

Thank-you notes should arrive at the home of the gift giver no later than three months after the event. Ideally, they should be written within two weeks and sent out immediately while the event is still fresh. If possible, they should be hand written and personalized with the giver's name and type of gift. If it's cash, it can say "Your generous gift will help with my education, my trip, my Xbox, whatever." Just make it personal.

People have put their hard-earned, after-tax dollars into this gift, and it's mandatory that they're acknowledged in a timely and respectful manner.

Unfortunately, you're the one who's received the phone call, and it's up to you to relay the message. You don't need to preach. You just need to tell them exactly what was said. What they choose to do with that information is up to them. I might even ask Adam directly about the status of the thank-you cards, in front of his parents. If anyone argues or makes excuses, just say, "Don't shoot the messenger." Once the message is communicated, you've done your job.

Ask Ella

By Ella Burakowski

Readers may submit their questions to Ella at The CJN, *e-mail: ellacjn@gmail.com. But Ella is not a professional counsellor. She brings to the questions posed by readers her unique brand of earthy wisdom. Her advice is not a replacement for medical, legal or any other advice. For serious problems, consult a professional.*

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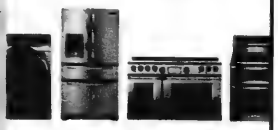

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On cjnews.com

The CJN's French-language reporter in Montreal, Elias Levy, writes about:

The Jewish General Hospital, which is the first hospital in Canada to perform complex robot-assisted surgery to remove a pancreatic tumour. At right, Dr. Tsafrir Vanounou.

Exclusive to cjnews.com in Hebrew

There is nothing like celebrating Tu b'Shvat in Israel.

Exclusive to cjnews.com

The University of Windsor has removed three globes from its Leddy Library after complaints that the State of Israel had been defaced on them.

The Agence France-Presse, an international news service, claims there are X-rays that substantiate the caption of a recent photograph allegedly depicting Israeli army brutality. Yet, after checking Palestinian, international and Israeli sources, it appears that the "injured worker," was, in fact, not actually injured. Moreover, there is no evidence that he was even run over.

When Israel is accused of persecuting NGOs, it is argued that progressives must not support Israel. But when Egypt raids the offices of NGOs, we are asked to give more financial assistance.

The importance of narrative

Everyone loves stories. It is almost universal practice for parents to read stories to children at bedtime. Every family social event is full of stories. It's common for parents to tell stories about our childhood, often about incidents when, as children, we probably remember wishing we could remove ourselves from the conversation because something we found embarrassing was being said about us, or we found ourselves rolling our eyes as we heard the same story being retold. For those involved in the care of our elders, stories are often integral to the fabric of our relationship. It's not surprising that, in the world of the arts, a narrative plays a very important role as the basis of the presentation.

I recently experienced the power of narrative in our lives again when I attended a Chicago play with my sister, Diane, with whom I often share stories about our lives together and our parents, both of whom are now deceased. The play, *The Last Act of Lilka Kadison*, was one in which the Holocaust played an important role, but this in itself was not enough to make it compelling.

The protagonist, Lilka, was being looked after in her home by a personal caregiver, a common phenomenon familiar to many people with aging parents. My father had a very devoted caregiver, Mario, who lived with him for five years and became an integral part of his life up until his death, which profoundly affected Mario, as if he were part of our family.

Senior Side of Life

Michael Gordon

What made the narrative in Lilka's story so compelling was her recollections, during the days of her illness, to Menelik, a new male caregiver. She told him of a short-lived relationship and love affair she had just before her small Polish shtetl was overrun by the Nazis. Her family were killed, as was her lover eventually, but not before she became pregnant with his child. This son was, until the story is revealed in her narrative to Menelik, deemed to be the child of Lilka's late husband, who never knew the truth.

Lilka rejects the overture by her son, who lives out of town, to come to her during the illness that has required the caregiver, whom he arranged for. Menelik is able to unravel the story as he exposes his own narrative that intersects Lilka's and resonates with her.

The play has only four characters: Lilka as the old lady, Lilka as a young woman, Ben Ari Adler, the young lover, and Menelik. The flashbacks and many associations are the power of the narrative, and it resonated with the audience, who likely recognized that as we age, we often dwell more on our past. The future seems to hold less promise and the past often becomes more prominent.

This is very important for family members to recognize and cherish, especially in the face of illnesses such as dementia, which may make remembering new experiences more difficult, whereas the past always seems to remain, sometimes in ways that can be disconcerting to family members.

The repetition of stories can be difficult for family members. It is worst when the past contains horrific experiences that are relived, and it can be very disquieting and at times disabling to the individual. It requires fortitude, patience and skill for family members to balance the best of the narratives with the worst and show the forbearance that is often required for the person we love to have the best experience possible during this very trying period of life.

Dr. Michael Gordon is medical program director of palliative care at Baycrest and co-author with Bart Mindszenthy of Parenting Your Parents (Dundurn Press). His latest book, Moments that Matter: Cases in Ethical Eldercare, follows his previous book, Brooklyn Beginnings: A Geriatrician's Odyssey. All can be researched at his website: http://www.drmichaelgordon.com.

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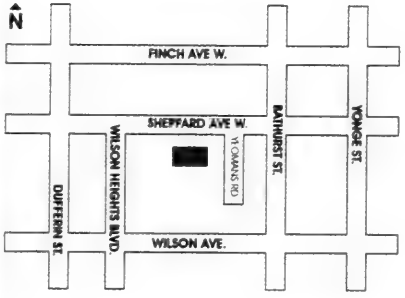

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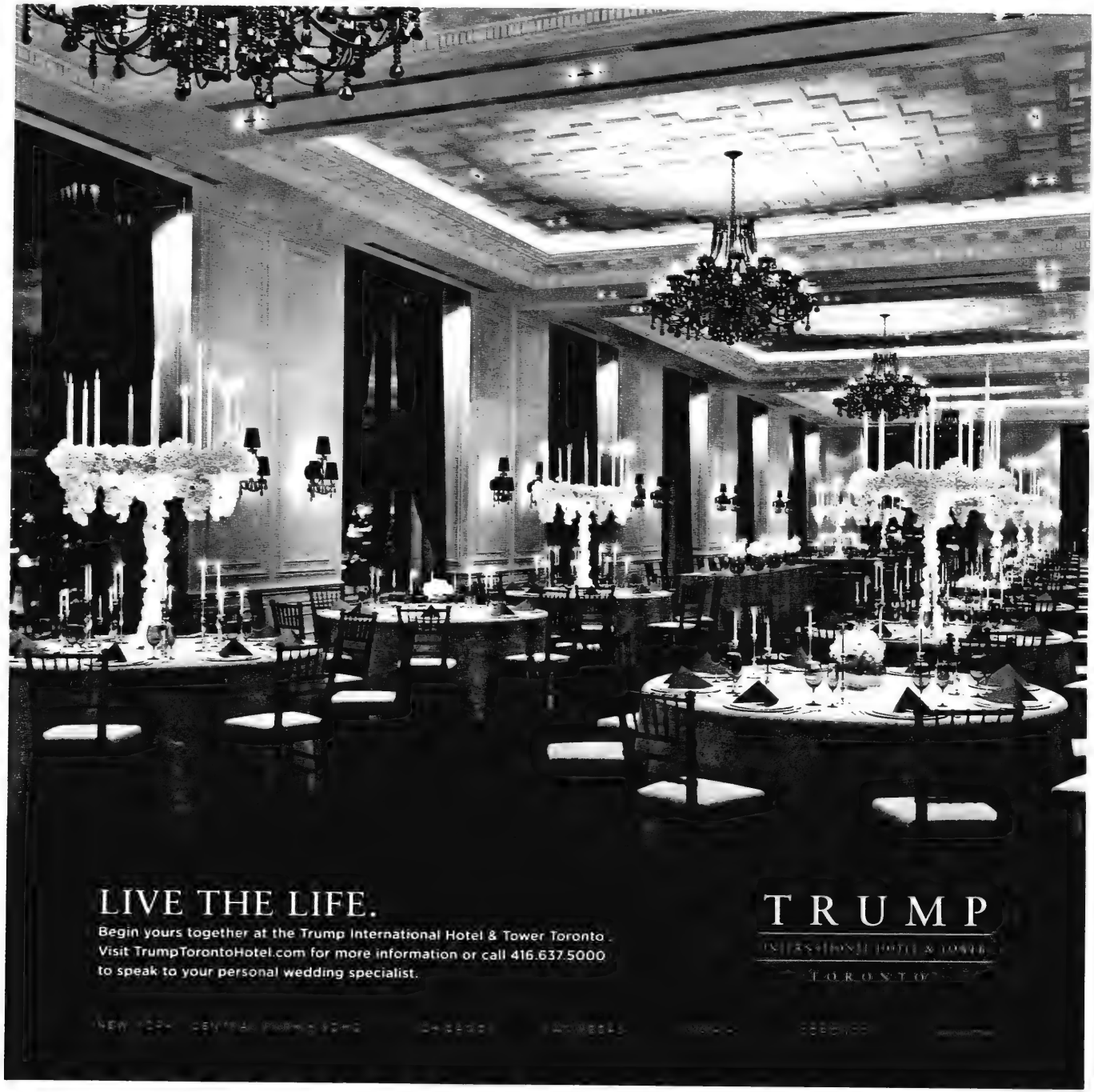
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Then and now: trends change, traditions remain

Bar mitzvah celebrants in 1948 rejoice as they dance the horah.

Elaine Cohen
Supplements Co-ordinator

Just browse through a photo album of a bar mitzvah held in 1948 at Congregation Shaar Hashomayim in Westmount and you'll realize that fashions and social trends may change, but traditions remain the same.

"I remember my cousin Lawrence's bar mitzvah," says Bella Wiseberg, now 83. "It was a double celebration because it closely followed the official declaration of the State of Israel. Everyone really enjoyed dancing the horah." *Tsena Tsena, Bei Mir Bist Du Shein* and *Hava Nagila* were popular tunes.

Today's seniors are often nostalgic for the post-World War II era. Leafing through photo albums, Wiseberg took time out to reminisce and make comparisons.

After marrying a man from the United States in 1954, Wiseberg settled in New York. But she never forgot all the fun she had growing up in Montreal, and still visits to attend family simchahs.

Religious customs haven't changed much, Wiseberg says. At her cousin's bar mitzvah, he was called up to the Torah on Saturday morning. Following services, the congregation attended a kiddush hosted by the family. After Shabbat, relatives and friends were invited back to the shul for dinner and dancing.

But not everything has stayed the same. "Maybe I'm old-fashioned," Wiseberg says, "but I miss some things."

Formal reception lines are no longer de rigueur, and Wiseberg admits many were happy to see them go. "Some people felt it was an imposition, having to line up and wait in turn to wish the hosts and celebrants a hearty mazel tov. Perhaps they thought everyone would have an opportunity to shmooze and wish mazel tov during the function, but it doesn't always work out that way."

Whenever she attends a reception today, whether in Montreal, Toronto or New York, Wiseberg invariably encounters another disconcerting social convention. "For sure, young people will poke fun at my age for this one." Usually, dinner and dancing coincide, she says. While dinner is served, the band plays and guests continuously leave the table for the dance floor.

"The music is so loud that I find it a strain to talk or follow a conversation, even though someone may be seated close by. It's especially frustrating for those of us who live out of town and want to catch up on things. Sure, there is e-mail today but it doesn't replace conversing in person."

As for styles, Wiseberg wishes she had kept some of her fashions. "I notice even hats are making a comeback."

Many women still wear hats to synagogue, but in the 1940s and early '50s, Wiseberg recalls, hats were in vogue for evening functions. So if a woman bought a dress or gown, she would often complement the ensemble with a hat. Gloves also made an important fashion statement. Depending on the outfit, women would also wear elbow or cuff-length gloves.

But as Tevye the Dairyman chanted in *Fiddler on the Roof*, "Tradition, Tradition!" Gloves and hats may change, but as Wiseberg has seen over the years, the traditions and warm family memories never will.

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Summer jobs at Centre Camp bring couple together

Amanda Cohen
Special to The CJN

Most little girls spend time daydreaming of what their "perfect" husband would be like – tall, funny, handsome, mature ... While I can say I am lucky enough to have three of the four. I won't say which three. I never thought I would meet anybody as amazing as Jason.

After my first year of university, I needed a summer job and a friend's mom suggested the Prosserman Jewish Community Centre's Centre Camp. I applied for an office job and was interviewed by the then-camp administrator and my now future sister-in-law, Jen, who hired me. That summer, I quickly made friends with Jason – he's an easy person to love. He immediately made me laugh and put a smile on my face.

That summer, Jason broke his arm and begged me to help him put his contacts in. It was also that summer that he invited me to a movie along with a few staff members. When I went to the wrong theatre, he bought me a ticket and waited outside for me until I found it. After the movie, he walked me to my car in the underground parking lot to make sure I was safe.

The summer ended, a whole year passed, and then I came back to work at Centre Camp the next summer. Surprise, surprise, Jason did, too. He commented on my hair looking pretty, and when he found out I was single, he asked me out for a date that Friday. We went out, I spilled ice cream all over myself, and we have been dating ever since.

I am so lucky to have such a special and amazing relationship. As cliche as it sounds, I truly have found my very best friend. I knew after that first date that he was

Jason and Amanda

"the one." Actually, on our second date, I had such a good time, I thanked him and said, "Bye, I love you" by accident. I was so embarrassed, but Jason made me laugh about it and forgot it quickly.

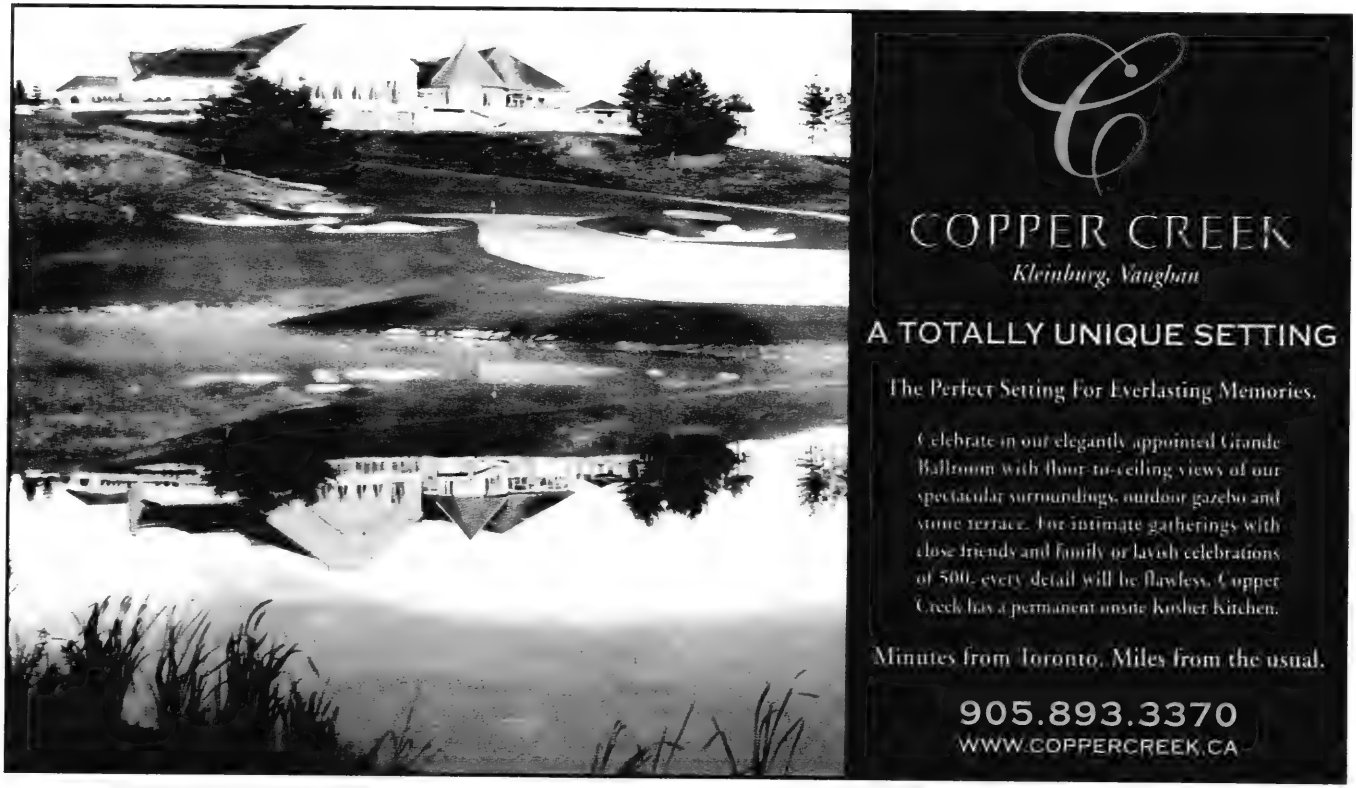
So in August 2011 when Jason and I – still working at Centre Camp together – had to go to a weekly staff meeting, I didn't find it unusual for him to first ask me out for dinner.

He had been telling me for weeks that he'd found the perfect book for me, one I would love, and he'd pre-ordered it. I didn't find this strange. Jason knows I love to read, however, he had given me an e-reader for my birthday, but I didn't question his ordering the book. I also didn't question Jason's brother bringing 50 packages of cocktail hotdogs to his mom's house, saying they were for a friend's barbecue later that week. A l'chaim to celebrate our engagement was the last thing on my mind.

On the day of our staff meeting, Jason told me to come upstairs and sit on the couch and close my eyes. I did, and he handed me the book. As a good girlfriend would, I acted excited when I saw it, gave him a kiss and said thank you, all while not noticing he was on one knee. I opened the flap of the 900-page book and began to read the description in a British accent. Honestly, the book seemed terrible, but so as to not disappoint my boyfriend, I pretended I was excited to receive this book on British history.

Jason was sweating profusely, and I still did not know anything was out of the ordinary until I put the book down and started flipping through the pages. What I found were not the wise words of a British author but rather a hole cut out, and in the middle of the book was my engagement ring. I started to cry, my heart pounding with excitement, and screamed "yes!" Then Jason told me he videotaped the entire thing.

I am so excited for my life with Jason. His wonderful family has welcomed me with open arms, and I am so lucky and excited to have them. Jason and I are getting married in July 2013, and I now know that a chance encounter, ice cream spill, and premature declarations of love were all important milestones into what has become the greatest adventure of my life. I will gladly help him put in his contacts for the rest of my life.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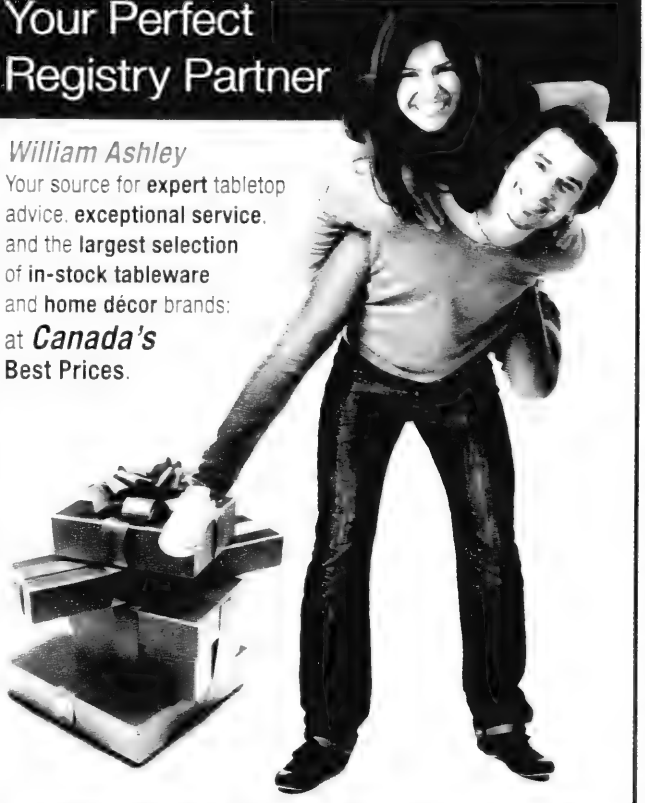

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Culinary tips save time, yield good results

Elaine Cohen
Supplements Co-ordinator

Before 1970, only 17 per cent of Canadian mothers with preschool children were in the workforce and the kitchen was a woman's domain. To reach female readers, magazine editors invariably included culinary tips addressed to brides in recipe columns and articles related to the home.

Today, more than two-thirds of mothers with preschoolers work outside the home. And men are also likely to be involved in shopping, meal and party preparations. Now both partners are bound to appreciate culinary tips that save time and yield good results.

For starters, check out these fruit- and vegetable-shopping tips. Cantaloupes should have a thick, close netting on the rind, which indicates best quality. Cantaloupes are ripe when the stem scar is smooth and the space between the netting is yellow-green. Honeydews are ripe when the rind has a creamy to yellowish colour and a velvety texture. Immature honeydews are whitish green. Ripe watermelons have some yellow colour on one side. Choose eating oranges that are heavy for their size. Smoother, thinner skins indicate more juice. Leafy carrot tops may mean fresh carrots, but the condition of the leaves on most root vegetables doesn't necessarily indicate freshness.

For recipes calling for peeled sweet potatoes, place them in a pot of cold water, bring it to a boil and then let it simmer for 30 minutes and the peel will come off easily.

When making a fruit salad, sprinkle apples, peaches and bananas with lemon juice. Otherwise, the fruit will tend to darken.

To avoid soggy salads, add dressing at the last minute.

To hard-boil eggs, place them in a pan with a pinch of salt and enough cold water to cover the eggs. Bring water to a boil and remove eggs from the heat after they have simmered for 20 to 30 minutes. Cover and let stand 20 minutes. Immediately rinse in cold water. When boiling eggs, some cooks prefer to add a teaspoon of vinegar to the water to prevent cracking. To keep yolks from crumbling when slicing hard-boiled eggs, wet the knife before each cut.

To separate the whites of an egg from the yolk, break the egg into a funnel. The white will seep through but the yolk will remain in the funnel. If a bit of egg yolk gets into the whites, touch the yolk with a damp cloth. The cloth will pick up the yolk quickly without mess.

Egg whites whip quicker and to a greater volume when brought to room temperature before beating.

After opening a container of ground coffee, make sure to cap it with a tight cover and store it in the freezer to retain flavour and freshness for subsequent brews.

If a drop of red wine spills on the tablecloth, dab the spot with some white wine and the stain will disappear.

When you're making soup, drop a leaf of lettuce into a pot of simmering soup to absorb the grease from the top.

To dilute a soup that's too salty or spicy, add a cut raw potato to the pot and discard the potato once it has boiled.

If a recipe calls for breadcrumbs and the pantry is bare but the breadbox is stocked with yesterday's challah, simply break up the bread and run it through a food processor. Place the processed pieces on a pan and bake for several minutes in a moderate oven.

To store unsweetened chocolate squares, keep wrapped in a cool pantry. If the wrapper becomes oily, that means the chocolate has deteriorated.

To soften hardened brown sugar, put a piece of fresh bread or a slice of apple or a few marshmallows in with the sugar. Then make sure to wrap the sugar in an air-tight plastic bag and keep it in the refrigerator or a cool place. Parchment paper placed on the surface of baking pans and grills saves a lot of messy cleanups.

Many delectable desserts can be prepared and assembled in springform pans. To avoid batter leaks, wrap the two-part springform pan in tinfoil. To ensure the dessert turns out intact, cool it completely before removing the outer ring of the springform pan. Chill the dessert until it is firm, then slide a metal spatula under the crust from several angles to loosen it and then place it on a serving dish.

[Elaine Cohen photo]

Keeping a journal can deepen ties between mates

Elaine Cohen
Supplements Coordinator

The years fly by and married couples are so busy attending to domestic, social and career commitments that they rarely take time to reflect on their relationship, let alone document each other's commendable qualities. However, American author and educator Raphael Cushnir has paved the way for such an enriching exercise in *Back to Us*, a couples journal of reconnection and growth.

This extraordinary hardcover coil-bound journal is distributed by Raincoast Books in Canada. The book is divided into four indent-tabbed sections. The author of several books, Cushnir is a popular guest on television shows and he also addresses audiences and leads seminars throughout North America.

In *Back to Us*, Cushnir aims to deepen the ties between husbands and wives by reflecting on worthy qualities and shared experiences. Cushnir's road map is designed to rekindle the spark that may lie dormant. Couples are provided with a platform to document their feelings. The instructions are simple and succinct. The colourful journal is embellished with a thick pad. It includes a template that reads: Exercise: Chapter: Name and Date. Other pages are set up for photos, notes and remarks. The neat little kit is easy to store and you only need a pen to get started.

Part 1 begins on a positive note with "Here we are" and an appreciation section follows. One partner starts off writing something he/she likes about the other and the spouse follows suit. The topic could be "Your kindness" and the idea is to jot down five relevant points. Other entries in the first part of the journal are "the most fun," "the biggest surprise," and "the great mystery." With regard to the latter, the author alerts couples to things they may have never considered. For example: "What makes her laugh at the oddest things?" The goal is to discuss these responses together. Partners are bound to discover more about each other.

Some pages include fill-in the blanks and certain questions could be public knowledge, but others should be kept private between husband and wife. The topics are similar to what couples discuss before they marry and eager to discover everything they can about each other's likes, including pet peeves, character traits, skills, inadequacies, thoughts, impressions, prejudices and quirks.

People see each other in a different light depending on the situation in which they meet and interact. For example, a wife may not really know as much about her husband as she thinks. He may interrelate differently with colleagues at work than he does with

[Raincoast Books in Canada photo]

family at home. Cushnir opens up this door with thoughts such as "If I only knew you" and she, in turn, poses the same question.

The journal also includes anecdotes that serve as an introduction to journaling. "Peas talks" is an example. The moral of the story is don't assume your spouse adores everything you wear or serve or how you act. A relationship should never be built on assumptions.

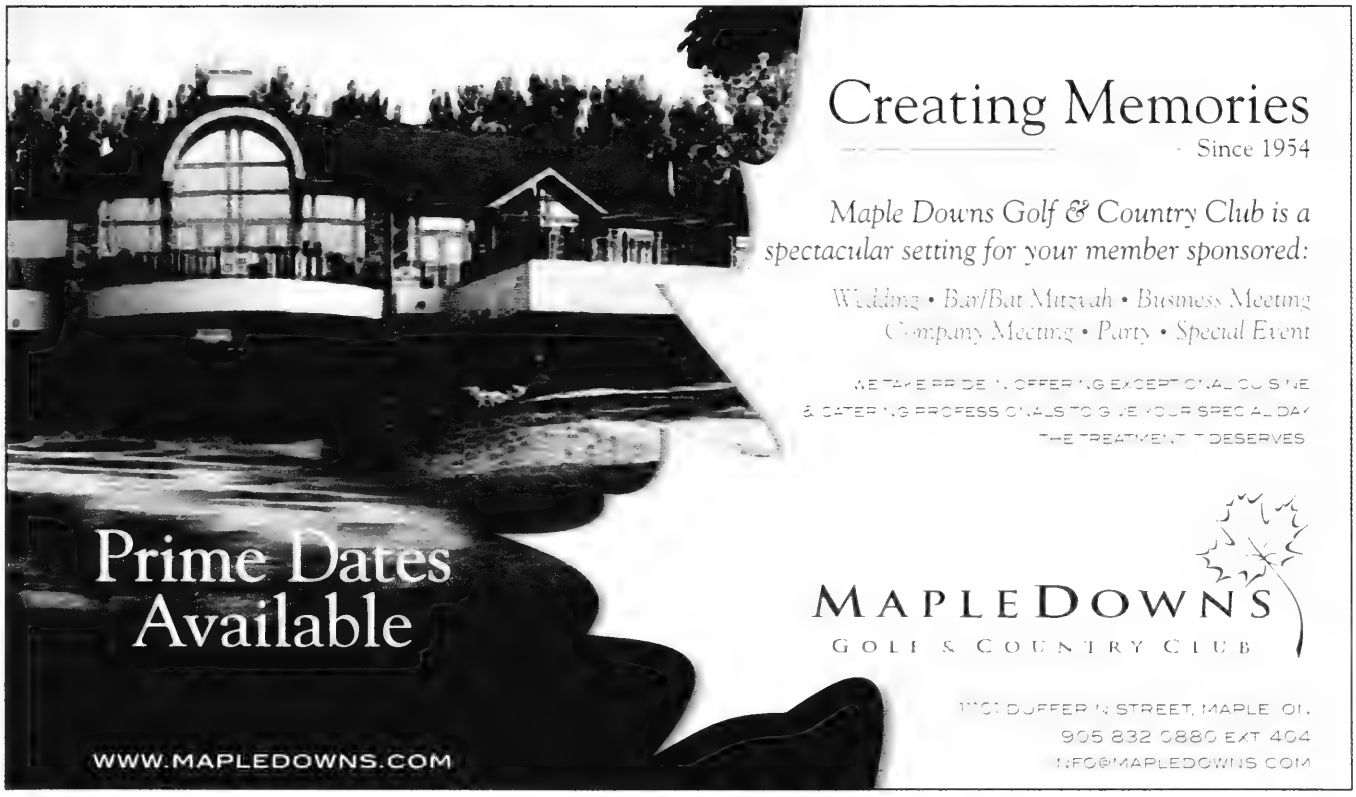
Part 2 of *Back to Us* deals with "How we got here." While some people like to dwell on the past, others prefer to forget it and move on. Regardless, the author helps couples find middle ground.

In Part 3, couples face the present by examining "How we're doing." On a pleasant note, they recall congenial days with each other. For instance, how they work, play and appreciate each other's values. With a list of 25 values, it helps to see how their value systems vary. Values run the gamut from freedom and beauty to integrity and serenity. In that same section, partners are asked to reveal their respective feelings about death.

Part 4 is titled "Better together." Once couples have reached this section, they are bound to have experienced a reconnection and better understanding of themselves. Here the entries deal with subjects such as comfort and discomfort zones, anger, fear, disappointment, stress and power struggles. In Part 4, the author suggests ways to address these issues. The journal ends with notes on negotiation.

Back to Us can serve as an ideal discovery channel. It also motivates a couple to take time to stop and think about their relationship.

If even a few couples appreciate each other more than before after doing the exercises in the book, the author will have accomplished a great service. Besides, it's a lot of fun to fill in the blanks and contribute to a personal journal.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My Jewish wedding in China

Dolly Biel
Special to The CJN

I was born in Tsingtao, the port city on the Yellow Sea, in the province of Shantung, China.

My grandfather, who was born in Russia, came to China during the building of the Trans-Siberian Railway, and prospered, supplying railroad ties for its construction. He consequently built the first hotel in Manchuria, completing it in 1905. This was a luxury hotel, offering all the amenities.

After its completion, he returned to Achensk, Russia, where he met his beautiful bride, and after courting her, he brought her to China, where he married her. She was my grandmother. My mother was one of her three daughters.

While I grew up in China, our family travelled extensively, then settled in the city of Tientsin (Tianlin), where I spent my formative years. That was where I went to school and met my future husband, Bob, when I was only 14 years old. After a courtship of four years, we finally got married.

On our wedding day, several man-pulled rickshaws came to take us to the synagogue. The one I mounted was padded with snow-white cotton. The fenders of the carriage gleamed and were embossed with highly polished brass inlaid dragons, whose scales shone like fire, and which had bright red bead eyes. The glass and brass carriage lanterns on each side of the fenders were also highly polished and gleamed, reflecting the light. The rickshaw-man was very proud of his new rickshaw and smiled widely when he saw me, as he was to have the honour of carrying the bride.

When we all arrived at the synagogue, I was ushered into a private room where my entourage was already waiting for me. There was my future mother-in-law, my mother, my Aunt Lucy, my cousin, a few of my very best girlfriends, and numerous female family members of my future husband.

I did not have to wait long. Soon, I was ushered into the main sanctuary of the synagogue, while Bob's uncle, the best man, escorted him, with a few men holding lighted candles down the steps that led to the main sanctuary.

My father and mother took me by both arms and led me slowly along the aisle to a chupah, right in front of the bimah. The chupah was decorated with garlands of green leaves and white flowers.

Dolly and Bob Biel on their wedding day

As I entered, I heard a hush from the people who sat on pews on either side of the aisle.

"She's gorgeous."

"She looks so tall and slim."

"Look at her figure."

While I approached the chupah, Bob was led to it by his uncle.

Finally, when we stood side by side, the rabbi started the ceremony. He made us walk around the chupah seven times, slowly led by the best man.

One wedding band was placed on my finger and another on Bob's finger. After the nuptials, a glass was brought to Bob and placed under his foot to be smashed. Then, with my veil raised, my husband came up to me and kissed me at last.

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Out of town guest impressed by politeness

Anita Szabadi-Gottesman
Special to The CJN

While in Toronto recently my son and I stopped at a deli on our way to the airport to pick up some sandwiches for the flight home. We chose some freshly squeezed juices to go along with our snacks and then quickly realized that we couldn't take our beverages through security. Our server listened in and cancelled our order without thinking twice. As we paid our bill, she wished us a safe journey and we were on our way.

Several things that happened in this short encounter are noteworthy. First, our server didn't snarl when we quickly changed our order. Second, she was kind enough to wish us a safe journey. So many of us go about our busy days without giving a thought to others. We were all taught by our parents to remember to say please and thank you, to help an elderly neighbour in need and, of course, to give up our seat in a bus or train to a senior citizen or pregnant woman.

These little signs of societal politeness have become mostly lost in our busy world. I always try to wait with an open door, pass it on to the next person coming through rather than let the door slam in the person's face, but only seldomly does the person thank me or even feign some acknowledgement.

I realize that we do things for other people because we want to, and because if we can help, we should and thank yous are not required, but even a little smile would be nice. We need to take more time in our daily, nondescript interactions with people. I'm convinced that if we did, long, difficult days would seem shorter and lighter.

An advertising agency in Toronto decided to take matters into its own hands and recently began a media campaign aimed at making Canada a better place while making each of us feel better. People for Good is a coalition formed to promote the generosity of spirit among Canadians. People for Good believe everyday good deeds such as giving up your seat on the subway or buying a coffee for a co-worker will not only make you happier, but that it will also make for a better Canada. In Montreal, Toronto and other major Canadian cities, billboards, newspaper ads, subway banners and online ads carry the message of People for Good, citing examples of simple daily human kindness as we go about our daily routines.

Little signs of societal politeness have become mostly lost in our busy world

They seem to be picking up on the Jewish tradition of tikkun olam – as one of their most recent ads that appeared in the *Gazette* stated, the campaign aims "to help make the world a better place, one good deed at a time."

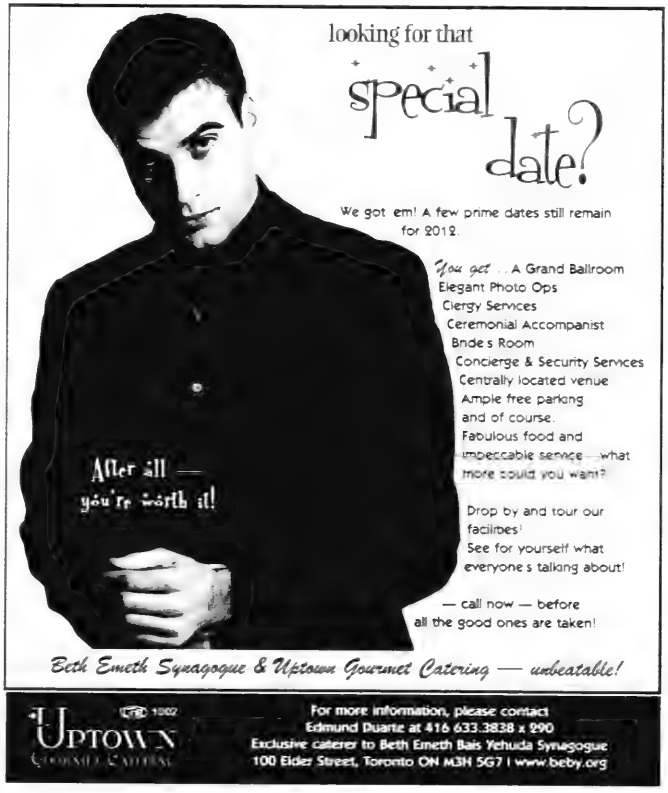
Their messages list simple acts of kindness that anyone can perform with ease.

The campaign was launched June 29 across Canada. It was co-founded by Mark Sherman, executive chair of Media Experts, a media strategy and negotiation company with offices in many major Canadian cities, along with Zak Mroueh, president and creative director of Zulu Alpha Kilo, a Toronto-based advertising agency specializing in rebranding. Their goal was to use their expertise and harness the power of creativity and the media for the collective good.

Mroueh states: "Advertising is often seen as an intrusion, asking us to buy something or buy into something. The People for Good campaign is certainly intrusive, too, but we intrude with a different kind of message. Simply put, that message is be aware of those around you, be nice to them."

Some of the suggested ways to be good and generous are as simple as taking the time to say hello to a neighbour and sharing an umbrella with a stranger when it's raining. Canadians are invited to add suggestions on the People for Good website. One recent suggestion was to remember to call your mother.

Visit the People for Good website at www.peopleforgood.ca.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Mah-jong game turns out a winning hand

Rebecca Unterman
Special to The CJN

It was an ordinary day last spring when I received a call from my grandmother. "Becca, I have someone I want you to meet," she told me excitedly.

Bubbie had been playing mah-jong with her friend, who suggested that they should introduce me to her great-nephew, Adam, who was really more like a surrogate grandson.

At first, I was a bit hesitant about the idea of a setup. I had been on a number of blind dates in the last few months and hadn't hit it off with anyone. I didn't expect Adam to be any different, but because my bubbie was so excited I agreed to give him a chance.

Adam and I first met at a Starbucks, and right away I knew this was not like any other first date I had been on. We had so much in common and the conversation flowed easily. We had grown up going to the same summer camps; he is a few years older than me so we never met, and we both have similar professions in the field of education. We joked that we probably should be rivals since he works for the Toronto District School Board and I work for the York Region District School Board. Even though he grew up in Kitchener, Ont., while I was in Thornhill, Ont., we still had very similar family values and visions for how we wanted to live our lives.

After that first date, we both knew that we wanted to see where this relationship could go. We spent the next several months happily dating, and as our six-month anniversary approached, Adam told me he wanted to take me away for a weekend. He refused to tell me any details before we left, and when we arrived at the airport, he revealed that we would be going to Quebec City.

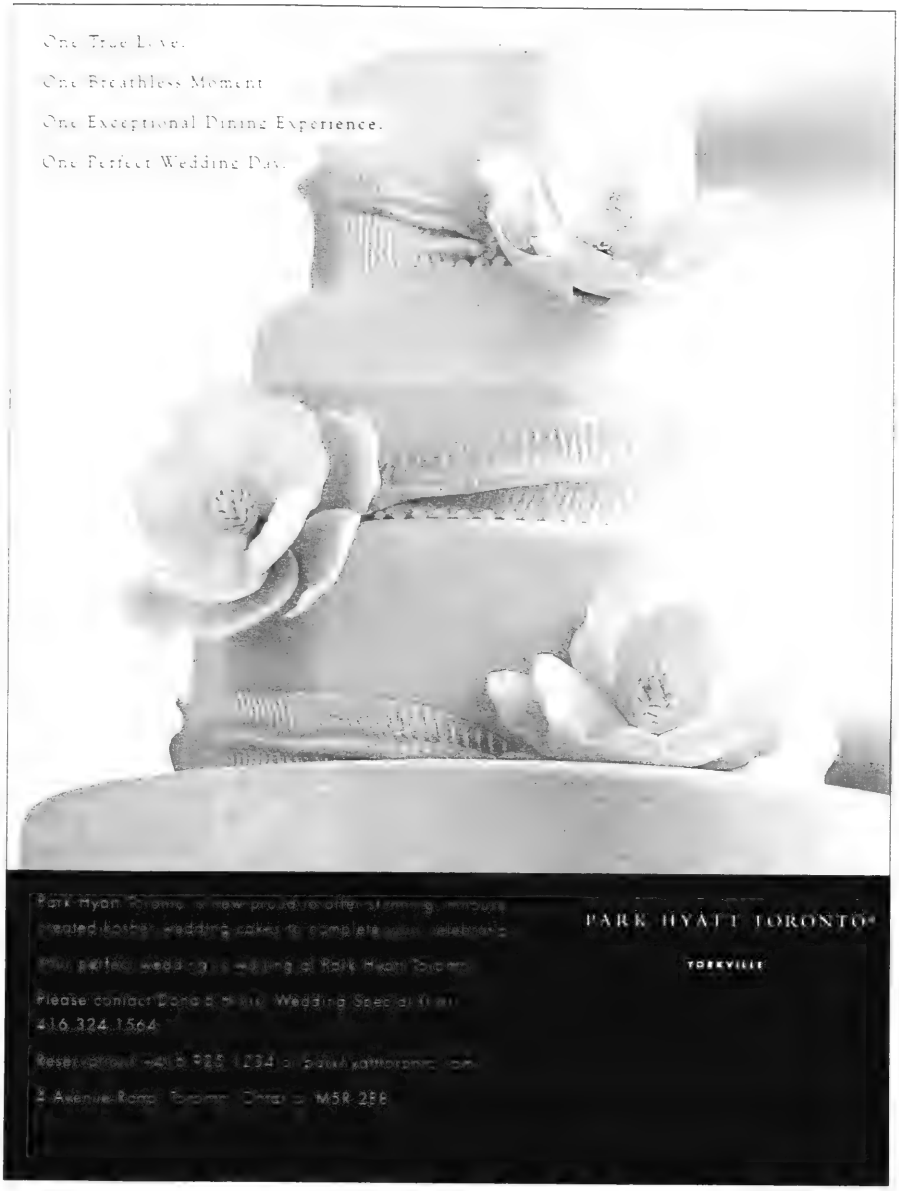
It was gorgeous weather that weekend, and we went for a romantic walk through the old city and to a delicious restaurant for dinner. I was having a wonderful time, but never expected that Adam had planned anything other than a weekend getaway. After dinner he told me he had a surprise for me. He told me to close my eyes, and when I opened them, he presented me with a beautiful necklace. He told me that was to celebrate the six months we had shared together.

I was thrilled with my gift, but Adam told me that he had another surprise planned. After a few minutes a horse and buggy walked up to us, and Adam told me we were going for a ride through the city. Thirty minutes into our ride Adam told me to get ready for one last surprise. I couldn't believe he still had something else planned. Once again, he told me to close my eyes. This time when I opened them, he was holding an engagement ring.

Without any hesitation, I accepted Adam's proposal. I had known from our first date that this relationship was important, so agreeing to marry him was a natural decision.

All of our family and friends are excited to celebrate our wedding with us in November, but no one is more thrilled than our two matchmakers. Those mah-jong tiles were lined up perfectly that day, and regardless of the results of that game, Adam and I were the real winners.

Adam and Rebecca



Make-ahead Shabbat meal

Daphna Rabinovitch
Special To CJN

Shabbat dinners are all about family – whether that is spouses, children, parents, siblings, friends and guests whom we treat and lovingly call family. At the end of the week it's a blessing to sit down with cherished ones eight times a month and share the Shabbat candles, the blessings for the children and wine and food in the company and conversation.

Such a joyful time especially when we are welcoming a new member into the family through marriage should not be stressful by a frantic rush to get in the guests in the door, in time and with what makes the main dish a glorious success properly. By preparing the sides and dishes ahead of time, the night of need never mind the work and be more relaxed and pleasurable.

The Coq Au Vin recipe must rest over the night. Shortly after an initial cooking the day before the meal and being reheated as directed in the recipe, the sauce will be tightening and ready to be topped off by mini sprigs

GARLICKY COQ AU VIN

This classic dish is a wonderful make-ahead. As the dish rests overnight the flavours meld and mellow. As an added bonus the fat from the chicken rises to the top, enabling the chef du jour to skim it off and reduce the calorie intake. Although not traditional, the inclusion of potatoes and carrots means you don't have to worry about a last minute side of vegetable dish. Choose a full-bodied red wine for optimal results.

- 3 chicken cut into serving pieces
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 2 leeks, white and light green parts only, thinly sliced
- 1 entire head garlic, separated into cloves, peeled and thinly sliced
- 1 1/2 cups pearl onions, peeled
- 2 tsp. dried thyme
- 1 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 1/2 tsp. pepper
- 1 lb. small mushrooms, cleaned, trimmed and quartered
- 1/4 cup all purpose flour
- 1 1/2 tsp. dried mustard powder
- 1 bottle (75 mL) dry red wine
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 16 small new potatoes
- 4 large carrots, cut into large chunks

Preheat oven to 350°. Heat oil in large saucepan or Dutch oven set over medium high heat. In batches, brown chicken on all sides, removing to clean plate as browned. Reduce heat to medium low.

Add leeks, garlic, pearl onions and 2 tbsp. of water, stirring to scrape up any browned bits from bottom of pan. Cook, stirring often for 10 minutes. Stir in flour and dried mustard. Cook, stirring for 1 minute. Pour in wine and chicken stock. Bring to boil. Add chicken back to pot along with bay leaf and potatoes.

Cook, covered, in centre of preheated oven for 75 minutes. Cool to room temperature. Refrigerate overnight. Skim fat off top. Bring to room temperature for 30 minutes. Add carrots to pot.

Rewarm in centre of oven at 350 for 65 minutes or until carrots are tender and meat is falling off the bones. Remove and discard bay leaves. Makes 8 servings.

Continued on page B11

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End your meal with a light sweet

Continued from page B10

GREENS WITH PEAR AND POMEGRANATE SEEDS

Tart and refreshing, this green salad with its acidic tones serves as a terrific foil for the richness of the Coq Au Vin. The greens can be tossed with the pomegranate seeds the night before and refrigerated alongside the vinaigrette and pear slices. Be sure to choose ripe juicy pears.

3 pears, peeled, cored and sliced
3 tbsp. lemon juice
3 cups torn arugula
5 cups mixed spring greens
2/3 cup pomegranate seeds or dried sweetened cranberries

Vinaigrette
1 shallot, finely chopped
3 tbsp. sherry vinegar
1 tsp. Dijon mustard
1/4 tsp. salt and pepper
1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil

Place pear slices in non-metal bowl. Pour in lemon juice, tossing gently until pears are well coated. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 8 hours or for up to 24 hours. In bowl, toss together arugula and spring greens with pomegranate seeds. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 8 hours or up to 24 hours. In separate bowl, stir together shallots, sherry vinegar, mustard, salt and pepper. Gradually, in thin stream, whisk in olive oil. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for up to 3 days.

Bring pears, greens and vinaigrette to room temperature for 30 minutes. Remove pears from lemon juice; pat dry. Scatter pear slices on top of salad. Pour vinaigrette over and toss gently. Makes 8 servings.

MANGO RASPBERRY SORBET

3/4 cup granulated sugar
4 large ripe mangoes, peeled
2 tbsp. orange juice
1 cup fresh raspberries
pinch salt

In saucepan, combine sugar and 1/2 cup water. Bring to a boil. Cook for 1 minute until all of sugar is dissolved. Set aside.

Cut mango flesh away from pit; place in bowl of food processor. Puree until smooth. Pour syrup and juice into food processor; pulse until smooth. Stir in salt.

If making in ice cream machine, freeze according to manufacturer's directions. Before placing in freezer, fold in raspberries. Or, transfer mixture to 13x9-in. baking pan. Freeze, stirring, every 20 minutes, until frozen. Freeze overnight. Before serving, defrost for 20 minutes. Cut into chunks; buzz in food processor until smooth. Fold in raspberries. Serve immediately. Makes 8 servings.

Jewish wedding celebrations in Stockholm

Anita Szabadi-Gottesman
Special to The CJN

On an unseasonably warm April evening in Stockholm, we approached the walkway of the Royal Swedish Opera house, nestled along the scenic waterways of the city.

The unmistakable sounds of klezmer music could be heard, along with the refrain of *Simen Tov* and *Mazel Tov*. As if finding ourselves in a daydream, we looked up at the second floor of this historic building, and through the floor-to-ceiling windows, we could see revellers dancing around the bride and groom. Men sporting kippot alongside women dressed in elegant cocktail attire held hands, joining in one energetic horah after another. What was seemingly a mirage was actually a Jewish wedding in modern-day Stockholm.

While there were some Jews living in Sweden by the early 1700s, it was not until the latter part of the century that Jews were able to legally settle in Sweden without converting to Christianity. By the early 20th century, the population had reached 6,500, largely based on immigration from Russia and Poland.

Sweden is the birthplace of Raoul Wallenberg, who saved thousands of Jews during World War II using his diplomatic status.

Sweden has always played a large role in my consciousness, as my mother, an Auschwitz survivor, found refuge in Sweden after the war. She worked in a factory in Stockholm for three years, before she left for Montreal. She often spoke fondly of her years in Sweden and the friends she made there.

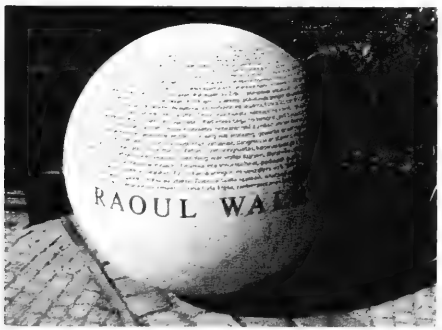
My recent trip to Sweden was as a tourist. My son and I explored this beautiful seaside city while my husband attended a work-related meeting. Of course, we visited the requisite museums and walking paths, but my goal was to find out as much as possible about the present-day Jewish community and to try to imagine the daily life my late mother led there.

The Great Synagogue in Stockholm
[Anita Szabadi-Gottesman photos]

Walking near the tourist port just east of Stockholm's downtown core, I found myself following a set of rusted railroad tracks, seemingly leading toward the business district. The tracks led to a large monument dedicated to Raoul Wallenberg. The backdrop to the monument is the Great Synagogue of Stockholm, the city's main synagogue.

The gates surrounding the synagogue opened as a middle-aged man, who turned out to be head of the shul's chevra kadisha, was backing out of the parking lot. He obliged my gesture to roll down his window and ended up spending nearly an hour with me, talking about his life as a Jew in Stockholm. I found out that he, too, was the child of survivors who had settled in Sweden after the war, and he regaled me with stories about his childhood there.

Continued on page B13



The Raoul Wallenberg Memorial sits at the end of a set of railroad tracks in Stockholm.

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Thriving Jewish community

Continued from page B12

He spoke of growing up with no overt antisemitism.

Stockholm has a population of approximately 15,000 Jews. The country has a Jewish population of about 16,000 out of Sweden's overall population of nine million. Stockholm has three synagogues: two Orthodox and one Conservative, with smaller Swedish towns such as Gotebong and Malmo having at least one each. Jewish cemeteries are found in many communities across the country.

The man spoke with pride about Stockholm's thriving day school and the Jewish museum. From his car he handed me a copy of the community's bimonthly newsletter and also mentioned the weekly Jewish radio program.

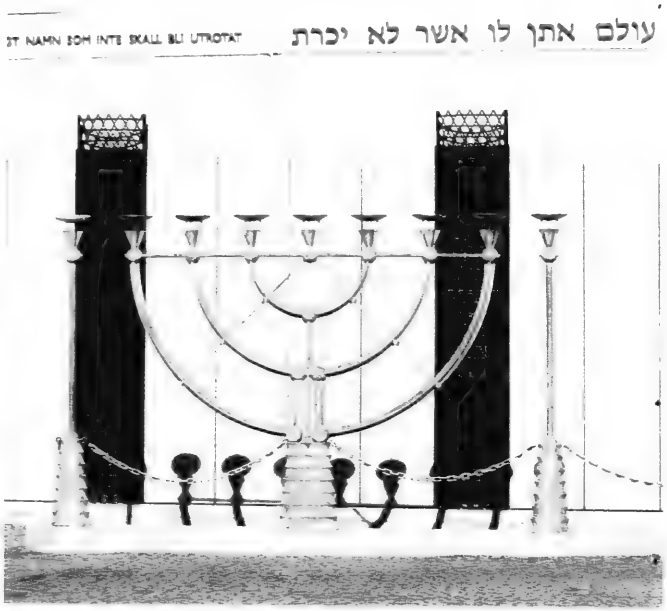
My son and I next went to the Jewish museum, where the curator, a Swedish Jew dating back several generations, gave us a few minutes of her time as she was awaiting a group of schoolchildren for a tour of the museum. She urged us to spend some time studying the museum's collection of Swedish and Scandinavian Judaica as well as the story of the history of Swedish Jews, which is brought to life through a cleverly done short film.

I was most anxious to study the photos of immigrants arriving by the boatload to Stockholm harbour after World War II. Although I didn't spot my mother, I could see the expressions of joy and thankfulness in the passengers' faces as they disembarked to begin their lives anew.

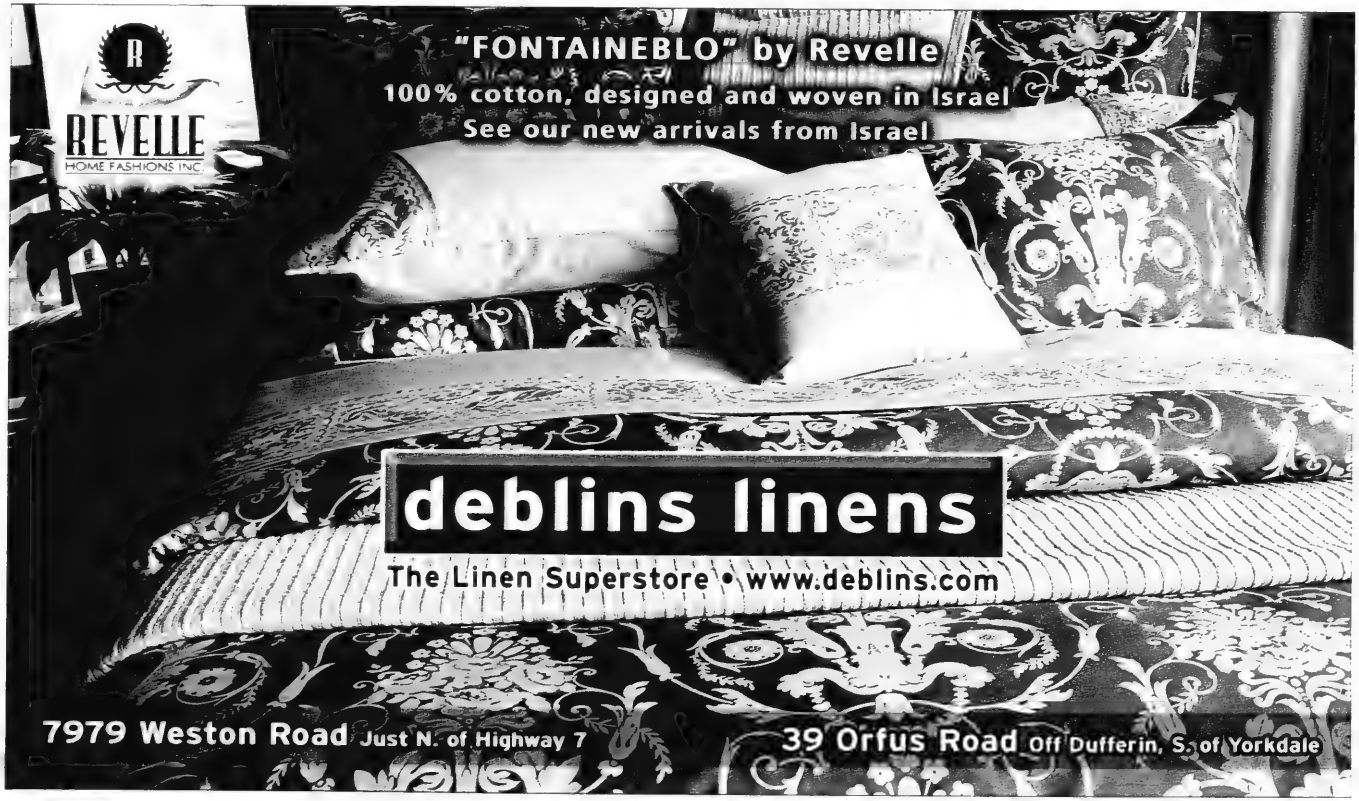
The museum also boasts many world-class short-term exhibits.

Guided tours of Jewish Stockholm are offered on several websites and can be booked in advance.

The Jewish museum in Stockholm is visited by tourists and local schoolchildren throughout the year.



The Holocaust Memorial Wall is adjacent to the main synagogue in Stockholm.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Greening your simchah

Shayla Gunter-Goldstein.
Special to The CJN

It's not easy being green, especially when it comes to planning a simchah. In this age of environmental awareness, however, families are committed to reducing, reusing and recycling. They are carrying forward this dedication to their planning of bar and bat mitzvahs and weddings.

More than just the three Rs, a green trend is emerging from the United States that is seeing families taking extra steps toward ensuring that their simchah has as little of an environmental impact as possible. E-vites over paper invitations, purchasing carbon offsets for out-of-town guests, buying local and seasonal flowers or renting reusable centrepieces, and using organic and local food are all ways that families are strengthening their commitment to being eco-conscious at their celebration.

While eco-consciousness is blazing into wedding planning, slower progress is being made with bar and bat mitzvahs. Teens are becoming ethically conscious, though, undertaking mitzvah projects and making donations to charities in honour of their guests. Some teens are twinning their celebration with a child who perished in the Holocaust, as a way to commemorate their lives. Volunteering at food banks or participation in out-of-the-cold programs are other popular projects. Such projects are often required as part of synagogue or school bar and bat mitzvah courses. Simchah baskets are widely used now as centrepieces. Filled with books, school supplies or food, the contents are later donated to organizations such as Zareinu or Tomchei Shabbes – both popular choices in Toronto.

Such projects help elevate the simchah, and it becomes more to the teen than just a party. "It's about what kind of person they want to become and what they can give back to the community," says Tamara Temes, a Toronto event planner. "It's putting the mitzvah back into bar and bat mitzvah."

But what about really "going green" at a bar or bat mitzvah? What if your child is a dedicated vegetarian or is committed to slowing global warming?

Temes suggests that if "your child is concerned about the environment, incorporate their passion into their special day." She offers ideas as simple as ensuring your venue is committed to recycling and composting, to centrepieces that are rented from an environmental charity, to group projects in which your teen can participate with their friends, such as planting trees or a community garden, or cleaning up a park. "For those truly committed to environmental awareness, their project might be to request that batteries, cellphones and other electronic waste is brought to the party and, after the weekend, take everything to a depot for proper disposal."

Such actions are about awareness and about having kids, parents and guests think outside their own world. You can help educate your guests by explaining the project on place-cards or programs for your event, or the greener option of having a simchah website, which explains why your child wanted to contribute to a particular cause.

As for greening the décor at a simchah, event planner Karen Garscadden's experience includes "flowering centrepieces meant to be replanted or totally edible centrepieces with fruit and chocolates." Clients are opting for rented props and away from live, cut florals, and seed-infused, plantable place-cards are quite popular.

"Parents want to set an example and are teaching children to have a social conscience. They are suggesting donations to a favourite charity instead of gifts, or encouraging children to donate a portion of their gift money to charitable causes," Garscadden says.

In wedding planning, couples are opting to register for gifts that match their values through unique registries, such as the Alternative Gift Registry (www.alternativegiftregistry.org).

Continued on page B21

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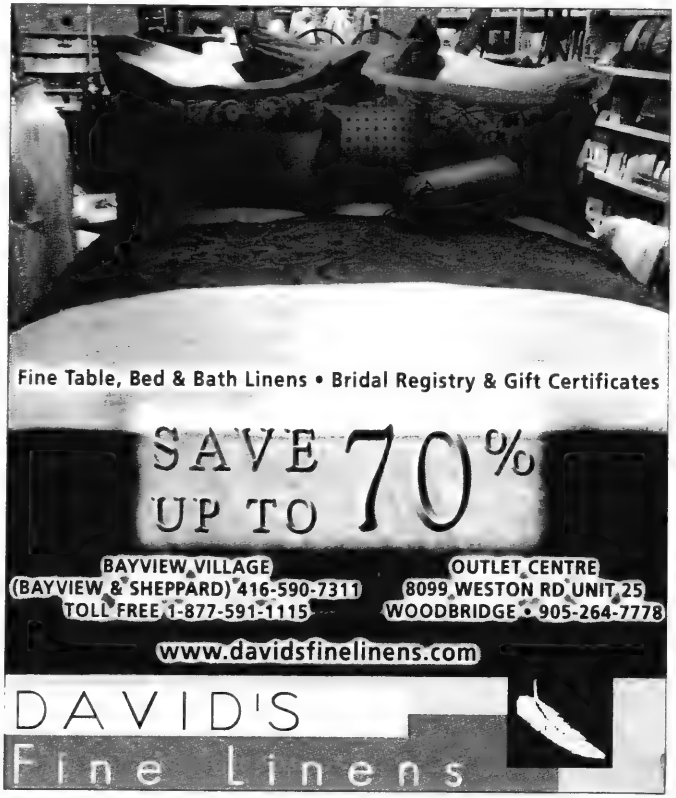

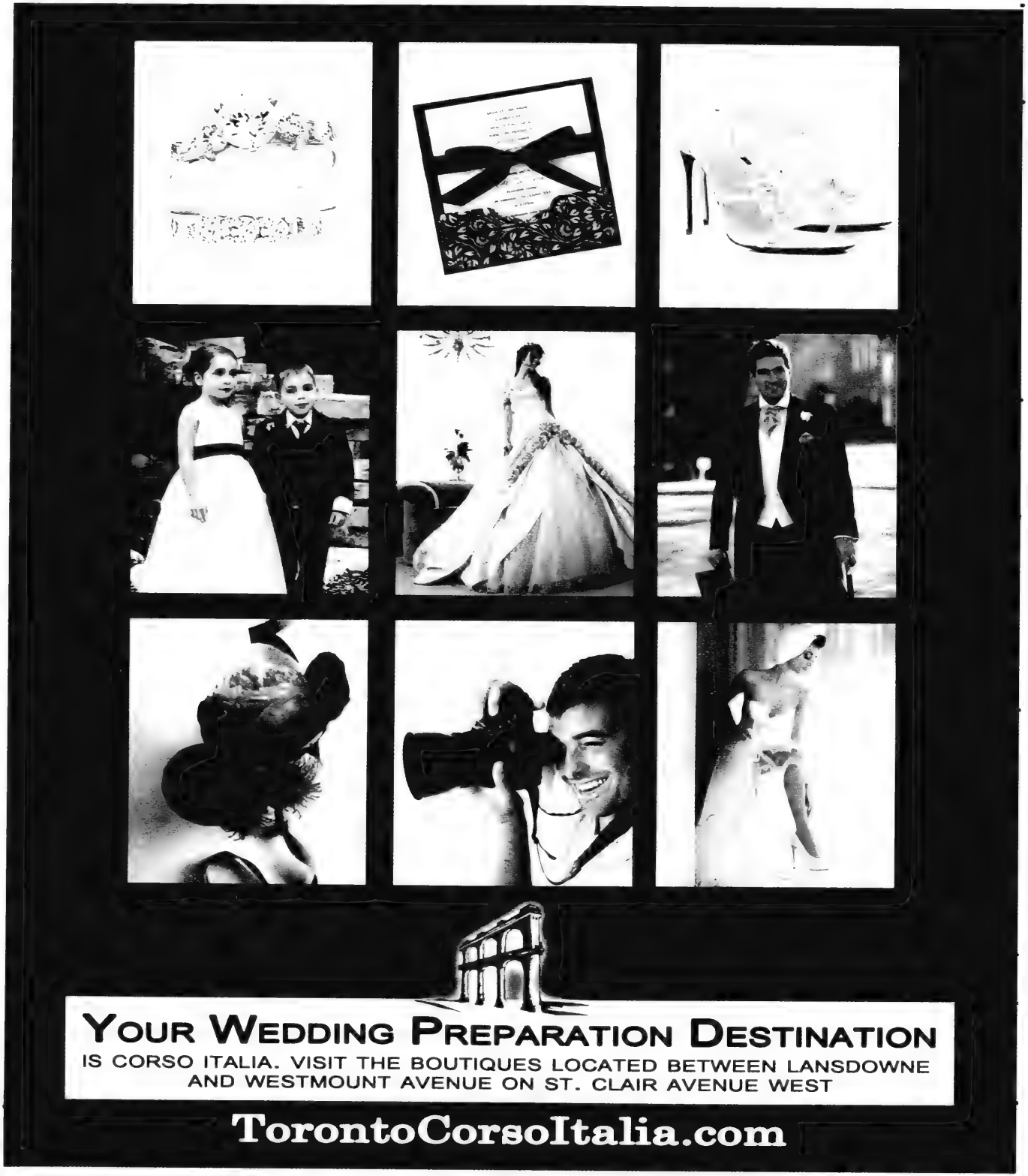
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Websites for planning eco-conscious simchahs

Shayla Gunter-Goldstein
Special to The CJN

Jews United for Justice's Green and Just Celebration Guide
www.juf.org/green_just_celebrations

Designed to help families make ethical choices that reflect Jewish values, the booklet offers specific suggestions for how families can make purchasing choices for their special day in ways that are mindful of workers' rights and environmental impact. The resource section has dozens of excellent and helpful links.

Progressive Jewish Alliance's Green and Just Celebration Guide
http://pjalliance.org

PJA's guide provides resources for families to incorporate values of social justice and sustainability while planning weddings, bar or bat mitzvahs, or any other celebration.

Green Bride Guide
www.greenbrideguide.com/

Brainchild of author Kate Harrison, this companion website to the book of the same name features a large green resource directory, tips, real-life stories and articles on every aspect of planning a green wedding. There's even an online course to become a certified green wedding planner.

Canfei Nesharim
http://canfeinesharim.org

This Orthodox organization's mission is to provide a Torah-based approach to understand and act on the relationship between traditional Jewish sources and modern environmental issues. Canfei Nesharim develops programs and materials and provides access to Torah-based environmental resources. They seek to educate both those in the Orthodox Jewish community and those in the wider Jewish community about these issues, and promote an ongoing dialogue about our Torah-mandated responsibility to protect the environment.

JNF's Go Neutral Calendar
http://support.jnf.org/goneutral

You can use this carbon offset site to calculate your own or your guests' carbon footprint for travel to your wedding. Calculate your impact on the planet and become "neutral" by planting trees in Israel.

Evite.com
http://new.evite.com

The main online source of electronic invitations, this website includes templates and a help section to assist in the creation of lovely and personal invitations.

The Jewish Wedding Network
www.jewishweddingnetwork.com/

An excellent resource for learning about all aspects of Jewish weddings, this website feature a link to an article and tip list on greening your Jewish wedding.

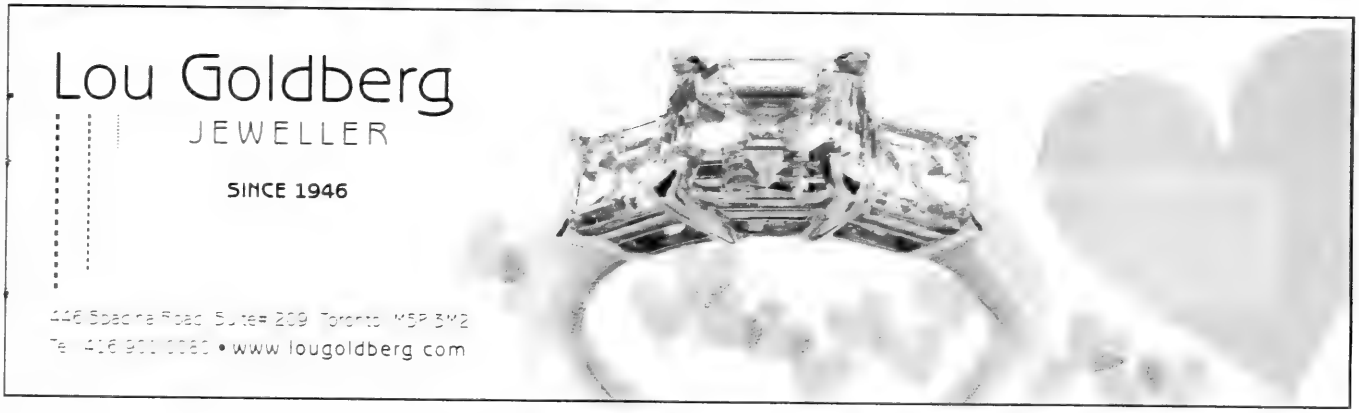
The Alternative Gift Registry
www.alternativegiftregistry.org/

This site encourages non-material, second-hand, homemade and environmentally friendly gifts, and makes it easy for couples to register for gifts that match their values and perhaps deepen the meaning behind an event.

Planet Green's Top Ten List of Green Registry Options
http://planetgreen.discovery.com/

Green Wedding: Planning Your Eco-Friendly Celebration
http://mireyanavarro.com/

This is *New York Times* journalist Mireya Navarro's helpful site, which links to her book, *Green Wedding*.



Commandments of a good marriage

Lauren Kramer
Special to The CJN

If I had my way, couples getting married would receive a how-to handbook, a little something they could read after all the wedding fuss has died down. Planning a wedding – choosing a gown, determining who sits where at the reception and opening gifts – these are the easiest parts of marriage. The more challenging parts come later, behind closed doors.

That's when you start to realize your spouse never replaces the toilet paper roll, takes a magazine into the toilet, is horribly flatulent in bed or has a habit of spending hour upon hour of supposed "couple time" hostage to the television, computer or iPad. The million-dollar question is: what are the commandments for a happy marriage? I asked couples with a decade or more of marriage under their belts what they thought. Here's what they came back with:

The sweet: find time for a six-second hug each day, ensuring there's no texting, e-mailing or phone calls occurring while it's taking place. Embrace for that length of time and you can connect with your spouse in a more meaningful way than by a quick peck on the cheek or affectionate squeeze before you rush out the door. In six seconds you can inhale their scent, feel the soft texture of their hair and get a body-to-body closeness that may just add a spring to your step all day long.

Keep dating: "Twice a week we go to a nice restaurant for good food and decent wine," jokes my friend Colin. "She goes on Mondays. I go on Tuesdays." Quips aside, couples that play together, stay together, a phrase that's particularly true once kids are born. Take time out to enjoy each other's company, whether it's dinner and a movie every couple of weeks or a day playing hooky from work so the two of you can just hang out. With time to simply be together doing something you both enjoy, it's easier to remember the partner you fell in love with when you said, "I do."

Learn the art of silence: this tip comes from a relative who was married some 50 years before she passed away. "I just learn to keep quiet sometimes," she told me when I asked for the secret to such a long, happy marriage. An art in itself, learning to shut up is a skill worth mastering in marriage, if only to keep the peace. The last word isn't always one worth having, and ending a dispute with an "I told you so" attitude doesn't do much for camaraderie or a sense of partnership.

Forget telepathy: you get to a point in a marriage where you just expect your spouse to know how you feel. Which is why many women feel it's not necessary to verbalize their feelings. But telepathy is overrated, and good communicating is one of the most essential commandments of a good marriage. Let your partner know what you want and don't expect them to read your mind. If they learn telepathy, it's an added bonus. But chances are, they'll need words to recognize what you need and when you want it.

Compromise: "Marriage is about give, take and compromise," says Tammy, a mother of three. "We'll never get our way all the time. But if both parties give and take a little, it's possible to meet somewhere in the middle and hopefully live a happy, healthy and full marriage."

Bad vibes? Fight it out if it needs to be fought. Every marriage involves disputes – it's how you resolve those disputes that makes or breaks your partnership. If there's something you need to discuss, get it out of your system, then kiss and make up. But don't use the word "always" when you complain about your spouse. Don't go to bed mad at each other. And don't let it linger unresolved for months on end. Communicate, resolve and move forward.

Pick your battles: in a marriage, there's lots of "small stuff" issues that may bug you but aren't worth a full-on argument. The toilet seat that got left up. Smelly socks under the bed. A kitchen that was kosher until he decided to make dinner. The key is not to sweat the small stuff. Save the arguments for issues that matter deeply and, remember, though your list of spousal irritations may be long, his is likely just as long.

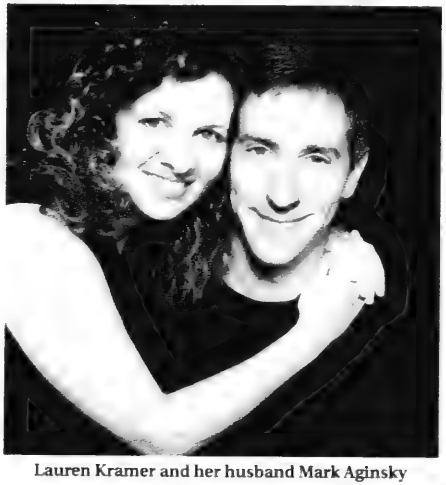
Don't look for trouble: you always hear the same excuses when people have an affair. "It just happened," they will say.

"It was a once-off mistake."

"S/he caught me in a moment of weakness."

I don't buy it. People emit signals when they want others to know they are available, and those signals lead to glances, insinuations and conversations inappropriate for those of us who have tied the knot. Married couples owe it to each other to be faithful, and when that value slips, trust and loyalty are lost as well.

Forget the 50-50: there's no such thing as 50-50 in a good marriage, so drop the compulsion to compare what he did to what you did. There's no point keeping tabs on who made coffee last, who did the last carpool or who worked harder. Accept that each partner will do their share in the areas of their respective strengths, and that somehow, when two people pull together as one, the family unit will work and work well.



Lauren Kramer and her husband Mark Aginsky

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65 years together

Bertha Kronenberg
Special to The CJN

There is no magic about the numbers 6 and 5, and yet on celebrating our 65th anniversary, I cannot but reflect on how I met my husband, Gerhard, under an African sky.

He fascinated me with his European ways – so different from the locals. He was someone who appeared more refined and gentlemanly.

Our backgrounds were very different – he had fled Nazi Germany – his parents were killed in the Holocaust – to join his brother and was allowed to enter South Africa, ostensibly to work underground in the gold mines.

The former 10,000-metre German national champion chose to use his wits and worked at various jobs. He never told me that he was invited to represent Germany at the 1936 Olympics but refused their condition that he should renounce his religion. I was intrigued with this man because he never talked about himself or advertised his achievements.

He enlisted in the South African Defence Force, chose to be a dispatch rider, and went to Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya. During this time, he contracted malaria – he lost a lot of his curly hair – and later suffered a spinal injury when he fell off his bike on one of the mostly rutted, rough roads.

I was born in South Africa – my family came from Lithuania. At the age of 16, I was self-supporting. I went to night school after work to improve my shorthand. I can still write in Pitmans. I got bored with my work, and joined the Air Force in the meteorology section. Here, we flew in an open "kite." Imagine the wind pulling the skin on your cheeks like rubber. It was wonderful cruising among the puffy cumulus clouds as they towered in the blue.

Bertha and Gerhard Kronenberg

By the time I met Gerhard, I was living with my sister. I had been brought up in an orphanage.

He lived with people on the other side of Johannesburg. He courted me, and he used to walk to visit me, carrying a long knife for protection. I told my sister that as we had no parents, she should ask him if he intended to marry me. Now there's a reverse proposal for you.

Our wedding was nothing fancy. We borrowed money from a friend, and I had a second-hand wedding gown, but I reckoned I was the bees' knees.

We have been blessed with three sons, their wives and four grandchildren. Two sons are still in South Africa, and our eldest, Bud, and his wife live in Scarborough. We feel great pride and joy that we are able to hug and kiss his family in person.

Our sons in South Africa are in touch daily by Skype, and I keep in close touch with my grandchildren on Facebook.

We've had our ups and downs, and healthwise we have overcome many hurdles. I studied by correspondence and earned my BA (majors English and psychology) and went further to study honours English.

We have lived in Toronto for 24 years – in the Bluffs in Scarborough for most of that time. To settle down, Gerhard invited the neighbours for snacks, informing them in a loud, clear voice that we had chosen to settle here, that we are from South Africa and that we are Jewish. The hospitality extended to us over those years has been phenomenal. My mezuzah fascinated Jewish salesmen.

We respect each other as individuals. We don't try to absorb each other.

Gerhard is a doer, and I am a thinker. He is a practical person, not given much to the arts. He still loves watching sports on television but only has peripheral vision because he has macular degeneration. His hearing is excellent, and he can sing, but I can't. I love to read. He is wise. He is now 97 and I am 87.

For two years, we have lived at Forest Hill Place, and we have met remarkable people here. If I want to take part in an activity, I go. Gerhard is very supportive. We had an unexpected anniversary party here, and all the residents helped us celebrate.

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Birthday milestones through the years

Heidi Zackon
Special to The CJN

For one day each year, everyone gets to feel like the star of the show. While every year brings a reason to celebrate, the milestone years seem to pack more punch as people take stock and reflect on their lives.

"Looking back over the years, the big birthdays really stand out," says Joanne Berg, 46. "As a kid you remember turning 11, because now you are in the double digits. You remember 13 for the bar mitzvah parties, 16 for the chance to drive, 18 for finally becoming legal and 20 for the official end of your teenage youth."

Through the adult years, decades are counted, and each passing one brings different feelings and different ways of celebrating life's stages. "For me, 30 was still a lot of fun and easy to celebrate," Berg says. "Life was very busy and full, and my 30th birthday was a good excuse to take a little break and have a party with friends."

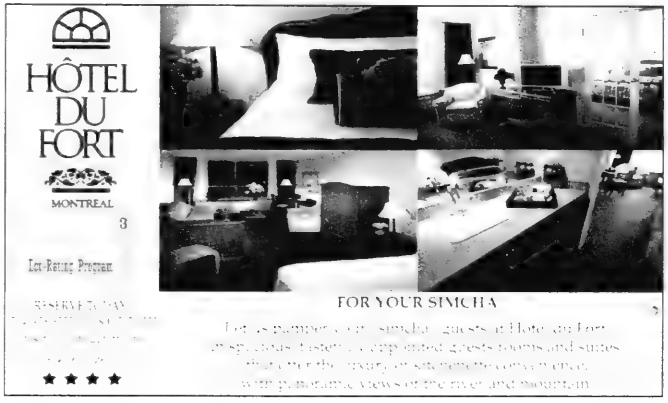
Berg admits to being a little less enthusiastic about a big celebration for her 40th birthday, but she still chose to get together for dinner with her closest friends.

"For my husband's 40th birthday, I planned a surprise dinner at a restaurant, and a few of his close friends came from out of town, so that made it extra special," she says. "Neither of us wanted a big splash at 40, but we did feel the significance of the age and found a way to honour it. Some of our friends did have bigger parties, and it was fun to celebrate with them in that way too."

With her husband's 50th birthday just around the corner, Berg feels a change at this age. "Our priorities have naturally shifted over time, and after so many years of working and raising a family, now it seems time for a little personal indulgence. We think about places we haven't been to, or things we would still like to experience, so I think a little vacation for the two of us might be just the right thing."

While turning 60 is another decade away for Berg, she did recently celebrate her aunt's 60th birthday and the two of them talked a lot about what entering the so-called "senior decade" felt like. "It's funny how a number can make you feel all sorts of things inside, but it really is true that you are as young as you feel," she says. "Since my aunt lives in a different city, we set ourselves up to see each other on our computers and we had a family party complete with cake and candles just the same. It turned out to be the perfect way to celebrate with her."

With many decades still to come, Berg hopes each one will bring its own meaningful celebration with family and friends. "Our days are so busy and time passes so quickly. It is nice to slow down the pace and just experience our lives at each stage along the way," she says. "Birthdays, especially the milestones, remind us to do just that."



A *Simcha* at Beth Sholom Synagogue

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"...Bill Batista (from Caterers York) was a pleasure to work with. He was very accommodating and willing to help us find a menu that we were all comfortable with. After the wedding we got rave reviews about the food..."

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Book keeps the lid on comfort food

Elaine Cohen
Supplements Co-ordinator

The 52 delicious, nutritious recipes in *Simply Soup* are bound to bowl over everyone in the community from kids and bubbies to brides and grooms. Each recipe is enhanced with a stunning colour photograph so that the artfully designed presentations please the eye and pique the palate.

Proceeds from the hardcover, coilbound recipe book benefit Cummings Jewish Centre for Seniors Foundation.

"I'm glad everyone likes our book, because our executive committee, along with recipe contributors and testers, volunteered so much time, effort and expertise into making this project a success," says Melissa Margles, the foundation's development co-ordinator.

Foundation president Mike Wagen and director Cathy Simons are equally delighted with the results and grateful that the team started off with soups, implying that they look forward to preparing a series with more courses to follow that will boost foundation funds.

Others besides the 21-member executive committee contributed to the eight-month gestation period. Like proud parents, they regard the project as their baby. The book costs $25 and copies are available at the Cummings Centre Boutique, 5700 Westbury Ave., online at www.cummingscentre.org or by phone at 514-343-3529, extension 7373.

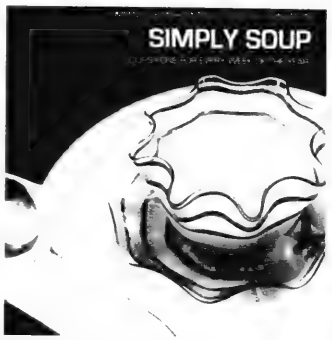

Photo courtesy of Cummings Jewish Centre for Seniors Foundation.

Looking for a wedding gift? Committee members offered some suggestions to accompany the book. To make a dramatic presentation, add a beautiful soup tureen or a large, sturdy pot or food processor, or a hand blender or a ladle. Or include a set of soup bowls and spoons. For a bridal shower, *Simply Soups* is a useful present on its own.

Margles, along with four committee members, gathered at the Cummings Centre recently to discuss the book and the significance of soup as a versatile, wholesome, tasty, comfort food. Soups are easy to prepare and they inspire novices with confidence in cooking, so they're perfect for brides and grooms starting out, Arlene Sternthal observes.

"Each recipe was tested and retested. Our editing team checked for accurate, simple instructions. We have included helpful hints." For example, one tip found in the book, Sternthal says, is to cut a leek in half lengthwise and run it under cold water until dirt disappears.

Debi Budning Latsky assumed the daunting task of book design and layout. "I'm accustomed to design and printing, but it's the first time I've worked on a 144-page document," she said. "We made sure the printing is clear, consistent and the soups are arranged according to season."

Flipping through the colour-coded sections, she illustrates how the listing begins with summer soups and progresses to autumn, winter and spring offerings. "Our ingredients for each category reflect what's available that particular season."

Like her committee peers, Roz Weiner is an accomplished cook and likes to entertain. "I enjoyed working on the project and I learned a lot," she says. "Everyone brought in dinnerware, cutlery and unusual pieces. Our talented food stylists co-ordinated everything with photographer Joe Lapin." The presentation is awesome, and Weiner is sure readers will adopt unique ways to serve and showcase soups.

"Soup is so versatile and can be served as an entrée or starter or a main dish," Maxine Bloom said. "An example is our hearty recipe for Stone Soup, which is a complete meal in a bowl." It's a winter soup, chock full of carrots, celery, fresh spinach, shredded cabbage, rice, kidney beans, crushed tomatoes, vegetable stock and seasonings.

Bloom keeps her pantry stocked with labelled jars of homemade soup. "It's easy to make and worthwhile to have on hand."

Nothing goes to waste when it comes to scrumptious Squash & Pear Soup, a spring soup that makes use of the butternut squash itself as a container. For a cool summer treat, sweet enough to satisfy dessert lovers, the team presented a picturesque bowl of Cold Strawberry Soup.

Experienced cooks seeking new tantalizing soups for the next 12 months will discover recipes for curried, creamed, cold, piping hot and ethnic fusions that run the gamut from Moroccan Fava Bean, and Thai Coconut Ginger to Tuscan White Bean, to Polish Pickle, Tropical Gazpacho, French Onion, Easy Mexican Soup and a multitude of other delectables.

Contributors' names are not mentioned on any of the recipes because it's a group effort, Margles said. "We would receive similar recipes and try many variations and different ingredients until we came up with the best formula."

Student Erica Rowniak worked with the committee and produced a comprehensive ingredient conversion chart. In addition to all the extraordinary recipes, the team provided soup-making tips and tricks, a glossary of terms, a list of tools used in soup making, recipes for basic vegetable, beef and chicken stock.

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Many synagogues going green

Continued from page B14

There are all sorts of "green" weddings, besides that [illegible] and there's one that reflects their values and [illegible] The Green Bride Guide for example, includes the largest green [illegible] in the web site [illegible] www.greenbrideguide.com. The Toronto Wedding Network [illegible] with [illegible]

Caterers are also trying to [illegible] requests for vegetarian options and healthier [illegible] Many caterers say that in practice [illegible] as Battista and Levy's to praise the family and truth cater to all of the guests. Vegetarians often complain that their needs aren't met at [illegible] but caterers insist they are willing to meet their clients' needs for special menus or diets. They want to offer more than just double servings of the salad or vegetable and are developing interesting and tasty vegetarian options.

Being eco-conscious also means being mindful of waste. In Toronto, kosher caterers may call a *gemach* – which is a group that picks up leftovers and distributes them to needy families. Ask your caterer to use this service.

Other green steps involve using a venue that is committed to recycling and composting. Many synagogues are now doing this, but it's worth asking if you are unsure. For less formal luncheons or breakfast events, why not forgo disposables and rent dishes instead? Or, purchase compostable plastics and paper goods. They are widely available in urban centres.

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The make-your-own-pizza wedding shower

Beverly Levitt
Special to The CJN

When I was a young teenager my granny told me: "Forty days before a daughter is born, her husband is selected in heaven."

I remember worrying: "I just hope God gets it right."

Years later, as the young mother of marriage-age daughters, I was still worrying. But the first time I saw Zach, I knew he was the one for my daughter Cindy. As for Frank and Alyssa, there was definitely divine intervention in that one. And Julie and Edward had such a long courtship that by the time they said "I do" and were both lifted up in chairs as everyone danced around them, they were smiling from ear to ear.

And so I had the pleasure of umpteen bridal showers of all sorts, sizes and shapes.

Lately, everyone seems conscious of creating new traditions, and I doubted any of the showers would be the expected all-women, sit-down luncheons where the bride opened her presents one by one, and everything she said would be dutifully recorded by her maid of honour, then read aloud. I also doubted anyone would assemble a bouquet of gift bows – how 20th century.

And so it began.

I hosted a couples' shower for Cindy where each loving duo was instructed to share the most romantic moment in their relationship; another where guests were asked to paint a picture and some words of wisdom on two giant kitchen aprons. At a shower for Alyssa, her new sisters-in-law created new food traditions and played the "telephone" game, where we started a tall tale that nobody quite knew how to finish.

At an intimate shower for Julie, guests constructed a large quilt of three different squares of fabric. Some embroidered, others drew pictures, still others created poetry and homilies and calligraphed them onto the fabric. A seamstress sewed the pieces together and produced a quilt for my daughter's new home.

We gushed over gatherings at an elegant country club, a beautiful back yard, and perhaps the most fun, a potluck celebration at the park.

The most delightful element of all these showers was that everyone was participating, so I thought, how about a shower where the couples learn to make their own pizza?

The bridal couple led off by making the first pizza, and then got to watch, kibbitz and tease each couple as they took a turn making the bread of our ancestors. Even though Neapolitan baker Raffaele Esposito is credited with having invented pizza pie in the 19th century, ancient Israelites baked flat, unleavened bread in rustic mud ovens, then covered it with their favourite topping, years earlier.

Men enjoy the activity as much as women and are often more creative pizza makers because they're not so worried about being perfect, says chef and food stylist Rori Trovato, who has held many a pizza-making party at her home in Santa Barbara, Calif.

Author of *Dishing with Style*, she calmed our nerves, assuring us that that the pizza pie of antiquity is very forgiving. And she hates predictably round pies.

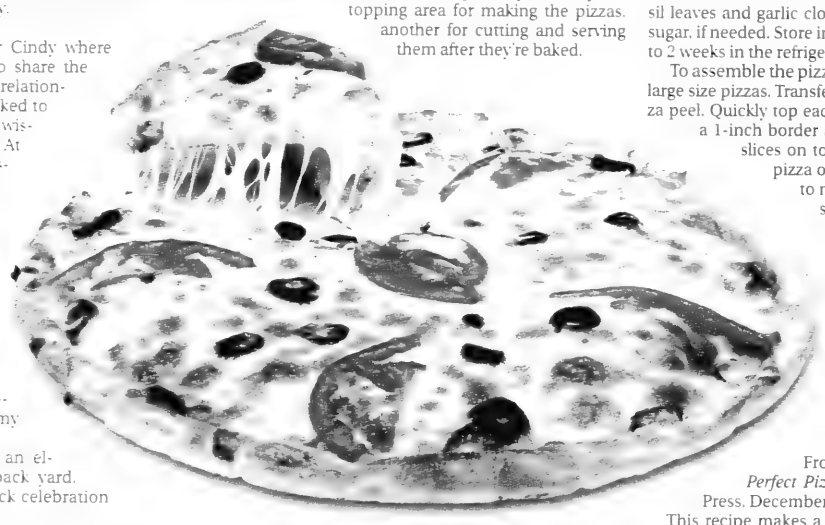
"When hosting a pizza party, organization is key," says Trovato, who recommends having all the ingredients prepared in advance and everything in its place before you begin cooking, the same as in a pizzeria.

To make it easier, Trovato recommends buying prepared pizza dough. If you'd rather make it from scratch, assemble it the day before the shower and divide it into balls big enough to make individual pizzas. Leaving it in the refrigerator overnight actually gives it more flavour. When you are ready to assemble the pizzas, remove only as many as you need.

Trovato proceeded to roll the dough, brush it with oil, then top it with sauce, and a variety of ingredients, then cautioned everyone to wear gloves when they took their masterpieces out of the oven. Freshly baked pizzas are hot!

Essential Tools: pizza stone, wooden baker's peel (a type of "shovel", a rimless baking tray or very wide spatula, long handled tong, roller-style pizza cutter or large sharp knife. Microplane zester or good cheese grater, a rolling pin. If making dough, you'll need an electric mixer with a dough hook or a food processor.

The Table: Set one large table or several smaller ones with a washable tablecloth, the necessary tools, cheeses and graters, bowls of sauces and toppings, and condiment oils in small jars with metal spouts so guests can assemble pizzas easily. Divide the tasks into stations – a dough making area to roll out, stretch and shape the pizzas, a pizza topping area for making the pizzas, another for cutting and serving them after they're baked.



Tips For Assembling Pizzas: The oven should be heated to 550 1-1/2 hours before making the pizzas. Assemble pizzas just before transferring them to the oven. Liberally flour the pizza peel. Keep pizzas loose on peel, making sure the end of it is clean so pizzas will slide off easily on to the pizza stone. Brush raw dough with olive oil, then the tomato or pesto sauce, then the myriad of toppings, all at room temperature. Don't overload the pizza, or when you slide it on to the stone the toppings may spill over and stick to the stone. Don't have any ingredients that are too watery or juicy, or pizza will end up soggy. Check pizza after 10 minutes; if it's not browned enough, bake 1 to 2 minutes longer until cheese is bubbling and colour is pleasing. Work quickly; pizza dough is impatient.

Topping Ideas: Thick tomato sauce; pesto sauce; a variety of cheeses – mozzarella, Parmigiano-Reggiano, gorgonzola or goat cheese; sautéed or caramelized onions and garlic; sautéed mushrooms including cremini and portabella; sautéed or roasted red, yellow, orange or green peppers; kalamata or oil-cured olives (pits removed); anchovies; roasted purple or yellow potatoes; sun-dried or oven-dried tomatoes; sautéed radicchio

CLASSIC MARGHERITA PIZZA

From *Dishing with Style* by Rori Trovato, Clarkson/Potter Publishers, 2004

prepared pizza dough

Tomato Sauce

3 garlic cloves, peeled
1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
1 28-oz. can whole tomatoes in their juice
4 to 5 whole leaves of basil
1 tsp. kosher salt, plus more to taste
1 tsp. sugar, plus more to taste

Topping:

1 lb. fresh mozzarella cheese, sliced 1/4-in. thick
6 to 8 whole basil leaves
kalamata olives, for garnish

Preheat oven to 550 and make the sauce. In a large saucepan over medium-high heat, sauté garlic cloves in olive oil until golden brown, 4 to 6 minutes. Turn off the heat for 5 minutes to cool the oil. Add all the remaining sauce ingredients. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat to low, and simmer for 30 minutes. Remove and discard the basil leaves and garlic cloves. Adjust seasoning with salt or sugar, if needed. Store in a plastic or glass container for up to 2 weeks in the refrigerator.

To assemble the pizza, roll out dough into individual or large size pizzas. Transfer pizzas onto a lightly floured pizza peel. Quickly top each pizza with sauce, leaving about a 1-inch border around the edges. Lay mozzarella slices on top to cover and carefully slide the pizza onto the hot stone. Do not attempt to move pizzas on the stone; they will stick. Bake individual pizzas for 6 to 8 minutes and the large pizza for 10 to 12 minutes, until lightly browned and bubbly. Using long handled tongs, remove pizza from oven, sliding it onto peel, cutting board, or plate. Top with the basil, tearing the leaves as you place them. Place an olive in the centre of each pizza.

PESTO SAUCE

From *American Pie: My Search for the Perfect Pizza* by Peter Reinhart, Ten Speed Press, December 2003.

This recipe makes a smooth, creamy pesto. It can be baked on top of focaccia or pizza, or drizzled over it after it comes out of the oven. It will keep for about a week in the refrigerator, but will be at its best during the first 24 hours. You can substitute toasted walnuts for the pine nuts, or add them in equal parts.

2 cups fresh basil leaves
8 cloves garlic, minced
1 cup extra virgin olive oil
1 tbsp. freshly squeezed lemon juice
1 cup pine nuts, lightly toasted
3/4 cup freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano or pecorino Romano cheese
1/4 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
salt to taste

In a blender or food processor, combine the basil, garlic, olive oil and lemon juice and puree until smooth. Add half the pine nuts and blend for a few seconds to grind them coarsely. Transfer the puree to a bowl and fold in the cheese, the remaining pine nuts, pepper and salt. Place in an airtight container and keep refrigerated until needed. Makes about 2 cups

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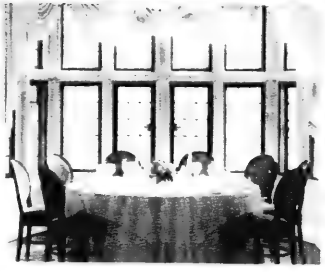
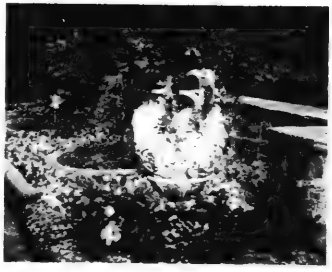

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Poignant story touches the world

Began 10 years ago with CJN interviews

Paul Lungen
Staff Reporter

George Brady is an unprepossessing man. The celebrity that came with publication of his family's wartime story came as a complete surprise to him.

His story was turned into a bestselling children's book, a film, a children's play and a radio documentary. He received invitations from around the world to speak, and piles of letters from elementary schoolchildren tell how they were inspired by the story of *Hana's Suitcase*.

The story of Hana's suitcase has acquired a momentum of its own, being shown in film festivals and growing now to include the brave new worlds of social media and the family's website (www.hanassuitcase.ca).

Ten years ago, when Brady visited the offices of *The CJN*, he told the remarkable story of his sister, Hana, who was murdered at age 13 in Auschwitz after living for two years in Theresienstadt. Their parents had already been killed and Brady felt as the older brother – all of 16 at the time – he had a responsibility to keep his little sister safe. After her death, he made it his mission to keep her memory alive.

A series of remarkable coincidences brought the story to more people than Brady could have imagined, beginning when Fumiko Ishioka, a Japanese educator, contacted him about a replica suitcase she'd received from the Auschwitz Museum. She'd asked for an artifact to help make the Holocaust more current and real to her students, and the museum had chosen a replica suitcase, the original of which had belonged to Brady's sister. Brady did not know it even existed.

"Do you think this is a story," he asked with characteristic modesty.

And how!

The story ran on the front page of *The CJN* and attracted the attention of Karen Levine. She authored *Hana's Suitcase*, a children's book that has been translated into more than 45 languages and as of 2009 was in its 24th printing.

Continued on page 16

A generational interview

Alon Ben Eliezer interviews Israeli President Shimon Peres at the president's residence about *Ben-Gurion: A Political Life*, recently published by Peres, concerning the life and accomplishments of Israel's first prime minister and one of its founders. Alon is David Ben-Gurion's great-great-grandson.

[Flash90 photo]

Terumah
Candlelighting: 5:32
Havdalah: 6:36

Greater Toronto Area

This edition of The CJN went to press Friday February 17, 2012.

CANADA

Mirvish Appointed

GUELPH, Ont. — Theatre impresario David Mirvish has been named the next chancellor of the University of Guelph, the eighth in the school's 48-year history. He replaces Senator Pamela Wallin, the ex-broadcaster, who resigned the post in March 2011, citing workload, the *Guelph Mercury* reported. Mirvish, son of late businessman "Honest Ed" Mirvish owns four theatres in Toronto, as well as Honest Ed's department store. He's also a member of the Order of Canada.

Heritage Day Debate

TORONTO — Ontario MPPs are set to debate a bill this week that would designate May as Jewish Heritage Month in Ontario, honouring the achievements of Jewish Canadians in the province. The bill, co-sponsored by Thornhill Conservative MPP Peter Shurman and Parkdale-High Park NDP MP Cheri DiNovo, has the support of all parties in the legislature and is endorsed by a wide range of Jewish groups. May was chosen because it's a significant month for Jewish artistic and cultural events, and because Holocaust Remembrance Day and Israeli Independence Day also frequently occur in May.

WORLD

New Mashgichim

KRAKOW — Reacting to higher demand for kosher food, 17 Polish Jews graduated from a seminar certifying them as mashgichim, marking the first time since the Shoah Jews have been certified as kashrut supervisors in Poland. The graduates, mostly in their 20s and 30s, attended a three-day seminar in Krakow by the Jerusalem-based Shavei Israel organization, under the auspices of Polish Chief Rabbi Michael Shudrich. The demand for more locally made kosher food comes from a re-emerging Jewish community and rising Jewish tourism, Shavei Israel said.

Firebomber to finish sentence in jail

MONTREAL — Omar Bulphred, one of two men convicted in the 2006 firebombing of an Outremont yeshiva and the attempted firebombing of the Snowdon YM-YWHA in Montreal in 2007, has been refused early release.

Omar Bulphred

The Parole Board of Canada decided he must remain in prison for the remaining four months of his seven-year sentence because he has not reformed his behaviour since the punishment was handed down in February 2009.

The board decision believes Bulphred suffers from a mental health problem and is still capable of committing a violent crime. His sentence expires June 11.

Bulphred and his accomplice, Azim Ibragimov, were charged with hate crimes after they threw a Molotov cocktail into the entrance of the chassidic Skver community's boys' school Toldos Yakov Yosef in September 2006 and tried to ignite a propane-fuelled explosive outside the Y in April 2007.

Bulphred, now 26, also pleaded guilty to uttering threats, namely writing a letter in which he and Ibragimov spoke of jihad and demanded the release of a group of men, linked to an Islamist cell, who were arrested on terrorism charges in Toronto in 2006. He was released to a halfway house last May, but was soon sent back to jail when he threatened another resident with a knife.

Deputy Settles Case

LOS ANGELES — The Jewish sheriff's deputy who arrested actor Mel Gibson and was the subject of his antisemitic rant in 2006 settled a religious discrimination case against his department. James Mee says he was subject to religious discrimination and a hostile work environment after the arrest. Mee claims his supervisors ordered him to remove Gibson's antisemitic remarks from the official incident report, placing them instead in a confidential supplemental report. He claims he was passed over for promotions in the department because he complained about it.

IZENBERG GOLDBERG *Monuments*

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Regina student union backs BDS motion

Sheri Shefa
Staff Reporter

A resolution by a pro-Palestinian student group that requires the University of Regina Students' Union (URSU) to endorse the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel passed at URSU's annual general meeting earlier this month.

The Regina Solidarity Group, a chapter of Students Against Israeli Apartheid (SAIA), released a statement following the Feb. 8 gathering that boasted about the victory being "a huge first step towards the full divestment of the University of Regina from companies complicit with the human rights violations currently taking place in Palestine."

Part of the motion demanded that URSU "commit to identifying and divesting from companies that support or profit from Israeli war crimes, occupation and oppression."

The statement said SAIA members plan to work with URSU to "begin investigating URSU's portfolio for companies that support or profit from Israeli war crimes, as well as collectively launching an education campaign on campus about the issue."

URSU president Kent Peterson told *The CJN* that about 150 students came to the AGM, which is open to the university's 12,000 undergraduate and graduate students, and voted on various motions. He said that when the BDS motion was brought forward, students were given the opportunity to debate it.

"There were actually no con speakers to the motion. There were a few pro speakers, and then it was voted upon," he said. "I believe it was passed unanimously and if it wasn't unanimous, there might have been one vote against it."

Emile Scheffel, vice-president external of the Canadian Federation of Jewish Students (CFJS), said that the BDS campaign is anti-dialogue, anti-peace, and singles out Israel for condemnation.

"These are some of the reasons the BDS campaign, despite all its sound and fury, has achieved nothing," Scheffel said in a statement, one of many released by Jewish groups in the days following URSU's adoption of the motion.

"Sadly, this resolution singles out and punishes Israelis, holding the lone democracy in the Middle East entirely responsible for the conflict. The condemnation of Israel, and Israel alone, is particularly bizarre, given the upheaval and loss of life occurring at the hands of repressive regimes across the region," Scheffel said.

Emile Scheffel

"We hope URSU members will withdraw their support from this failed, discredited effort that only promotes division and resentment."

David Koschitzky, chair of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, echoed Scheffel's call to repeal the motion.

"The campaign to boycott Israel rejects constructive dialogue and solutions that promote peace and reconciliation," Koschitsky said.

Trent University professor Asaf Zohar, national chair of Canadian Academics for Peace in the Middle East, said that "URSU's decision to boycott Israel, including Israeli universities and academics… [is] antithetical to the tenets of free expression and free association that are fundamental to academia… [and] is blatantly discriminatory."

Continued on page 19

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Silence of the hypocrites

From the editor's desk...

Last Monday morning at the United Nations General Assembly, the UN's high commissioner for human rights, Navi Pillay, accused Syrian President Bashar Assad of committing "crimes against humanity."

As reported in *Ha'aretz*, Pillay said the continued crackdown on pro-democracy activists was ordered with the complicity of government authorities "at the highest level." She told the world that her organization intends to have Assad tried in the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

According to Pillay, as of December, more than 5,400 Syrians had been killed, more than 10,000 people injured and more than 18,000 people arrested and detained by the authorities.

Updated reports suggest more than 7,200 people have now been killed.

Each day for the past 11 months, since last March, when the uprising against him began, Assad and his army have brutalized the people of Syria to ensure his family and his clan's rule over the country.

Assad's onslaught against his own people has continued despite protestations at the UN and in the face of the close-at-hand presence of Arab League monitors and even that of Russia's foreign minister earlier this month. Could there be a clearer insight into the pitiless heart and ruthless intentions of the man than this unabating, gruesome slaughter week after week, month after month?

That Assad apparently receives his moral counsel from Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, that he apparently relies on one of Ahmadinejad's top military commanders to help direct the carnage, tell us that the Syrian ruler considers mass murder a legitimate survival policy option.

One of the most unsettling reports of the many jarring ones of the Syrian bloodletting that have reached the West emanated recently from UNICEF.

"The UN Children's Fund says hundreds of children have been victims during Syria's violence. It says there are reports of children being arbitrarily arrested, tortured and sexually abused while in detention," Voice of America reported Feb. 7. "UNICEF spokeswoman Marixie Mercado says her organization is also dismayed at shelling by government forces of civilian neighbourhoods in the city of Homs over the past few days. She says this undoubtedly is causing more suffering for more children."

Mercado said that the latest numbers "available through the local human rights organizations working in Syria on children dead and in detention are over 400 dead and also over 400 in detention as the end of January."

This sorrowful piece of news must not be glossed over. Some 400 children arbitrarily arrested. Tortured. Sexually abused. Some 400 children murdered!

Thankfully, a great many in the West and in the Middle East are outraged. They condemn Assad and call for his ouster. The outcry is a shriek of disgust at Assad's barbarity.

But there are some individuals in the West – usually noted for the hair trigger on their respective consciences that quickly yields to umbrage and offence – who have remained quietly unaffected throughout Assad's embrace of mayhem and killing.

Where, for example, is the outcry from the members of the Canada Boat to Gaza campaign, the high moralists whose consciences are wounded by Israel's blockade of Hamas-run Gaza?

Their website proclaims that they aim "at publicizing the cruelty, illegality and inhumanity of Israel's blockade over the people of Gaza." What about the cruelty, illegality and inhumanity of Assad's assault on his own people, we must ask.

That Israel's blockade is neither cruel, illegal nor inhumane is irrelevant to them. Goods and products of all sorts, including consumer, construction, and tons of humanitarian aid, flow each week into Gaza from many points of entry through Israel and now, too, through Egypt. But facts do not matter to the predetermined beliefs of the Canada Boat to Gaza crowd. What matters most to them is the guiding sanctity of their ideology and, in some cases, too, their prejudice. But search every inch of the group's website and you will not find a word, let alone a sentence, of concern for the people and more pitiably, the children of Syria.

One of the most famous signatories on the list of endorsers of the Canada Boat to Gaza told *The CJN* in an e-mail exchange last year that his concern was for the children of Gaza, and indeed, for children everywhere.

Renowned American author Alice Walker also joined the Freedom Flotilla II to Gaza last year because she wanted "justice and respect" for Palestinian children. "One child must never be set above another," Walker wrote in explaining her actions.

We are entitled now to question the sincerity of their beliefs. For it is clear they do set some children above others.

The slaughter of Syria's innocent lambs evokes only silence from these hypocrites.

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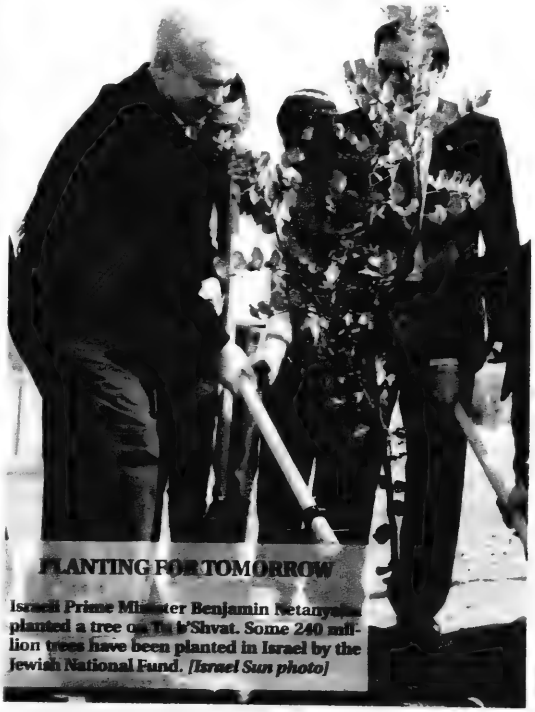

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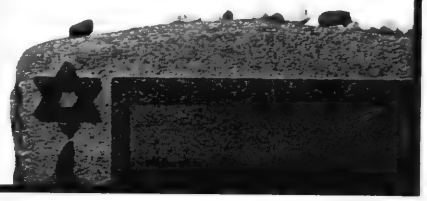


Judy Feld Carr receives Israel's Presidential Medal

Carolyn Blackman
Staff Reporter

Judy Feld Carr, a human rights activist who was responsible for the rescue of more than 3,200 Jews from Syria from the early 1970s until 2001, is one of six honorees to be awarded Israel's first Presidential Medal.

The announcement was made at a press conference at President Shimon Peres' residence on Feb. 9. The medal honours individuals who have made significant contributions to Israel's society and its global image.

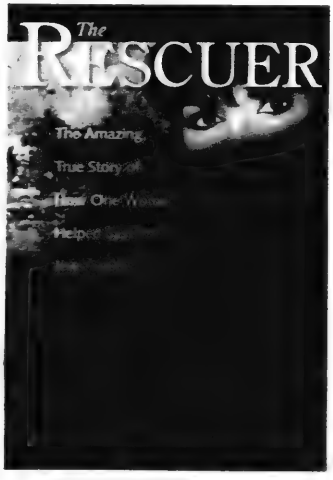
Judy Feld Carr

Others honorees are diplomat Henry Kissinger; Uri Slonim, chairman of the Variety Israel charity; philosopher Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz; the Rashi Foundation and Zubin Mehta, director of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.

Feld Carr, who along with her husband, Donald Carr, publisher of *The CJN*, has six children and 13 grandchildren, said in an interview that being honoured was a "big surprise. I was in the grocery store when the call came from Israel. I immediately said 'yes.' It's a huge honour, and I am in very good company."

To this day, Feld Carr, a retired music professor who was raised in Sudbury, Ont., said in an interview, "I cannot digest what I was really doing."

The saga began when she and her first husband, Dr. Ronald Feld – who died when she was 33 – learned that 12 young Jewish men died trying to escape from Syria.



Together with some friends, they decided to take up the cause of Syrian Jewry and made one phone call to the chief rabbi of Syria. It was the only phone call ever made to Syria from the Jewish community.

The rabbi told them Syrian Jews needed religious books, she said.

"I sent them boxes of books because I wanted them to know that we were thinking about them."

That led to a communication with some families, and she learned about the arrests and torture that many suffered. She wanted to help, she said.

Much of the money that was needed was raised through the Dr. Ronald Feld Fund for Jews in Arab Lands, established at Beth Tzedec Congregation.

"[For all those years] I was living two lives. I travelled to different countries to undertake secret negotiations, and I was a mother and wife. I was the first woman president of Beth Tzedec, an executive of Canadian Jewish Congress, and I attended community dinners. I didn't let my one life [interfere] with the other. It was difficult making my lives so separate, but I learned to be an actress."

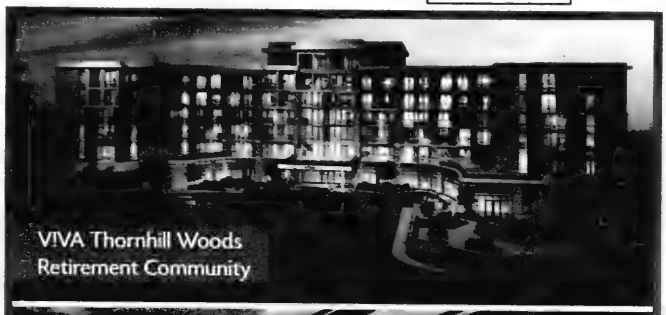
She would be basting a brisket, she said, when a call would come through about a Syrian Jew. "I talked and I basted. I had to do it all. I had many sleepless nights."

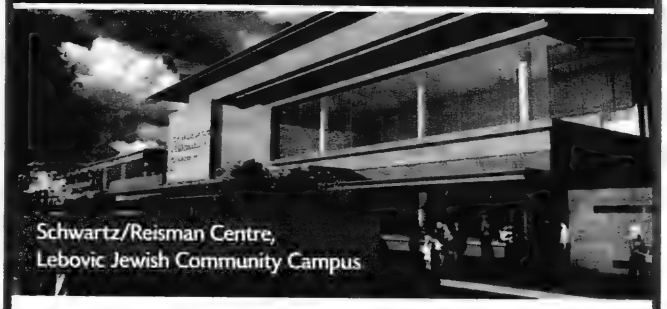
Everything was done secretly, and even now people still know very little, she said. "Absolutely nobody knows how I got people out of Syrian prisons. I never made a call. I never initiated contact. They had to find me. [Even though] their lives became intertwined with mine, most have never seen me."

Feld Carr's story is told in a book written by University of Toronto Prof. Harold Troper in 1999 titled *The Ransomed of Gods: The Remarkable Story of One Woman's Role in the Rescue of Syrian Jewry.* It was republished in 2007 under the title *The Rescuer: The Amazing True Story of How One Woman Helped Save the Jews of Syria.*

She has received numerous other awards including the Order of Canada, the Queen's Jubilee Medal, the Saul Hayes Human Rights Award of the Canadian Jewish Congress, and the Simon Wiesenthal Award for Tolerance, Justice and Human Rights.

Looking back, said Feld Carr, "nothing that happened really made any sense. Everything [occurred] almost by happenstance."





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Centres support kids with emotional, behavourial issues

Sheri Shefa
Staff Reporter

When Seth Posluns was a teenager and so overwhelmed by his mental health issues that he had to drop out of school, he never dreamed that just three years later, he'd be living on his own, in the midst of obtaining a physics degree.

Posluns, 21, a second-year University of Guelph student, said he owes much of his success to the Youthdale Treatment Centres.

The Toronto-based, non-profit agency runs group homes – including a Jewish, kosher home – and a summer camp for children who suffer from serious mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder and Asperger syndrome.

Posluns, who shared his testimony on Youthdale's website, said his depression and anxiety stems from a serious car accident he survived with his mother when he was 4-1/2.

"I also had this sleeping disorder that was causing me to miss a lot of school," he said in a telephone interview from Guelph, Ont.

"I had a rough time with my parents who really wanted to fix the problem but didn't really know how."

When his social worker suggested he consider moving into a Youthdale group home, he was skeptical.

"One of my fears going in was, 'What is this place going to be like?' It was so far outside of what I was used to."

Posluns made the choice to join Youthdale in 2007, a decision he said was the best he ever made.

"It was scary to leave home and go into this environment with new kids... It was a radical shift and I wasn't even sure it would work, because I didn't even have a proper grasp on what my issues were," he recalled.

But Posluns said he was very receptive to the staff – which includes psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers and nurses – and he responded very well to the treatments.

In addition to living in a group home, Posluns said he also took advantage of Youthdale's overnight summer camp, which is tailored to the needs of their residents.

Camp Magnetawan is a 1,000-acre camp about four hours north of Toronto that has a two-to-one camper-to-staff ratio.

Youthdale staffer Shirley Malanych, who has spent nearly every summer at the camp since it was founded in 1972, said children are able to experience things that boost their self-esteem and social skills.

In some ways, Camp Magnetawan is like any other overnight camp. Campers play sports, take part in drama classes, do arts and crafts, go on canoe trips and sit around campfires.

But this is a camp designed specifically to cater to children who need professional help with their mental health issues.

"The staff are professionals that are taking care of the kids and sleeping in the cabin at night... and giving them a lot of time and attention and support throughout the day," Malanych said.

But it's also about giving the kids an opportunity to let loose, have fun and create lasting memories.

"Whether they're learning how to swim or going on a canoe trip – for people who attend camp that can be a magical experience that lasts a lifetime," she said.

"For some of the kids who have lower self-esteem or family issues or problems, this certainly can help kids... interact with their peers."

Posluns said that for some of his peers who may have been resistant to life in the group home, the camp helped them open up.

"When they got there, they couldn't help but embrace where they are. For the most part, people opened up more and broadened their horizons," he said.

"I got to have experiences I never would have had. I went on these canoe trips and camping trips, and these are really wonderful memories I have now that I wouldn't get to have otherwise."

Seth Posluns, right, with one of the Camp Magnetawan staff

Until last year, Camp Magnetawan was only open to Youthdale residents. Today, any children who feel like they could benefit from the program are welcomed.

"It's a well-structured program. In terms of anyone who might have difficulties, but may not need to live in a residence... I think this might be a good place," Malanych said.

Director of client service at Jewish Family & Child (JF&CS) Wendy Wolfman, who has had a relationship with Youthdale staff since 1996, said she was thrilled to learn that she could refer her clients to the camp.

"Because we already have this connection between Youthdale and [JF&CS's] Jerome D. Diamond Adolescent Centre, it just made sense that Youthdale would call us and say, 'What if we opened up our camp program to JF&CS kids?'"

Wolfman explained that JF&CS used to operate its own residential home but after suffering huge budget cuts in 1996, JF&CS was forced to close its doors.

"We asked [Youthdale] to open a Jewish, kosher treatment home. To this day, they continue to run that home," she said, adding that while the children live at Youthdale's Jewish Cultural Residence, they spend their days at the Diamond centre for treatment and education.

Wolfman said that Youthdale centres and the camp – which also provides kosher meals – is a "terrific" resource for the Jewish community and for children in general.

"This really is a camp that can support kids who have some behavioural, emotional issues, who would not be welcomed at other camps," Wolfman said.

"Most camps just can't [accommodate them] because they don't have the resources or staffing. Magnetawan does."

For more information about Youthdale, visit www.youthdale.ca.

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Paul Lungen
Staff Reporter

The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) is cautioning Jewish community organizations and facilities to ratchet up their security measures, given Iran's recent threats to attack Jewish and Israeli targets around the world.

CIJA is advising the Jewish community to implement pre-set protocols that govern responses to security concerns, said the organization's CEO, Shimon Fogel.

The protocols, which have been in place for several years, provide suggested measures for various security threats that in the current security environment should advance to a more heightened level, Fogel said.

Although there are no specific threats at hand, such advice is given when the international security situation heats up. Iran or its agents are suspected in recent attacks on Israeli diplomats in Tblisi, Georgia, as well as in New Delhi, Iran and Thailand.

"We know Canada is on the radar. That's the message expat Iranians tell us in our engagement with them... This is the kind of thing where we err on the side of caution," Fogel said.

In the past, the Jewish community has stepped up its security levels when the Middle East heated up – during the 2006 Lebanon war and in 2009 during military operations in Gaza – but concerns raised by Iran are qualitatively different, Fogel said.

In the wake of the heightened western campaign against Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and other leaders of the regime in Tehran have recently issued threats against Israeli and Jewish interests abroad. ***[RNS file photo]***

"Iran is a bigger international threat" and has made explicit threats against Jews, Fogel said.

"Iran has repeated and longstanding comments that are getting more intense and with greater frequency," he added.

CIJA has sent Doron Horowitz, its director of national security infrastructure, across the country to audit security measures at various Jewish facilities. Horowitz is also consulting with Canadian communities and with local and national police forces to ensure that potential threats are addressed, Fogel said.

Horowitz's job is to advise communities on steps they can take to ensure their facilities are adequately protected. In recent years, Jewish schools and agencies have seen the addition of surveillance cameras, security guards and other less obvious measures.

"There is a protocol in place on paper with a set of procedures and steps for communities and institutions about how to increase the integrity of buildings and how to manage people," Fogel said.

That means incoming packages are given greater inspection and care is taken in scrutinizing guests allowed into buildings, he added.

CIJA suspected that Iran might pose a threat, and Horowitz, even before tensions escalated recently, had led community exercises "where we calibrated the need for the plan... but not in a way that heightened the level of anxiety within the community or would impact in a way that wasn't constructive or helpful," Fogel said.

So far, the measures are purely precautionary. The situation hasn't reached the point where the community might be advised to avoid synagogues or keep their children out of school, he added.

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Poison's antidote

Every year around this time as temperatures inch higher, blue skies become more frequent and breezes blow moderately warmer, we are reminded of the imminent advent of spring. But every year around this time, some breezes blow toxically, disbursing tiny droplets of poison into the fermenting soil of students' curiosity, self-discovery and growth on college campuses around North America.

Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) returns.

This year marks the eighth annual campus "celebration" of falsehood and calumny against the Jewish state. The celebrants, as we know, care very little about fact and rather a great deal more about ideology. In a recent column in *The CJN* (Feb. 5), Gil Troy compared them to the very worst distorters of truth during the Cold War. "Anyone who perpetuates the big lie accusing Israel of practising apartheid or claiming that Zionism is racism is simply passing on Soviet propaganda that has outlived its maker," he wrote.

The University of Regina Students' Union apparently couldn't wait for IAW to begin. At the instigation of the Students Against Israeli Apartheid, the union recently passed a resolution that purports to compel the university to boycott, divest from and impose sanctions (BDS) against Israel. The BDS movement, of course, is IAW's pernicious partner. Like the proponents of the Israel apartheid lie, the champions of BDS resist examining facts. They shun history and truth like slugs under a rock shun the sun.

Emile Scheffel, vice-president of the Canadian Federation of Jewish Students described the movement well when he told *The CJN* (see the story in this issue) that the BDS campaign is anti-dialogue, anti-peace, and singles out Israel for condemnation.

BDS is the flip side of the counterfeit coin that is IAW.

To expose the bogus currency, we once again take our cue from Troy. "We need to learn our history. We need to learn the facts. We need to fight the apartheid libel with the truth. And we need to challenge Palestinians to devote a week celebrating their own nationalism rather than focusing on destroying Israel and denigrating Zionism."

Thus, this week and next on campuses throughout North America, countless students – organized by Hillel and other campus organizations and individually – will be doing precisely what Troy urges. They will defend Israel.

Some will do so in a counter-campaign called Israel Peace Week (IPW). A grassroots initiative of Hasbara Fellowships, now in its third year, IPW will advance one simple, straightforward, uncluttered message: Israel wants peace and has constantly demonstrated its willingness to make painful sacrifices for peace. In a hothouse ventilated by noxious fumes, in soil irrigated by droplets of poison, only twisted timber can grow. The antidote to falsehood's poison however, is the healing balm of truth.

We commend and thank all the students who, not always under easy conditions, will be ministering that balm.

25 years ago in *The CJN*

The Conservative movement's flagship Jewish Theological Seminary announced that it would grant cantor diplomas to women at its 1987 commencement. The certificate had previously been reserved for men. Chancellor Ismar Schorsch said the move was a logical extension of JTS' 1983 decision to ordain female rabbis.

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Rabbi Plaut made Ont. a better place

On behalf of the citizens of Ontario, the premier, the cabinet and the government, I would like to express our sincere condolences on the passing of Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut ("We were blessed he was in our midst," Feb. 16). Rabbi Plaut was held in high regard by the people of Ontario. Through his tireless work as vice-chair of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, he was well-known, especially for his sensitivity and understanding of minority issues.

When it came to human dignity, Rabbi Plaut was a fearless advocate. Having barely escaped the Nazis as a young man, he saw the brutality of hatred firsthand. He vowed "Never Again," and he delivered on that promise through his words and actions. His was a worldview in which the dignity of all humankind was paramount, no matter the colour of one's skin, their sexual orientation or the God of their faith.

Ontario is a better place today thanks to the tireless efforts of Rabbi Plaut. We are all proud of the rabbi's work and his legacy. It is also a reflection of the value Jewish Canadians have put on human rights and civil liberties. Rabbi Plaut understood this well. He will be missed. His memory and legacy of caring for people and his community will live on for generations to come. With deepest sympathy.

Charles Sousa
Ontario Minister of Citizenship

* * *

'A drink with the old rabbi'

For the last 21 years, I had the privilege of first serving as research assistant and then as a sort of granddaughter to Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut ("We were blessed he was in our midst," Feb. 16). When we first met, I had just turned 22 and he was turning 80. One evening after work, he and his late wife, Elizabeth, invited me for dinner at their home. Rabbi Plaut announced that he would be ordering in pizza ("No pepperoni, Miss Fingerhut") and asked what I would like to drink. "Whatever you have will be fine," I said respectfully. "You will have water," he replied. He presented me with a large glass of "water," downed his own glass in one shot, and said: "Please, Miss Fingerhut, have some water." Not one to disobey a rabbi, I followed suit and promptly choked, causing his wife to scold him: "Gunther, you could have killed her. What would you have done if she was allergic to alcohol!" Rabbi Plaut winked at me: "Someday, Natalie, you will tell everyone how you had a drink with the old rabbi," he said.

Rabbi Plaut taught me how to think critically and to write with clarity. He showed me that the world was bigger than myself. He was my go-to guy when I didn't know what to do when I grew up, and the first person I told when I met my future husband. He raised me from a self-centred bratty child to the responsible and respectful adult that I am today.

Natalie Fingerhut
Toronto

LET THEM GO...

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz

* * *

Anti-Israel speakers on campus

The real issue in the article "Wiesenthal Center objects to McMaster speaker" (Feb. 2) is identified with this statement: "[Avi] Benlolo, [CEO of Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center], who sends letters of complaint to university presidents each time he learns that an anti-Israel speaker has been invited to speak on a Canadian campus, said he is becoming tired of getting the 'brush-off.'" The fact is that by the time an anti-Israel speaker is booked, it is nearly impossible to unbook, as we've witnessed for years. Jewish organizations must unite to demand legislation to prevent universities from continuing as anti-Israel forums, and not just wait for the next fire to put out! Our current Conservative government is the most outspoken friend and defender of Israel. Jewish organizations would be wise to galvanize and take advantage of this golden opportunity. It is nearly too late.

Elisabeth Gelb
Duncan, B.C.

* * *

Like coals to Newcastle

Regarding the article "Iranian military man aids Syria's brutality: report" (Feb. 9), Iran sending a brutality adviser to Syria is like carrying coals to Newcastle!

Edward J. Farkas
Toronto

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Never again: if not now, when?

Chemi Shalev
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I can well understand people who dismiss comparisons between Adolf Hitler and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, 1939 Germany and 2012 Iran or the modern and well-armed state of Israel and defenceless Holocaust-era European Jewry. The differences are so vast that there's no wonder many people find them ludicrous.

I can also empathize with those who suspect that supporters of an attack on Iran are cynically conjuring images of the Holocaust in order to advance their cause. In recent years, any tin-pot dictator who threatens Israel is Hitler's successor, any critic of Israeli policies is a latter-day Goebbels and every call to negotiate on the basis of the 1967 borders is but a station on the road to the Final Solution.

When zealous haredim or ultra-nationalists call IDF soldiers Nazis and their commanders Eichmanns, when left-wing radicals describe the Israeli army as SS stormtroopers and Gaza as Dachau, when one of the most popular characters on Seinfeld is a Soup Nazi and when Hitler himself becomes the darling of YouTube spoofs from the movie *Downfall*, one can hardly blame people for refusing to take Holocaust analogies seriously.

But even if the legacy of the Holocaust has been crassly trivialized and cynically exploited by politicians in Israel and the Diaspora, it's still a towering presence in the lives of most Israelis and Jews individually, and of Israel and the Diaspora, collectively. It's not some distant memory. It's not a historical tragedy. It's not something that happened to our forefathers once upon a time in a strange and distant land. It's not a ruse, not a cover, not a pretext and not an excuse. Even as the last of the survivors are rapidly disappearing from our lives and even if their children and grandchildren are living secure and comfortable lives, and even if Israel has the most powerful army in the Middle East and a reported nuclear arsenal that can destroy any combination of its enemies seven times over, memories of the Holocaust are omnipresent. And 70 years after the fact, it's the main prism through which I and most other Jews view the spectre of a nuclear-armed Iran and the echo chamber where the arguments for and against a military attack are heard.

My mother, of blessed memory, never forgave her parents for refusing to leave Prague after the Nazi occupation in 1939, even though they stood a good chance of securing an exit visa. And she never forgave herself for not insisting.

It's only bluster, they told her, a political posture. He wouldn't dare. The world won't allow it. The Germans would never agree. The proud and lofty civilization of Goethe, Schiller and Beethoven cannot harbour such evil. Herr Hitler might be a ruthless and cunning and Jew-hating politician, but he's not crazy. He knows his limitations. He isn't suicidal. He wouldn't push his country over the edge. All we need do is wait and this, too, shall pass. "You go ahead," they told her, "but we will stay here. Everything will be all right."

My grandfather died of typhus in October 1943 in the Terezin concentration camp in Czechoslovakia and my grandmother was gassed to death in Auschwitz in late 1944, when the Germans had already lost the war, but were insanely insisting on using their last remaining resources to murder as many Jews as they possibly could. And when the Allies were asked to bomb the camps or the rail lines feeding them, they couldn't be bothered. They were otherwise engaged.

So after listening carefully to the logical analyses of experts about the internal rivalries between the ayatollahs, the limitations of the Iranian regime, its need to divert attention away from the deteriorating economy, the growing internal opposition, the prospects for regime change, the 3,000-year-old civilization that would never be risked, the hidden rationality of the irrational bluster, the fact that the Iranian leadership is not suicidal and would not endanger its own existence and the deterrent power of Israel's powerful army and nuclear arsenal – after all this, I still believe, as do many Jews and Israelis, that a nuclear Iran is the worst possible option and that anything and everything that can be done should be done to prevent it.

Israel's cabinet will decide the Jewish state's ultimate response to Iran. Advising the cabinet at that time will be some of the same individuals who gave advice regarding the release of Gilad Schalit from Hamas captivity: pictured to the right of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, centre, is head of Shin Bet, Yoram Cohen and to the prime minister's immediate left is the secretary of cabinet, Zvi Hauser, and to Hauser's left is David Meidan, a senior section chief at the Mossad. ***[Israel Sun photo]***

And although I freely admit that this attitude is heavily influenced by the trauma and the legacy of the Holocaust, I reject the notion that this is irrational. In fact, the opposite is true: it's the expectation that when they come to make a decision about Iran, Israelis should ignore their experience, disregard their memories and forget the lessons that they learned from the destruction of European Jewry that is itself irrational. Jews know better than most that the unthinkable should never be dismissed, that the monstrous is often a viable option and that inside any supposedly cool and calculating antisemite there may lurk a murderous barbarian just waiting for an opportunity.

After all, what differentiated Hitler from all the others was neither his motivation nor his intention to exterminate the Jews, but the fact that he had the means and the opportunity to do so. When Iran has a bomb and a missile to carry it, it too will have the instrument of Israel's destruction at its disposal. No rational leader of modern-day Israel – which, despite the cliché, rose out of the ashes of the Holocaust – can ever allow such a thing to happen.

Other than "Israel-lasters" – that is, people who have Israel's worst interests at heart and who view American foreign policy through the narrow prism of weakening Israel as much as possible – most opponents of a military confrontation with Iran, either American or Israeli, are genuinely convinced that it would do more harm than good, would damage rather than enhance America's interests in the Middle East and would entail horrific consequences for Israel and the region as a whole. And they're convinced that Iran will never attack Israel with a nuclear weapon, because the regime, after all, is completely rational and intent on surviving.

On my side of the argument, I admit, there are some gung-ho Republican presidential candidates who sometimes seem absolutely gleeful in promoting an attack on Iran – remember John McCain's 2008 rendition of "bomb, bomb, Iran" to the tune of the Beach Boys' *Barbara Ann*? – as well as run-of-the-mill rabid right-wingers who disdain diplomacy, don't believe in sanctions, think that liberals and Europeans are weak-kneed appeasers, view all Muslims – including Barack Hussein Obama, of course – as collaborating with Iran against western civilization and would like nothing better than to see clouds of smoke, preferably mushroom-shaped, rising over Tehran.

But most Israelis, from both sides of the political spectrum, would rather have Iran cave in to sanctions or be defeated in the clandestine war that is being waged against it. They are perplexed by the opposition of some Israeli security chiefs to an attack and absolutely terrified of its aftermath and its fallout and the danger that these may prove no less destructive than if Iran had built the bomb.

Nonetheless, when push comes to shove, when all the other options have been exhausted, when there is no other avenue left, when it's yes or no, do or die, kill or be killed – then I think that most Israelis and Jews, including myself, will support a military attack. And the only way to prevent such a risky and dangerous development is to stop the Iranian nuclear problem dead in its tracks, and to stop it now.

Otherwise, in all likelihood, with grave doubts and terrible misgivings, the planes will be dispatched, the missiles will be launched, the troops will be landed and the bombs will then explode. Because the phrase "Never again," however grossly misused and cynically manipulated throughout the years, was actually meant for this very moment.

Chemi Shalev is a political commentator with Ha'aretz.

Contemplating age-old questions about aging

The poignant plea "Cast me not away in the time of old age" acquires its most powerful meaning when one looks around and realizes that this time is fast approaching for many.

Much is being written about how Canada funds its old age public pension system and attendant medical costs. As someone collecting CPP and OAS, I realize that by being born just five years ahead of the baby boomers, I've been able to live large on the government's amazingly generous system of pensions and medical care.

That's a joke, folks. If I had to survive in Vancouver on CPP and OAS, I would be eating cat food before the end of the month. Food bank, Sally Ann, here I come.

What's the real problem here?

The media and government officials assume that we seniors partied our lives away before retirement, doing little to advance the good of the community. In retirement, we spend our time on the golf course or slurping drinks in Maui. Meanwhile, poor, hard-working stiffs are taxed to death while we laze around the pool. For them it's all about the money. Is it? Should it be?

A recent episode of the series *Arctic Air* revolved around the intention of a First Nations elder to return home alone to his camp rather than join his son in Yellowknife, where he would be sent to an old age home. Ultimately, rather than being "locked up in four walls," he convinces the hero that he has the right to make his own decision. He is last seen heading north.

Jean M. Gerber

in Vancouver

The script gave each character a chance to articulate an argument for or against the elder's decision. "It's his to make." "But what if he dies out there, cold, alone?" "Shouldn't we do what is best for his wellbeing?" And, most terrible, "He's losing it."

True, we seniors do think about what will happen if we end up unable to look after ourselves, or age out of whatever resources we have, or become a danger to ourselves or those around us. What if our spouses are themselves are too old and frail to look after us? What if our children won't derail their lives to look after us? Then what?

My childhood household included, at various times, both my widowed grandmothers. One was spry and had a wry sense of humour. The other, after a series of strokes, needed constant care. Both my parents worked. In any case, who had money to pay for a "home"? And, indeed, no one expected us to make that choice. So we looked after them until they passed away. From them I learned a great deal.

A First Nations woman wrote to me some time ago. "I'm already considered an elder!" she noted with surprise. Of course, I thought. You were wise even when you were young. Now, as an elder, you will be able to speak from that wisdom and be heard, in communities where wisdom is so needed.

Al tashlicheni b'et ziknah! Don't throw me away when I am old. Since those words were written thousands of years ago, the problem seems as old as time. What would I wish? What do I expect from my spouse, my children, the government, the medical system? What do I expect from my community? Yes, it's about the wisdom, if any, that elders may pass on. More importantly, is anyone listening?

Are we thinking about the right questions? Or is it easier to just think about the cost, without acknowledging that we don't even have the right questions? Right now, the feeling seems to be, "Get out of the way and let us make the decisions. We can't afford you."

A primary rule of social planning: know what your real goal is. Then you can make it happen. If you want to save money, you will create that system. If you value the person and their experience, you will create a system that cherishes and values those gifts.

What I do believe – most strongly – is that a better question to start with is how we will understand and appreciate the wisdom and strength of our elders, what society can learn from them, and what will make the best society for both old and young.

Come to think of it, that goes for any age.

Finally someone said, 'Enough already'

The other day a student called to interview me about Women of the Wall. It's been many years since I was an active member of that group, and his questions evoked many memories and concerns.

I remember that first prayer service at the Kotel. We were at a conference on women and Jewish law. We were active prayer members – some of us had even started our own women's prayer groups. After years of studying the law together, we were experienced with rabbinic law and reactions, or so we thought. Going together to the Western Wall, we bridged many different needs and denominational concerns. We spent an exhilarating evening deciding how to conduct ourselves.

In general, many of us often wondered why the male establishment was so opposed to our gentle, separate form of prayer. Why did they assume we were rebellious when we thought we were trying to increase our ritual participation by following the law? How could we be so misunderstood?

Residents of Beit Shemesh protest the growing demand by radical religious elements to exclude women from public life in their city and in Israel, in general. The sign reads: "Shemesh is a Zionist city." *[Flash90 photo]*

Years later, we have a better understanding of the presumptions and miscalculations, but questions remain pertaining to process and long-range goals. For example, how is it possible that the Supreme Court of Israel would rule that while the women didn't violate any Jewish law, they disturbed public order? It was the individuals in the men's section who threw chairs who would seem to have violated public order. Why blame the women?

And how is it that Israel's feminist community did not come to the defence of this small, beleaguered group of women? Today, the Women of the Wall still pray together on Rosh Chodesh, but they are limited by certain forms and structures. Yet they have a vibrant committed element that will not be denied their spiritual heritage. After centuries of being denied access to Jewish holy sites, it's ironic that in the name of Jewish religion, Israeli authorities deny women access to our holy sites.

Norma Baumel Joseph

in Montreal

As the interviewer asked me more questions about my own commitments and priorities, I began to make certain connections. The Kotel was not my primary issue. I did spend many hours on it at certain points in time, but I didn't think it was the sink-or-swim issue for Jewish feminism by any means. Yet it touched the hearts of many people, as we understood that we should not let others dictate our access to our heritage – neither in terms of Jewish texts, architecture nor communal institutions.

Few outside of our group understood it in those terms or saw the full impact of its potential. But perhaps today I might hazard a connection – to Beit Shemesh and a lovely eight-year-old who was rudely treated by zealots who think they own the religious character of Israel. Now I know that there's no direct link or even any association that we can legitimately make. I am not trying to make the Women of the Wall into a more important cause than it was.

For too long we allowed a certain element to take over, to control our image of "the religious." It was too difficult to stop them at every juncture. There were just too many issues and they were too adamant and it took too much energy. Israelis were too busy fighting wars and earning a living. This fanatical group was so obsessive about whatever small issue was at stake (and they were not out earning a living or fighting in wars) that it just seemed simpler to let them have it. Separate buses, sidewalks, no army service, government support for anti-Zionist schools, no women on signs, and no women at the Kotel with a Torah or singing or anything. Just give in. Let their rabbis be in charge of marriage and divorce, and let them control conversion.

And before you know it, they own the religious character – and actually the entire character – of Israel. We gave it up to them by not fighting each and every little battle.

The Women of the Wall was not settled in court. The Supreme Court asked the state to satisfy each group. But fearing the religious zealots, the state denied the religious freedom of the women. No one said a word. How far was that from Beit Shemesh – from some men thinking they could yell at an eight-year-old and force her to conform to their standard of dress.

Thank God someone said, "Enough already." Pity it took so long.

Iran's nuclear program reignites tension

Leon Panetta, the U.S. secretary of defence, told the *Washington Post* recently he believes there is a strong possibility that Israel will pre-emptively strike Iran's nuclear facilities in April, May or June, before Iran enters what Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak has ominously described as a "zone of immunity."

Barak claims that if Israel waits much longer, Iran's far-flung network of nuclear plants, buried deep underground, will be invulnerable to attack. "Later is too late," he is reported to have said.

Panetta's comment has intensified a tense and heated debate in Israel and the United States whether brute military force to stop Iran in its tracks would be wise or effective.

It has also prompted sharp reactions from the increasingly isolated but defiant Iranian regime. Last week, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad boasted of Iran's "very major nuclear achievements" and declared that Iran "will not withdraw one inch" from its "[nuclear] rights." Two weeks ago, Hossein Salami, the deputy leader of Iran's Revolutionary Guard, vowed to retaliate against any country that violates Iran's sovereignty.

The latest round in this war of words and brinkmanship erupted last November when the United Nations' International Atomic Energy Agency published a report saying that Iran has "carried out activities relevant to the development of a nuclear device."

But in a dissenting view, the U.S.-based Institute for Science and International Security says that Iran is unlikely "to dash toward making nuclear weapons as long as its uranium enrichment capability remains as limited as it is today." It adds that Iran will not go nuclear until it is able to augment enrichment to the point "where it would have the ability to make weapon-grade uranium quickly and secretly."

Iran, which has repeatedly called for Israel's destruction, claims its nuclear program is peaceful in nature, intended to generate electricity and manufacture medical isotopes. Israel is highly skeptical, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu having said that Iran has already decided to become a nuclear power.

The official American view, as enunciated by James Clapper, the director of U.S. national intelligence, is that Iran's leaders have yet to decide whether to build a nuclear weapon, even as they continue to enrich their stockpile of uranium. According to Panetta, Iran would need about a year to build an A-bomb, once a decision is taken to do so.

Israel and the United States,

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

though unanimously opposed to an Iranian nuclear arsenal, are in disagreement over a major issue. Washington, preferring a diplomatic rather than a military solution, wants to give current sanctions imposed on Iran sufficient time to work. Israel remains doubtful that sanctions will convince Iran to abrogate its militarized nuclear program.

Iran, so far, has been subjected to four rounds of United Nations sanctions. These measures have dented its economy, but have not dimmed its appetite for attaining nuclear status.

Indeed, sanctions may have had the opposite effect, inducing Iran to redouble its effort to join Israel in the exclusive nuclear club.

Iran is also being squeezed by American sanctions, which are aimed at its vital oil-export sector. Similar European Union sanctions are due to kick in on July 1.

Iran, in response, has threatened to close the Strait of Hormuz, through which much of Arab and Iranian oil is shipped to markets, and end oil exports to Europe before July. Still more defiantly, Iran's oil minister, Rostam Qasemi, has said that Iran will not retreat from its nuclear program, even if its crude oil exports grind to a halt.

Netanyahu has called the U.S. and EU sanctions a "step in the right direction," but not crippling enough to deter Tehran from halting its nuclear program.

At a recent meeting in New York, Israel's foreign minister, Avigdor Lieberman, warned 15 ambassadors accredited to the United Nations that Israel is "keeping all options on the table," even as it hopes that sanctions will work.

Barak, in an earlier warning, said, "If sanctions don't achieve the desired goal of stopping [Iran's] military nuclear program, there will be a need to consider taking action." Before issuing this veiled threat, Barak indicated that Israel has not made a decision to deploy force. "The entire thing is very far off," he noted.

Israel's strategic affairs minister, Moshe Ya'alon, a former chief of staff, has called for a combination of international pressure, biting sanctions, support for Iranian figures opposed to the Islamic fundamentalist regime and a "credible military option."

Israel has reportedly used covert means to try to disable Iran's nuclear program, having allegedly assassinated five Iranian nuclear scientists in the past five years, having purportedly killed the head of its long-range missile program and having engaged in cyber warfare to blow up its centrifuges. But Israel has stepped back from the brink and not resorted to an aerial bombing campaign to deal with Iran.

Ehud Barak

Israeli leaders who support an aggressive approach, including Netanyahu and Barak, apparently believe that an attack is not as risky as some contend and that Iran's nuclear program can be set back by several years. By all accounts, they reject the widespread assumption that an Israeli raid would touch off a catastrophic regional war, cause the deaths of thousands of Israelis and result in unprecedented property damage and skyrocketing global oil prices.

Dissenters, such as the former director of the Mossad, Meir Dagan, reject these arguments as intrinsically self-serving and dangerous and argue that a nuclear-armed Iran does not pose an existential threat to Israel.

Israeli proponents of attacking Iran have fed journalists information suggesting that a strike will occur this year. In a *New York Times Magazine* piece, Ronen Bergman writes that Israeli leaders feel that conditions are supposedly ripe for an assault: sanctions and containment strategies have been exhausted. Israel has the ability to inflict severe damage to Iran's nuclear sites. Israel can withstand Iranian reprisals. Israel would have the tacit support of the international community.

U.S. President Barack Obama, an opponent of an attack, has been quoted as saying that Israel is still mulling the matter. In the meantime, the Obama administration has expressed anxiety that Israel may go for broke and bomb Iran. Perhaps Netanyahu has reached the conclusion that the United States cannot do the job for Israel. The *Wall Street Journal* has reported that the United States does not possess deep-penetration bombs powerful to destroy Iran's nuclear facilities.

So the question now is whether Israel is using the threat of an attack on Iran to increase pressure on Tehran, or whether Israel is serious about using force.

It's debatable. In bombing nuclear reactors in Iraq and Syria in 1981 and 2007 respectively, Israel struck without notice. But will Israel bomb Iran now that the element of surprise has been removed?

The current director of the Mossad, Tamir Pardo, visited Washington earlier this month to gauge U.S. reaction to an Israeli strike. He was probably informed that while the United States is determined to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear arsenal, it is equally determined to restrain Israel, at least for now.

Another steady and happy year for my family.

I invested with Romspen on the advice of a friend 18 years ago. Throughout I have consistently added to my Romspen account. At one point I took some investment dollars out to put into mutual funds, but I was sorry. It didn't compare to the consistent returns and peace of mind that the Romspen fund gives me. Everyone in my family is a Romspen investor. We like the personal service we get any time we call. I feel fortunate that we are physically, spiritually and financially healthy.

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Centre for Jewish Education appoints new director

Frances Kraft
Staff Reporter

Ed Segalowitz, formerly UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's chief of corporate affairs, has been appointed executive director of the federation's Centre for Jewish Education, effective last month.

Chari Schwartz, who served as acting executive director of the centre, is now its associate director. Schwartz, who has a 28-year history as an educator, and Segalowitz, whose background is not in education, constitute the senior "team" of a staff of five.

Ed Segalowitz

In 2009, the centre's predecessor, the Centre for Enhancement of Jewish Education (the Mercaz) was downsized and restructured, eliminating 10 of 14 full-time jobs. As well, its budget was cut from $13.8 million to $12.6 million, while tuition subsidies were increased by $500,000. Its 2011/2012 budget is $12.3 million.

At the time, the federation announced its intent to enhance the capacity of community day schools to provide "direct education services, rather than receiving services supplied by the Mercaz.

Segalowitz' appointment represents the implementation of the entity's new role, Sokolsky told *The CJN* last week. "Nothing has changed significantly since [the restructuring.]

He added that federation lay leaders chose Segalowitz, who has worked in the Jewish community for more than 25 years, for his expertise in organizational strategy, development and capacity building.

Sokolsky said that other institutions are undergoing similar changes, with leaders "relying on their team to provide the background specific to the organization."

The centre works collaboratively with the schools, Sokolsky said. "Most of the schools are very resourceful and advanced in understanding curriculum and educational requirements of students. In terms of capacity building, they're looking for support and advice in areas of cost savings, marketing, fundraising and strategic planning."

Segalowitz said the mandate of the centre is "to help the education sector develop its capacity, both in day schools as well as supplementary."

Before the Mercaz was downsized, it ran programs including professional development days, and the Midrasha L'Morim (Jewish teachers' seminary), which is no longer in operation. "It was put on hold and I don't think it's starting up," Segalowitz said.

Two years ago, instead of organizing its annual professional development (PD) day, the centre provided grants to schools for professional development. It is still organizing Rikudya, the annual dance festival for students, and Zimriya, an annual song festival.

In 2010, Paul Shaviv, director of education at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto, wrote a report detailing more than 60 recommendations for the new entity.

"That was a discussion document," Segalowitz said, adding that it was followed up by a second document.

He said in a phone interview that he couldn't comment on whether any recommendations were being implemented. He is still getting oriented, he noted.

The centre has just launched an initiative to enhance supplementary education and expand the number of options available for families who "do not now engage in supplementary education and might consider it as an option," Segalowitz said. The initiative is part of JESNA's (Jewish Education Service of North America's) WOW! Project, which will also run in other cities in North America.

Half the Jewish children ages 4 to 17 in the Toronto area are either in day school or supplementary schools, Segalowitz said. "We're looking at how to sustain what we have and how to attract the others as well."

As well, he added, "we're meeting with the day schools to deal with other issues that are under discussion at the moment."

Among those issues is the high cost of tuition. "Over the next 12 to 18 months, we're looking to build a plan."

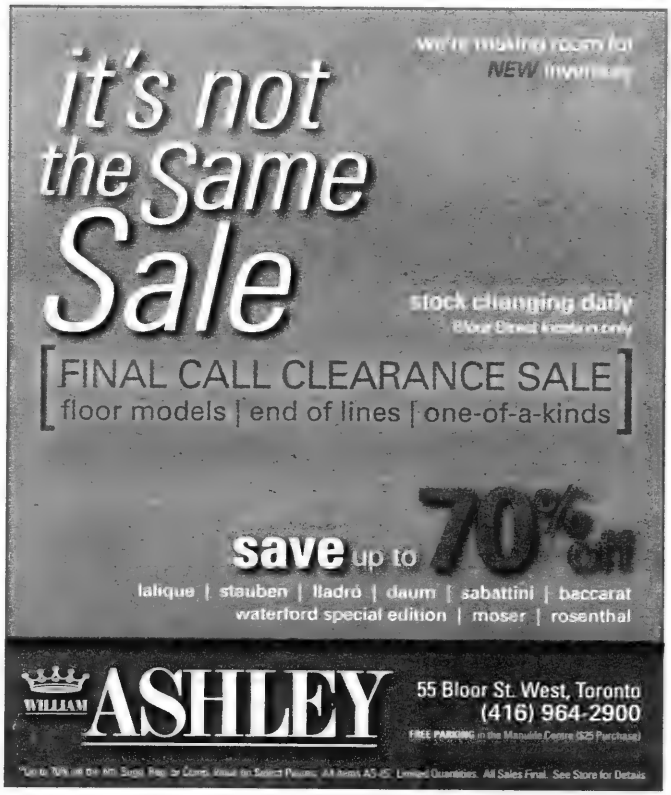
Sokolsky said the federation's commitment to Jewish education is "stronger than ever."

He said an increased emphasis on informal and supplementary Jewish education does not mean a decreased emphasis on day school education. "The Toronto federation puts in more money in Jewish education than all the 10 largest federations after us do in total. I don't think it's a zero sum game."

He added that despite high day school tuition fees, the rate of day school attendance has not changed in recent years relative to the size of the school-age Jewish population.

Correction

In the article "UJA campaign ahead of last year's pace" (*CJN*, Feb. 16) Felicia Posluns' title was stated incorrectly. She was chair of women's philanthropy for UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's 2012 campaign. Lori Sheff is incoming chair of women's philanthropy for 2013.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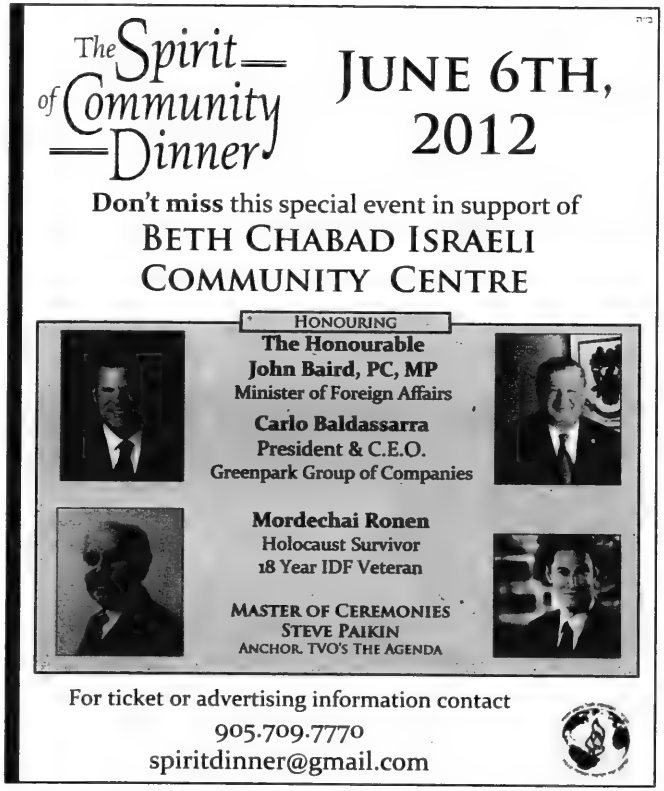

Teacher brings art appreciation to preschoolers

Diana Bick's students at Hillcrest Progressive School are unusually conversant with the work of artists such as Paul Klee, Marc Chagall and Vincent Van Gogh, given that they are only four and five years old.

Recently, Bick led a senior kindergarten class in a discussion about Andy Warhol, reviewing what the children had learned in a previous class. "What kind of things did he paint?" she asked.

"Soup cans!" piped up one youngster.

"Do you remember why he painted soup cans?" Bick prompted. "He was sick, and what did his mummy feed him?"

The discussion circle – which included concepts like intensity of colour, complementary and contrasting colours, and what constitutes art – preceded work on a Warhol-like art project.

Each student had a paper divided into four squares, and painted traced images of their hand in each of the four squares. Bick also read the class a story by Warhol's nephew, James Warhola, titled *Uncle Andy's*.

By Frances Kraft

An award-winning artist who teaches a junior kindergarten class in the mornings and art in the afternoon, Bick likes to use a Smart Board as part of her lessons. She often shows the children art images and videos about artists.

Bick has been at the 83-year-old Jewish preschool school since 1986, when she was an early childhood education student at Humber College.

Diana Bick reads a story about Andy Warhol to students at Hillcrest Progressive School. *[Frances Kraft photo]*

A mother of three children, now 22, 20 and 18, Bick worked part-time during their growing-up years.

As a teenager at Vincent Massey Collegiate Institute in Etobicoke, she wondered whether to pursue art or early childhood education, opting for the latter with the intention of pursuing her art studies later.

"I loved art class in school," she said. "For my birthdays I'd get art kits and pencil kits. I was always drawing."

She traces her interest in art back to her childhood, when her father would draw funny cartoons of family events – of her not eating her eggs, for example – and leave them for her to find.

Art has been "sort of a second career I've been fostering for years," Bick said. A member of the Bayview Watercolour Society and Toronto Watercolour Society, Bick studied for several summers at the Haliburton School of the Arts. She also studied art, history and literature at York University and has taken private art instruction.

Bick initially instituted art education in her own classroom and was asked to bring the program to other classes in the school. She has also done pottery with her students.

As well, she makes a point of incorporating art activities into holiday and special occasion activities.

"I really believe strongly in incorporating art and learning through art," she said. Benefits include improvement in fine motor skills, focus, and colour recognition, she added.

Her work at the school "really combines my two passions."

For Bick, the process of creating art is the most important part of the lesson. "You're supposed to be in that creative zone. There's no right and wrong... I want it to be a successful, happy and rewarding experience."

A lesson from the teacher: *"Children are never too young to start learning about art and its history... I believe that children are naturally creative."*

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ICRF's Next Generation learn from the experts

Susan Minuk
Special to The CJN

Some 300 young professionals got first-hand advice from successful entrepreneurs and, at the same time, raised $63,000 for the Israel Cancer Research Fund at the ICRF Next Generation's 2nd annual Revolving Tables, held at Toronto's Park Hyatt Hotel Feb. 9.

"We are both young professionals," said Leah Carr, who co-chaired the Revolving Tables event with Kyle Lichtman, "and we know that while many young professionals have career questions, few have access to senior executives whom they can ask for candid answers on career paths and career opportunities. Many young professionals are also unsure of a specific career direction to pursue, so the ability to meet several senior executives in an intimate setting would make the experience even more valuable. Hence, the concept of Revolving Tables was born."

Next Generation committee co-chairs Jodi Fenwick and David Elfan said ICRF strives to foster generosity, community involvement and shared experiences, with the goal of raising $35,000 annually, the cost of a grant for one scientist to do one year of research in Israel, research that could assist in eradicating cancer.

The evening was structured around a three-course meal. Participants were assigned to a table where they networked with other participants. Each table was hosted by a Toronto business executive who shared his or her journey to success, offered advice and answered questions. After each course, the participants switched tables to meet their next mentor.

Seen are the co-chairs of the Israel Cancer Research Fund Young Generation's Revolving Tables evening, Leah Carr and Kyle Lichtman. ***[Susan Minuk photo]***

Thirty-two CEOs in a variety of fields were invited to act as moderators and mentors. Among them were interior designer Brian Gluckstein, author and culinary expert Rose Reisman, Harvey Kalles Real Estate president Michael Kalles, Mandell Entertainment Group CEO Corey Mandell, Cineplex Inc. president and CEO Ellis Jacob, Goodmans LLP co-chair Dale Lastman, Herzig Eye Institute medical director Dr. Sheldon Herzig and Post Media Network Inc. president and CEO Paul Godfrey.

The evening's host, Julian Brass, founder of Notable.ca, an online lifestyle guide for young professionals across Canada, shared one of his secrets to success. "Passion, it was my passion to manifest my online business. It is passion for life that makes cancer patients fight back, and God willing, survive. It is passion and dedication that [makes] doctors who are aiming to find a cure wake up every single day and not take no for an answer."

Jordan Banks, managing director of Facebook Canada shared the qualities he feels a business leader must have today. "One needs three fundamental qualities: number 1, a real sense of curiosity. The world changes so quickly, technology evolves so rapidly that you need to be curious and you need to have a real passion for not only what today brings but tomorrow as well… Secondly, you need to be extremely community-minded. We live in an era where it's all about community, and you need to be genuine and you need to be authentic, and you need to be who you say you are and have a very strong moral compass. When you do that in business and as a business leader… people are going to want to buy your product and service and people are going to want to work with you. The third factor you need is to be motivational, inspirational and honest as a business leader."

Canadian Football League commissioner Mark Cohon added another element. "I think you have to love what you do, and if you don't love what you do, change it," he said.

Participant Allan Beckerman, founder and CEO of IQ Inc., which provides project management and software development services to companies with information technology needs, looked at the question a little differently. "Pursue what you are passionate about, certainly passion plays a big part of the equation, but I think people must gravitate toward things they are actually good at, and that has been evidenced to me by some of the CEOs here tonight," he said.

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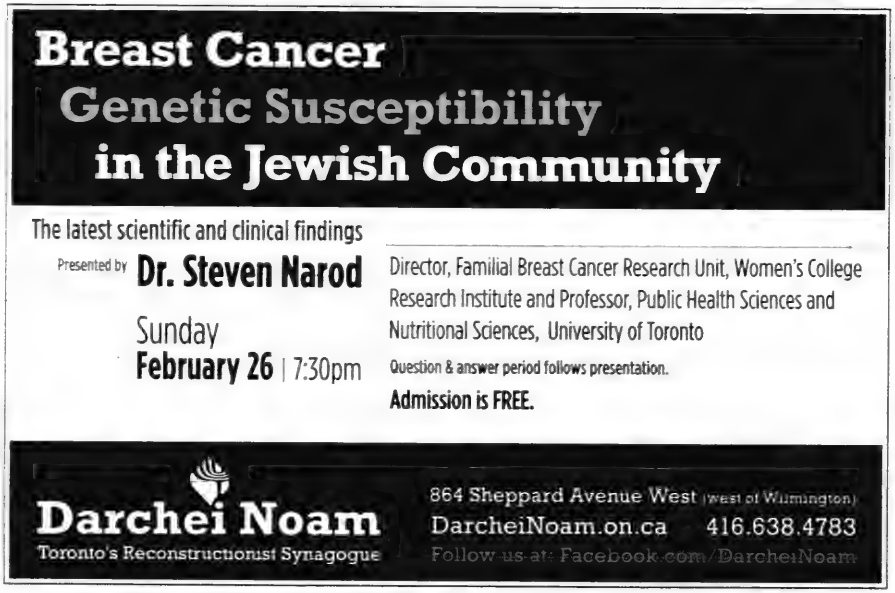
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Charity prepares for dragon boat race

Paul Lungen
Staff Reporter

Canadian supporters of the One Family Fund have always looked for new and offbeat ways to visit Israel.

Not for them mundane bus tours and de rigeur tourist stops. Instead, during previous visits, they've taken their supporters on five-day bike rides, rappelled down rock faces, scrambled on steep mountain grades and chosen events more suited for mountain goats than matronly philanthropists.

This time, it's no different. In May, supporters of the One Family Fund will man two uniquely decorated vessels in the Dragon Boat Israel Festival.

Forty-four people will paddle for the Fund in two days of races, which takes place on the Sea of Galilee on May 17 and 18.

They will be among an expected 40 teams of paddlers, split between North Americans and Israelis, including members of families that have lost loved ones to terror attacks.

As many as 1,000 people are expected at the event, the first of its kind in Israel, said Debbie Halton-Weiss, Canadian chair of Dragon Boats for Israel.

The festival will introduce the sport of dragon boat racing to the Jewish state, raise money for charities and create a fun way to bond with Israelis, she said.

Among the 20 North American crews, most of them Canadians, will be breast-cancer survivors, One Family Fund supporters and individuals enthused by the sport, Halton-Weiss said.

Pam Albert, executive director of One Family Fund Canada, said terror victims, bereaved parents and Israeli supporters of the charity would join Canadian paddlers in their boats.

The event will afford bereaved Israelis the opportunity to enjoy a get-away, recharge their emotional batteries, work with others as a team and perhaps learn new coping strategies.

As for the Canadians, "it's a really hands-on opportunity to be with the victims of terror and get the opportunity to connect," she said.

When they're not racing their dragon boats, the Canadians will also do volunteer work, visit bereaved families, take part in a one-day hike and devote another day to touring.

The dragon boat race is one of three main athletic activities the charity has scheduled in Israel, Albert continued. From Oct. 21 to 25, supporters can take part in an annual hike, while in March supporters take to the streets of Jerusalem for that city's marathon.

Each of the events is also a fundraising opportunity. The charity raised $1.2 million last year, with funds earmarked for camps designed for victims of terror, youth clubs, twinning of bar and bat mitzvah kids and retreats for bereaved Israeli families, she said.

For the One Family Fund, combining a good cause with the dragon boat extravaganza "is an alternative, fun way to see Israel, to really connect with the land and people… I think people are really looking for a new way to connect to Israel," Albert said.

One Family Fund was recruited to the dragon boat races through contacts in the United Israel Appeal of Canada, a sponsor of the event.

Halton-Weiss, who also chairs the Jewish Federation of Ottawa, took up the sport several years ago and immediately appreciated the way it brought together sports, support for charity and community building. She spearheaded the effort to bring the event to Israel.

Dragon boat racing originated in China 2,000 years ago and has grown in popularity in Canada over the last 25 years. It features long boats decorated with a dragon head. A drummer pounds out a beat as 20 paddlers move the boat while a 22nd individual steers the boat at the rear.

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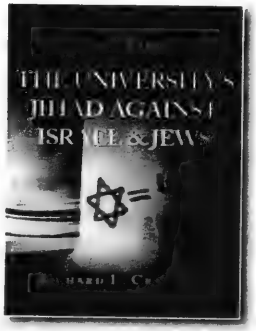

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Brady has received thousands of letters from students

Continued from page 1

Winner of the Silver Birch Award, voted by Ontario students, the story spawned a television documentary by veteran CBC journalist Joe Schlesinger, a film, a website and, in Japan, a touring group of student actors called Small Wings.

Brady still can't believe the story could touch so many lives and even today is at a loss to explain why.

"I didn't think it would be interesting for anybody but the family," he said. "I had no idea how far it would go. Nobody could imagine how far it would go."

His wife, Teresa, has her own take on why the story became so popular. The book is constructed in a way that touches young people today, she said.

Part of it focuses on the Brady family's normal life in Czechoslovakia – the skiing and theatre outings – and contrasts it with the world of fear created by the Nazis.

"It describes this happy family life before the hell happened," she said. "They go through a period of evil and still stay [human.]"

"Everyone seems to be able to find a connection in the story to themselves," adds Brady's daughter, Lara.

New immigrants from strife-riven countries like Somalia have been touched by it and they see "a certain parallel," he said.

He's seen that same universal appeal across Canada and during his many speaking engagements abroad. In Macao, 2,500 kids came to hear him tell the story. Afterward, a young girl came up to him and told him how she was affected by the tragic death of her grandfather.

Hearing her story, "I told her to make it through the mourning and then life goes on. She acknowledged she could also get through it," Brady said.

One of the incidents that touched him the most was described in a letter from a teacher in a Micmac community in Nova Scotia. It told of a young girl who, it was feared, might take her own life.

"The teacher wrote that the girl read the book and now it changed her attitude completely. Things like that…" Brady said, his voice trailing off.

Over the years, Brady has received thousands of letters from middle school students, passed along by their teachers. He's sent back 7,000 signed photos of himself and Hana in the last five years alone.

"We get about 100 e-mails a week, plus 2,000 letters a year," said Lara, who along with her father responds to them all. Another 25 to 60 questions about his life are generated on their Facebook page and "we're starting to tweet," she said.

Brady has travelled across Canada to tell the story, as well as to Hong Kong, Macao, South Africa, Israel, Australia, the Czech Republic and, just recently, Scotland. Still active at 84, he'll tell his story in Boston, Mass., in March and a month later, in New York. At one point, he'd speak to 100 schools a year, but with age he's cut it down to a more manageable 10 or 15.

Brady has used *Hana's Suitcase* to draw attention to another wartime story, that of his wartime friends, the boys who shared a room with him in Theresienstadt. One of them, Petr Ginz, was a creative soul who drew a picture that imagined the Earth as seen from the moon. The artwork survived the war and was taken aboard NASA's space shuttle Columbia by Israeli astronaut Ilan Ramon. The shuttle, of course, burned up on re-entry, killing all on board. Ramon, it turned out, died on Ginz's birthday.

Brady marvels at the coincidences – and there are many. In 2004, he received an e-mail on his birthday from the Czech Republic. Someone, it turned out, had found his wartime diary in a dumpster. A family in Brno, in the Czech Republic, was clearing out its basement and a person walking by happened to notice some children's books on top. As his mother was a professor of drama and children's literature, he thought she might be interested in them. When he looked more closely, he also found worn books, papers and postcards. He retrieved them and turned them over to his mother. Later, she happened to read a review of *Hana's Suitcase* and thought the material might be connected to it. It turned out many of the items had actually belonged to Hana.

The papers were taken to a Roman Catholic priest – who happened to know Brady – and he passed them along. Among the documents were postcards from Hana, including one sent to her mother in Auschwitz but which had been returned. There was also a 90-year-old family photograph in which Brady recognized his grandparents and mother, Marketa, as a young woman.

Also retrieved was Brady's diary from Theresienstadt, with the last entry in September 1944, just five days before he was transported to Auschwitz. The material had been found at the home that belonged to Brady's aunt's family. It had been saved because the aunt's husband was not Jewish and was not deported.

Just another coincidence in a remarkable series of coincidences, though Brady is convinced something more than blind luck is at play.

"The story should have ended when [the suitcase] was in Auschwitz, when it was destroyed [by vandals] in 1984. The suitcase was not an original artifact when Fumiko got it," Brady said.

Fumiko found a survivor in the Czech Republic who knew Brady and initiated contact, but the story could have ended there.

"These are crazy chances," Brady said.

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Russia and China use Syria to flout the West

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

Last November, as Syrian leader Bashar Assad pushed ahead with his brutal assault on his own citizens who were protesting for freedom, this column asked why the media had almost entirely failed to critically examine Russia and China for their obstructionist role in opposing sanctions on Syria and refusing to condemn the Assad regime at the UN Security Council.

This recently changed. Following the Russian and Chinese veto earlier this month of a Security Council resolution backing an Arab League plan to resolve the crisis, the media finally came around to focusing on these two major powers. Indeed, for some journalists there was a sense of urgency to understand Russia's role in particular. After all, Russia is Syria's principal arms supplier and Assad used the veto as a cover to intensify his attacks, mainly on the city of Homs, where hundreds of civilians were reportedly killed as a result of tank, artillery and sniper fire.

How, some naively asked, could Russia, in full view of the Arab world, be so callous and indifferent to the human suffering they've contributed to by re-supplying Assad with heavy weapons while claiming, with stunning hypocrisy, to be opposed to favouring one side or the other.

But what of Russia's broader strategic interests in the Middle East?

In "Why Russia Supports Assad" (*New York Times*, Feb. 10), Dmitri Trenin, director of the Carnegie Moscow Center, pointed out that "Russia's stance on Syria is often explained in terms of Syria's importance to Moscow." However, while "Moscow's links to the Assad family go back four decades," Trenin claimed that Damascus is not ultimately a strategic ally or even a vital arms purchaser.

What explains Moscow's unstinting support for Syria, Trenin argued, is its opposition to the West, which involves primarily staking out a position against the United States and Europe for their support of the popular uprisings in the "Arab Spring." Both Russia and China, which have restive factions back home, are sending signals that by supporting Assad, they will not tolerate social upheavals, let alone revolutions.

Trenin, however, went beyond this general attitude to focus on something even more specific (and which concerns China as much as it does Russia): "When the Kremlin... looks at the Arab Awakening, they see democratization leading directly to Islamicization." Russia, let's not forget, faces the continuing prospect of a renewed insurgency from the Chechens, who are Muslim and who yearn for their independence, despite Russia's repeated brutal repressions.

Syrian President Bashar Assad beside a portrait of his late father Hafez.
[RNS file photo]

With respect to China in particular, Steve Tsang, director of the China Policy Institute, observed ("China's Syrian Folly" Project Syndicate, Feb. 8) that while China has no immediate strategic investment in Syria, it sees an opening against the West that can be exploited.

As Tsang put it, "[Given] the costs of the West's misadventures in Iraq and Afghanistan (and, to a lesser extent, in Libya) compounded by its major economies' weakness, China's leaders appear to see an opportunity to push back.

"With Russia on its side, the Chinese government can take a stand without appearing isolated. And, while a long-term strategic alliance between Russia and China may not be in the offing, tactical cooperation to stop the West from imposing its values on the global community is likely to persist."

Reflecting on China's bitter resentment of what it sees as America's democracy promotion mission, Richard Bernstein, a former Beijing bureau chief for *Time* magazine, noted (in the Feb. 23 *New York Review of Books*) that "China has been the main protector of regimes now under sanctions by the United States and the West, whether Iran, Sudan, or Zimbabwe, even as it has courted foreign leaders who have been branded as pariahs. At the end of this past June, it accorded a warm welcome to Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, even though Bashir has been indicted for crimes against humanity by the International Criminal Court, which wants him arrested."

International affairs in the "big leagues" doesn't get much uglier than this, when the butchery in Syria is but a side-show.

Paul Michaels is director of research and media relations for the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs.

honeycomb
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Western and Israel rebrand themselves

The University of Western Ontario last month undertook its third rebranding initiative since its inception as an institution.

The university was founded in 1878 as an academic branch of the Church of England, initially named the Western University of London Ontario. Early in the 20th century, the university secularized, and in 1923, was renamed the University of Western Ontario.

Campus Life

Jessica Pollock

Fast forward to the present day. In January, it was rebranded as Western University Canada, "for communication, marketing and web purposes," the university says on its website. I now enjoy occasionally referring to as WU (pronounced "woo"). Its new name is a modification of its original name in an attempt to become more globalized, although its official name remains the University of Western Ontario, and it "will appear as such on diplomas and official documents."

There were two major motives behind the rebranding project.

First, Western president Amit Chamka intends to transform the university into a more progressively international institution. Since his appointment as president in 2009, the number of international students at Western has substantially increased. Chamka hopes that, as a result of the rebranding project, the international student community will continue to expand because the institution will be more easily recognized on a global scale.

Second, "establishing a more unified visual identity for Western," its communications webpage asserts, was necessary to eliminate its former identity confusion. Previously, very few people would refer to the institution by its legal name. Rather, the vast majority, in everyday discourse, would call it simply Western. Thus, it became natural to combine Western's identity with its usual street name.

Western's new rebranding reminds me of the campaign launched last year by LAPAM, the Israeli government's official advertising unit, in conjunction with Bodden Partners, a New York-based marketing communications agency, to promote Israel's tourism industry.

Focusing on this unique industry is a clever action plan that hopes to reverse prejudiced and preconceived notions of Israel and divert attention from political conflict.

Just as Western rebranded in order to attract a larger international student population, Israel has benefited from an initiative in Canada to promote increased tourism on a national scale.

For its 2011 national ad campaign, LAPAM distributed newly designed displays across Canada, particularly in Montreal and Toronto airports, in Toronto's Airport Express Bus and in some TTC bus shelters.

The displays market numerous Israeli destinations including the Sea of Galilee, the Ramon Crater, the Church of the Beatitudes, Masada, the Dead Sea and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. By exhibiting landmarks that interest Jews and non-Jews alike, Israel hopes to attract a diverse array of individuals to explore the country's fascinating antiquities.

As a result of the 2011 campaign, Israel experienced a 15 to 20 per cent increase in tourism from Canadian passport holders, making LAPAM's efforts a worthwhile initiative.

Despite the reasons behind Western's rebranding, the university received unexpected criticism following the announcement. Alumni were left bewildered, with questions about how to refer to the institution they graduated from. Current students are also having difficulty abandoning the name they are accustomed to.

I feel, however, that it's a constructive step. Today, it appears that organizations and institutions want their identities to simply and clearly reflect who they are. The advantage of a straightforward brand is that names and symbols become distinguishable and easily recognized by the public. I believe that any institution can strengthen its identity if it engages in branding strategies similar to the one Western has undertaken.

TBR The Toronto Board of Rabbis

mourns the passing of our dear colleague and founding member

Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut ז"ל

Rabbi Plaut was one of the pre-eminent rabbis of our time, who dedicated himself to scholarship, the Jewish community, and to bettering Canadian society.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to Rabbi Plaut's family and Holy Blossom Congregation

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'BDS against Canadian values'

Continued from page 3

Zohar added that the BDS campaign, which was launched in 2005, goes against Canadian values.

"During previous boycott attempts, presidents of nearly every major academic institution in Canada expressed their clear opposition to academic boycotts of Israel, and it is telling that not a single major university in North America has implemented a program of boycott against Israel," Zohar said.

He said URSU should be working with the school's leadership to better represent students' interests, "rather than supporting extreme and discriminatory political campaigns."

But Peterson said the motion does represent student sentiment at his school, stressing that it was presented by a student group and not by the URSU executive or board of directors.

"I, as the president of the students' union, don't get to decide what is important. The students get to decide. So if students want to take on a social issue... that's their decision," he said. "I take my marching orders from students, not the other way around."

Now that the motion has been passed, Peterson said the next step is to look into URSU's investments.

"I think the rational action from the students' union perspective is that we sit down with our board of directors, investment professionals... and our general manager and look into our mutual funds and what we're investing in."

But Peterson admitted that he's not sure how to measure whether a company "profits from Israeli war crimes, occupation and oppression," as the motion states.

"We just have to take a very rational approach... look at our investments... and if something pops up, we'll flag it and the board of directors will decide what to do from there," Peterson said.

University of Regina spokesperson Jay Branch said the school had no comment on the motion, since it's a URSU matter.

Efforts to reach SAIA representatives for comment were unsuccessful.

LICENCE TO LEARN: Cheryl Koperwas, national executive director of the Canadian Technion Society, shows off her new Ontario licence plate, created as a tribute to the Technion's 100th Cornerstone Centennial and its upcoming 70th anniversary.

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Reena in the News

Reena

Noah's Story

Fraser MacDonald with Noah

Good service and delicious home cooking are important at the Sunset Grill Family Restaurant at 11710 Yonge Street in Richmond Hill. It's breakfast time and, like a good and attentive host, 16-yr-old **Noah Wolanski** greets his guests at the door, guides them to a table and proudly presents a menu to each patron. He leaves the guests in the hands of the wait staff, as he surveys the restaurant to make sure the table tops are sparkling clean. He beams with excitement as he seats a party of eight. A packed Friday breakfast crowd is an opportunity for Noah to shine.

He works hard, is never late and is passionate about his responsibility in making sure all his guests are taken care of; he understands that he contributes to the success of the business.

The only difference between Noah and the rest of the crew is that he needs a little extra help in the form of his mother, Rena, who acts as his "work coach". Her support is necessary because Noah was born with myotonic dystrophy, and is physically and intellectually challenged.

Much of Noah's success is due to the efforts of his boss, **Fraser MacDonald**. When his father Mark posed the idea of Noah coming to work for him, MacDonald never hesitated. "If anyone was uncomfortable with him at the beginning, they certainly are not now," says MacDonald. "People see Noah; they get a chance to know him."

Two years ago, no one would have thought Noah would ever be able to hold down this volunteer position. But with the help of his family, and Fraser's compassion and patience, Noah is flourishing. His ability to cope is impressive and the pride he takes in his work is admirable; the knowledge of a job well done fills Noah with excitement.

Noah is testament to the fact that people with disabilities ***can*** work and make a contribution to society. Holding a job that allows him to interact directly with the public gives Noah a wonderful opportunity to show everyone that he is not to be feared, or pitied, but is just another person trying to get by.

Restaurant hosts don't usually get tips, but when all of Noah's guest's leave, between them, they've left him about two dollars. Noah is thrilled but understands when his boss, tells him, "It's not about the money – it's about lessons learned." That goes not just for Noah, but also for his boss and his guests too.

Noah is just one of the young people with special needs who are engaged in the newly created Community @ Work program. Joan Glick Gold has been appointed to serve as Chair of the committee which is a collaborative effort of Reena, Geneva Centre for Autism, JVS, York Region District School Board and Zareinu. The Community@Work program will strive to uphold Reena's vision of a culture that completely and successfully integrates individuals with special needs into the workplace.

For more information please call
Rob Scott at 905-889-2690 ext. 2209

www.reena.org

check out OUR video section
The Canadian Jewish news & YouTube
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A parallel Jewish universe

Rabbi Asher Vale

Worlds that function on another plane of reality are not found in science fiction only. They exist, on a more mundane level, all around us. The underground economy, for example, operates just beyond the reach of the tax collector and government regulators. There's also the realm of counterfeiters who produce fake Rolexes and ersatz Gucci purses.

The Jewish People has a parallel universe of its own. It has its own foods (kosher) and special days (Shabbat and chagim). It also has its own judicial system, which is referred to in the beginning of the section of the Torah that we read this past Shabbat: "These are the laws that you shall place before them." (Exodus, 21:1) The Talmud (Gittin, 88b) explains that the "them" referred to in this sentence are the judges of a beit din, a rabbinical court. If a Jew has an issue with another member of the tribe, the Torah mandates that he or she should go to this kind of tribunal rather than a secular court.

These courts did not operate only in biblical or talmudic times. Batei din have been organized over the past two millennia in Jewish communities throughout the Diaspora. Canada, of course, is no exception.

Batei din are convened for different purposes. The type that is likely familiar to most people is the beit din that handles *gittin*, Jewish divorces. If a marriage began according to the laws of Moses and Israel, it needs to end that way as well. A civil divorce doesn't cancel the religious ties that bind a couple together. It is the *get* that gives spiritual closure to a marriage relationship that has, unfortunately, ended.

Rabbinic Reflections

There is also a beit din that performs conversions. It is inspiring to see non-Jews who voluntarily change their whole lives even when, in some cases, they become alienated from their families and friends, in order to become part of the Jewish People. It's a reminder for those of us fortunate enough to be born into our wonderful religion, to not take it for granted.

The type of beit din referred to in the biblical verse quoted earlier is the one that resolves disputes. The primary motivation for using its services is the biblical obligation to do so. However, there are also benefits to having a claim adjudicated by a beit din. It is usually a less costly, more informal and more expeditious process than that in a secular court. It's also a way for Jews to settle their differences without washing their dirty laundry in public.

A typical beit din consists of a panel of three rabbis who are experts in Jewish law. They render their decisions by applying such law, as well as taking into account local business practices. The rulings of the beit din are almost always enforceable in local courts since batei din structure their proceedings to conform with arbitration proceedings in their local jurisdiction.

Most of the time, we can contently live in our own little worlds. However, for those exceptional situations that require them, there are batei din to assist us. Conveniently, they are not in some far-off universe, but as close as cyberspace – beis_din@hotmail.com.

Rabbi Asher Vale is the director of the beit din of the Vaad Harabonim of Toronto.

Leadership needed to sustain social programs

Otto von Bismark, the 19th-century chancellor of Germany, introduced a social insurance program that set the retirement age at a rather arbitrary 65 during a time when few people actually lived that long. Yet 65 has become sacrosanct for many people.

An entire industry has developed around retirement planning – to help some to retire early and others to work beyond 65 – and the idea of raising the age when one can fully collect CPP or old age benefits is suggested only by the politically courageous, or suicidal. Twice before, Canadian prime ministers, recognizing the economic unsustainability of such a retirement age, have been forced to back away from proposals to raise the threshold. Prime Minister Stephen Harper's recent musings about raising it are tough, but necessary.

The need for reform cannot be seriously in doubt. Whereas 30 years ago, there were six taxpaying workers for every retiree, today there are about 4.5, and in 20 short years, the ratio is projected to be 3 to 1. Surely major reforms are needed.

Judaism has always revered the aged. There is a specific mitzvah to give honour to the elderly. While modern society associates beauty with youth, the Torah thinks otherwise and associates beauty, *hadar*, with the face of the elderly, *pnei zaken*.

Yet the notion of receiving public funds just because one reaches a certain age is foreign to Judaism. Public funds are meant to be used for public needs, and giving public money to all individuals, regardless of need, is difficult to justify. Such a consideration should not apply to CPP benefits, as they are basically a forced saving plan. Part of our wages are being withheld today to be paid back to us at retirement.

Money Matters

Rabbi Jay Kelman CA

Our tax system recognizes this by clawing back old age security, but not CPP benefits, beyond a certain income level. While one can debate the appropriate income level at which one should no longer be classified as needy, the clawback concept has much merit.

Additionally a Jewish pension system would likely take into consideration not only income, but also net worth. As is readily evident, there is often little correlation between a person's net worth and their income. To base government benefits (or tax rates) on income alone can lead to an unfairly distributed tax burden.

Truth be told, the entire notion of universal benefits makes little economic or moral sense. Why millionaires should receive $100 a month per child under seven while other children can't afford lunch is beyond me.

As governments face rising health care costs and continuing deficits, we'll need to choose between continuing with universal benefits by necessarily lowering the level of, or access to, health care, or directing some funding toward the most needy. By imposing user fees on the wealthy or allowing some form of a "two-tiered" health system, rich and poor alike will end up with better health care.

It's the job of leaders – political, religious and business – to do what's necessary, not what's expedient, despite the inherent job risks that this may entail.

Send comments to rabbijay@torahinmotion.org.

The Peace and Violence of Judaism is even-handed

Perhaps the most pressing issue for Jews today is our attitude to the conflict surrounding the State of Israel. Even those of us who strongly support the state are divided: should the state be passionately pursuing peace or standing firm and fighting against its enemies and proudly asserting Jewish particularism and exceptionalism?

Reasonably enough, many Jews try to find guidance on this issue in our traditional texts. The problem is that Jews on the political left often argue that pursuing peace is the unequivocal message of the Jewish tradition, while Jews on the political right argue at least as forcefully that Jewish tradition teaches us to fight for exclusive Jewish national rights to the land. Which side is right?

A new scholarly book, *The Peace and Violence of Judaism: From the Bible to Modern Zionism*, addresses this question head on. Written by a former Torontonian, Prof. Robert Eisen, a leading scholar of Jewish studies who teaches at George Washington University in Washington, D.C., the book uses a daring and innovative method for analyzing this issue.

In the opening chapter on peace and violence in the Bible, Eisen presents not one thesis but two. First he builds the case that the Bible promotes Jewish violence against gentiles (Canaanites and Amalekites, for example) and that the original connection of the Jewish people to the land is based on an intolerant, ethnocentric worldview. Then he builds an equally impressive case for the opposite claim, that the Bible is truly universalistic, recognizing the humanity and dignity of every human being since all were created in God's image.

The chapter on rabbinic Judaism does the same thing. First he develops the thesis that the talmudic rabbis moved Judaism (even?) closer to a peaceful and universalistic model. They explicitly claimed that non-Jews, even without converting to Judaism, could perfect themselves and live meaningful lives that God would reward. They simply had to observe the seven Noahide commandments, which, it is claimed, represent the basic ethical teachings of humanity. (It is difficult to find in the Hebrew Bible an explicit description of how a gentile might live a meaningful and righteous life.)

Then he builds the case for the opposite argument, that rabbinic Judaism is intolerant, quoting derogatory rabbinic sayings about gentiles (although certainly no worse than what gentiles said about Jews back then). Even the proof from the seven Noahide commandments is debatable, Eisen explains. True, they include a number of ethical precepts that civilized people should accept (laws against murder, theft and adultery). But two Noahide laws are narrowly Jewish – one against cursing the Jewish God and one against worshipping other gods. It can be argued that the talmudic rabbis were offering gentiles a prescription for living a meaningful life only if they abandoned every gentile religion (all of which the rabbis saw as idolatrous) and practised a version of "Judaism lite."

Views & Reviews

Martin Lockshin

Maimonides famously promoted this narrow understanding when he wrote that a gentile is considered to be righteous only if she/he observes the seven Noahide commandments specifically because God commanded them to the Jewish people. It is not sufficient, he wrote, for the gentile to say that she/he finds those laws meaningful and reasonable (*Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Kings 8:11).

Further chapters follow the same model, arguing that (a) the medieval Jewish philosophical tradition, (b) Kabbalah and (c) modern Zionism have traditions and arguments that promote either the case for peace or the case for violent Jewish attitudes to gentiles.

All the arguments are presented dispassionately, based on careful reading of primary sources as well as the latest academic scholarship. While the book draws heavily on scholarly books and articles that are often densely written, Eisen manages to make the issues clear even for the non-expert.

This genre is unusual. Eisen combines the best of academic style – careful footnotes and unemotional debate – with the best of talmudic style. The beginner student of Talmud is often flustered when she/he reads a long talmudic discussion that carefully lays out mutually exclusive positions on a topic and never resolves the issue. More advanced Talmud students revel in this uncertainty.

What are readers of Eisen's book to do with the uncertainty it creates? I hope they will learn to dismiss the facile arguments offered both by right-wingers and by left-wingers who cherry-pick their quotations from Jewish tradition in order to claim that they, and only they, are the legitimate heirs of traditional Jewish thinking. In addition, readers will learn a lot about Jewish history and Jewish thought, presented in an engaging manner. Perhaps some readers will be stimulated to read more of the fascinating sources that Eisen presents. The book finishes with a moving epilogue in which Eisen presents his own personal view on Middle Eastern politics (he is a moderately left-of-centre Zionist) and on Jewish-Muslim dialogue (he is an enthusiastic participant), but, of course, does not argue that his is the only acceptable reading of the tradition.

Both at the beginning of the book and at the end, Eisen challenges scholars of other religions to write dispassionate books like this about their own traditions, instead of the all-too-common triumphalist books that argue that "Religion X has always been peace-loving" or the scandalous books that argue simplistically that "Religion Y is intrinsically violent." Let us hope that responsible scholars of Christianity and Islam accept Eisen's challenge.

More than once in the book, Eisen addresses the question of whether it is appropriate to judge old Jewish texts within their original ancient world context, or whether analysis should concentrate on how those old texts affect our world today. Personally, I am drawn to the former approach. Even after reading this book, a tour de force of even-handedness, I am convinced that we Jews have much to be proud of in our tradition. It was inspiring to see how many of our writers and thinkers promoted peaceful and positive approaches to gentiles, even in periods when gentiles were saying nasty things about (and often doing nasty things to) Jews.

Miles Nadal JCC

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF MEMBERS

NOTICE is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of Members will be held at 750 Spadina Avenue in Room 318, on the 26th day of March, 2012 at 8:00 o'clock in the evening to:

a) Accept as Members of the Corporation those Members listed in good standing tabled and delivered by the Secretary of the Corporation;
b) Elect its Directors;
c) Approve the Financial Statements for the Corporation for the year ended August 31, 2011;
d) Appoint auditors and authorize the Directors to fix their remuneration
e) Ratify and approve all the acts, proceedings, transactions, commitments, contracts entered into, and undertakings given by or on behalf of the Corporation by the Board of Directors from the date of the last Annual General Meeting to the date hereof;
f) Transact such further and other business as may be properly brought before the meeting or any adjournments thereof

Members of the Corporation may be nominated by written petition signed by not less than twenty-five (25) persons, who are members and eligible to vote at the Annual Meeting. The petitions must be accompanied by the written consent of the nominee and must be received by the Chairman of the Nominations Committee at least fifteen (15) days prior to the Annual Meeting, after which time no further nominations shall be accepted.

Proxy forms for those unable to attend the meeting may be obtained from the Business Office of the Corporation during business hours.

DATED the 24th day of February, 2012
BY ORDER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
"Jodi Shanoff"
Secretary

ISRAEL 2012-13

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Jewish Toronto and World Jewry say

Spiritual leader, world-renowned scholar, F

By Daniel Horowitz

"I believe I was created as a Jew to be God's tool. I believe that my purpose on earth is to serve not only my people, but to serve humanity and do so as a Jew. Others may see only themselves and their goals, private and national. We Jews see our goals as more than private goals."

Those words were written by Rabbi Gunther Plaut, z"l, a well-respected spiritual leader, world-renowned scholar, and accomplished author who passed away on February 9, at 99 years of age, after 12th at Holy Blossom Temple, is predeceased by his wife Elizabeth, by his parents Jonas and Selma Plaut, and his brother Rabbi Walter Plaut. He is survived by his children, Judith Plaut and Rabbi Jonathan V. and Carol Plaut; his grandchildren, Daniel and Amy Plaut, and Deborah and David Elias and his great grandson, Steven Elias.

"W. Gunther Plaut, father and husband, son and grandfather, brother and uncle; eminent man of letters; a rabbi of the word and the deed, was swift like the eagle, strong like the lion. He was a prince and a great man of Israel, and now he has died," Holy Blossom's Rabbi John Moscowitz said in his eulogy. "The eagle soars above all, the lion is mighty on land. One is master of the skies, the other will never yield the ground. Each is esteemed by the Bible, one bearing the next generation on its wings, the other a symbol of pride and courage. W. Gunther Plaut was our teacher, our rabbi. He soared above us, scoping out our history as Jews. And, he stood his ground, reminding Jews of our responsibilities born of that history. Eagle and lion, Rabbi Plaut embodied grace and power, the privileges and sorrows we've known, no less, the obligations incumbent on the fortunate. Holy Blossom Temple felt that he was ours, and rightly so. But we also knew that he wasn't ours alone. From the first, Gunther Plaut was a man of the world and so he would always be."

Rabbi Plaut's portrait for his role as UJA Campaign Chair, 1970. (Courtesy Ontario Jewish Archives)

decades of doing just that – serving humanity.

Rabbi Plaut, who came to Toronto in 1961 after serving as a rabbi in Chicago and St. Paul, was the senior scholar in residence at Toronto's Holy Blossom Temple at the time of his death. He retired from his post as Holy Blossom's Senior Rabbi in 1978. Rabbi Plaut was a former Campaign Chair of United Jewish Appeal of Greater Toronto as well as a former President of Canadian Jewish Congress.

Rabbi Plaut, laid to rest on Sunday, February

Born in Germany, Rabbi Plaut studied at the Universities of Heidelberg and Berlin, and received the LLB Doctor of Laws in 1934. He fled from Hitler in 1935 for the United States, and the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, where he was ordained in 1939. He served as a chaplain with the United States Army during World War II, and was at the European front with the 104th Infantry. Decorated with the Bronze Star Medal, Rabbi Plaut - who, among other honours, was a Companion of the Order of Canada, and received the Order of Ontario - was the first rabbi to bring a Sefer Torah back to Germany and held the first free service in a German synagogue, in the burned-out shell of the Cologne Synagogue in 1945.

Rabbi Plaut was also present at the capture of the Dora-Nordhausen concentration camp in Germany in April, 1945.

And, according to Toronto's Mendy Sharf, a longtime friend and neighbour of Rabbi Plaut, the rabbi's devotion to Judaism knew no bounds, even during the perils of war.

"I was part of the UJA Mission that took place when 9/11 occurred," recalls Sharf. "As it happened, I was seated on the bus next to Rabbi Plaut, who was also my neighbour. He started to tell me about his work as a chaplain with the U.S. army infantry. He never carried a gun, but there he was, on the front lines with explosions all around him, and people dying left and right, but he remained untouched. Suddenly, an order was sent out telling everyone to go to the Remegen Bridge, a railway bridge across the River Rhine which gave the allies access into Germany's heartland, which the Germans were trying to destroy. It was there that a truck-load of matzohs, ordered by Rabbi Plaut, showed up amidst the chaos of war. Undaunted by the danger, Rabbi Plaut stood there, handing out a box of matzoh to every truck, tank or infantry vehicle that passed by. What an incredible scene that must have been to witness. He was truly a remarkable man."

Rabbi Plaut, 1983 (Courtesy Ontario Jewish Archives) Photo by Al Gilbert

And, on October 19, 1971, with Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin visiting Ottawa, it was Rabbi Plaut leading over 12,000 Jewish

Rabbi & Elizabeth Plaut, 1978. (Courtesy Ontario Jewish Archives) Photo by Gilbert Studios

goodbye to a true renaissance man

Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut passes away at 99

men, women and children, standing arm-in-arm with them outside the Soviet Embassy, chanting, "Let our People go!" They were there, led by Rabbi Plaut to protest the common Soviet practice of not allowing its Jewish citizens to practice their faith, speak their language or make aliyah.

He published over two dozen books on theology, philosophy, and history, as well as works of fiction. His best known work is *The Torah - A Modern Commentary*, which was published by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the umbrella organization for Reform Jewish congregations in North America. This opus, which has sold nearly 120,000 copies, quickly gave Rabbi Plaut worldwide prominence.

Truly a renaissance man, Rabbi Plaut, who, in the 1950s had his own television program and for 12 years, his own weekly radio program, was an avid chess player and golfer. In fact, in 1935, he represented Germany on its tennis and soccer teams during the Maccabiah Games.

"Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut was not only the intellectual and spiritual leader of Reform Judaism, but through his communal leadership, he represented Canadian Jewry in his generation," said Elizabeth Wolfe, Board

Rabbi Plaut (2nd from right) joins UJA 1974 Campaign Chair, Murray Koffler (2nd from left) and guests at a Campaign function. (Courtesy Ontario Jewish Archives) Photo by Graphic Artists

Chair, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto. "His prolific writings, particularly his Torah Commentary, contributed to a resurgence of study and worship among liberal Jews everywhere. His success was due not only to his intellect and oratory, but to his ability to relate deeply on an individual basis as well. As a young congregant of Holy Blossom Temple, he personally inspired me, instilled me with confidence, and encouraged me to realize my potential and pursue a life of meaning and purpose."

"Rabbi Plaut's importance to Canada's Jewish community cannot be overstated," said Rabbi Adam Cutler of Beth Tzedec Congregation.

"His contributions to synagogue leadership, Jewish scholarship and public life are a model to which all rabbis should aspire. Beth Tzedec Congregation mourns shoulder to shoulder with our neighbour synagogue in the passing of this remarkable man. We are indebted to his legacy."

"Rabbi Plaut was a community leader in the truest sense," said Ted Sokolsky, President and CEO, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto. "Not only was he a brilliant man, admired and respected not only in Toronto and Canada, but around the world, but he was a man who had time for anyone he came into contact with. As the Chair of United Jewish Appeal's Annual Campaign in 1970, Rabbi Plaut demonstrated not only tremendous leadership, but great vision, compassion and, of course, wisdom. I had the unique opportunity of being with him in Israel on Sept 11, 2001 when the planes hit the Twin Towers. His insights and discussions on that historical moment will remain with me forever. I extend my deepest sympathies to Rabbi Plaut's family and friends."

An Unforgettable Day. A Remarkable Man.

By Julia Koschitzky

One never forgets the exact place where one was and the moment in time when a tragedy of enormous magnitude strikes. September 11, 2001 was such a day.

I was on a bus in Israel together with Rabbi Gunther Plaut and 21 past United Jewish Appeal Campaign Chairs. We were part of a solidarity mission during the intifada and came to show our support to the people of Israel for all they had to endure during those difficult years.

Even at the ripe old age of 89 there was no way that Rabbi Plaut would miss the opportunity of participating in such an important mission. Our itinerary on September 11 took us to the northernmost part of Israel at the Lebanese border when we heard about the first plane hitting the World Trade Center.

During a UJA Past Chairs' Mission to Israel during which the 9/11 attacks took place, Julia Koschitzky (holding Israeli flag) and Rabbi Plaut (middle row, 2nd from right) watched the terror unfolding a world away.

Together we watched in disbelief the terrors unfolding in New York and Washington, commenting that it was ironic that we, who were visiting Israel up in Metullah, felt safer and more secure than the families we had left behind in North America.

Immediately, Rabbi Plaut's concern was whether he would be able to fly back to Toronto in time to deliver his Rosh Hashanah sermon at Holy Blossom Temple as flights were being cancelled and curtailed due to security concerns. His sense of responsibility to his congregants weighed so heavily upon him that he decided not to take any chances in delaying his return with the other participants but rather to find an earlier alternative route home. I believe he made it just in time and no doubt he spoke about this experience from his pulpit.

This may have been one of Rabbi Plaut's last trips to Israel, the country he lovingly spoke about on so many occasions. This is the way I choose to remember Rabbi Plaut - always fully engaged in life, keeping up with people thirty years younger than him and never complaining about physical exhaustion even though he may have felt it. He was always ready to share his thoughts and commentaries of events in such an articulate and thoughtful manner, while always embracing every Jew from every stream of Jewish life with sensitivity and inclusiveness.

Our community feels blessed to have had Rabbi Gunther Plaut as our great statesman for so many long and productive years, guiding, advising and interpreting Jewish values not only to our own families but also to the Canadian community at large.

On a personal note, I will forever remember sharing the trauma of 9/11 with such a unique and impressive human being. May his precious memory be a blessing and a glory to his people.

UJA Federation OF GREATER TORONTO

Carrots: Inexpensive, healthy

Eileen Goltz
Special to The CJN

Carrots are my go-to veggie – always in season and cheaper than any other vegetable out there. They are delicious cooked or fresh, and you can always count on them to lend colour and fibre to any meal. They are also all over the place when it comes to their colour. They come in the popular orange we all recognize, but also in white, red, yellow, purple (yes purple) and everything in between.

On top of being the "pretty" vegetable, carrots are a terrific source of potassium, manganese, foliate, phosphorus, magnesium and vitamins A, B1, B3, B6, C and K.

So now I've got all these carrots and I only needed 2 pounds for the soup I was making. I figured that since I had them, I might as well use them all at once because, well, I just cook that way. I went digging for carrot recipes that were just a little bit different and easy to make and delicious enough that even the most finicky of non-veggie lovers would like.

CARROT SLAW

6 medium carrots, shredded
1/2 a head of green cabbage, shredded
1/2 a head of red cabbage, shredded.
4 green onions, sliced thin
2/3 cup òf mayonnaise
1 tbsp. sugar
1 1/2 tbsp. orange juice
salt and pepper to taste
1/2 to 1 cup salted sunflower seeds

In a large bowl, combine the carrots, green onions and cabbage. Toss to combine. In another bowl, combine the mayonnaise, sugar and orange juice. Whisk to combine and season with salt and pepper to taste. Pour the dressing over the carrot mixture and toss to coat. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour but up to 6 hours before serving. Sprinkle the sunflower seeds over the top and serve. Serves 10 to 12.

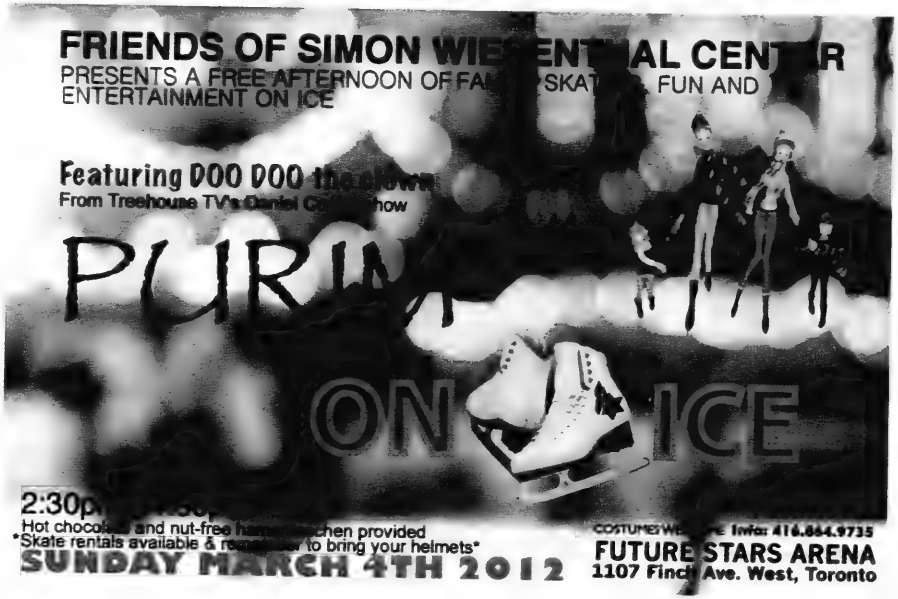
PARSNIPS AND CARROTS WITH HONEY AND ROSEMARY

Modified from Bon Appétit *November 2007, submitted by Molly Stevens*

2 tbsp. olive oil
1 lb. carrots (about 4 large), peeled, cut into bite-sized pieces
1 lb. large parsnips, peeled, cut into bite-sized pieces
1 tsp. sugar
2 tbsp. butter or margarine
1 tbsp. chopped fresh rosemary
1 1/2 tbsp. honey
kosher salt
pepper to taste

Heat the oil in a large skillet. Add the carrots, sugar and parsnips and sauté until the carrots and parsnips start to brown, 10 to 12 minutes.

Add the butter, rosemary and honey and mix to coat. Coôk, stirring constantly until the vegetables are coated, about 3 to 4 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serves 8.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דער יידיש ווינקל

דזשערי קעין

דער נסתר אין דער שטרוב פון יידיש אויף סטאלינס ביכער פאליצע.

צווי פובליקאציעס זיינען נעקומען מיר צו האנט: די ערשטע, "הייכלאנד", נעדרוקט אין יידיש, אין מאסקוע אין 1947. די צווייטע פובליקאציע, נעדרוקט אין 2011 אין ענגליש אין אמעריקע, הייסט "Regrowth".

"הייכלאנד", כיט אירע פארגעלטע בלעטער וואס צעברעקלען זיך דען מען האנדלט זיי. וויייזט אז צוויישן אירע רעדאקטארן זאיינען נעווען שמואל האלקין, איציק פעפער, פרץ מארקיש און ליב קוויטקא – פון די גרעסטע יידישע שרייבער אין אונדזער וועלט ליטעראטור. די ענגלישע אויסגאבע "Regrowth" איז אן איבערזעצונג פון "יידישמוסק" – א קאמפילאציע פון דערציילונגען געשריבן פון דעם נסתר. זיין נאמען געפינט מען נישט אין "הייכלאנד." זוין אין 1947 האבן די סאוועטן געטעלט דעם נסתר אין דער וויט איידער זיין "אריינטנטריס" אין גולאג אין 1948 וווּ ער איז געשטארבן אין 1949.

זוין אין 1947 האבן די רעדאקטארן פון הייכלאנד געוווסט אז די יידישע קולטור טעטיקייט שטייט אין סכנה און איר מארגן איז נישט פארזיכערט אין ראטן-פארבאנד. סטאלין האט זוין געזיין אין די דרייסיקער יארן אז דאס יידישע וואָרט און יידיש- נאציאנאלע הערטן זיינען נישט העלקאם אויף זיינע ביכער פאליצעס. סאוועטישער רעאליזם איז געווען די כאס פון גוטע ליטעראטור.

דער נסתר איז געווען א גוטער סאוועטישער יוד אבער זיין ארבעט, זייך אין יידישע טעמעס און סימבאליזם, איז נישט געפעלן די קאמהיסטישע קריטיקער. ער איז געווען אויף צוזות כיט דער מאכט זינדט ער האט אויפגעהרבען די פערער.

דער נסתר מיינט דער באהאלטענער אן איז געווען דער פסעודאנים פון פנחס-פיני קאהאנאוויטש. דער קריטיקער נחמן מיזיל שרייבט וועגן אים –" דער נסתר...אן זיינע שאפונגען האבן פון אנהייב אן שטארק נעריייצט דעם יונגן עפּינדלעכן לייענער. אין דער ציט, וואס די עלטערע, אינגעזעענע יידישע שרייבער האבן מבטל געווען דעם יונגן נסתר, באצייכנט אים פאר א פרעמדן אן זייטיקן – האט דעם יונגן יידישן לייענער געצוואונגן צו אָט דער קונסטלערישער נעשטאלט...פערקווידיקע עשיות כיט אריסטעלישע פארשוינען, כיט אלעגאריש און סימבאלישע שילדערונגען. און די פארפלאנטערעט זיי זיינען נישט געווען, האבן זיי נעמאט זיינער אינגעגעם קונסטלערישן סטיל אוך דיכטעריישן אראמאט."

ערייק באטלער, האט גענומען די דיבן מעשיות וואס זיינען, נאך סטאלינס טויט, נעדרוקט נעווארן אין אן מאסקוע אין 1956 אונטער דעם קעפל "וויידערוווקס" אוך זיי איבערגעזעצט אויף ענגליש. באטלערס איבערזעצונג כרענגט אדויס דעם אראמאט פון פון דעם נתנסר סטיל. די צוה פאר דעם נסתר, איידער סטאלינס טויט, איז נעווען אז די מעשיות באשריבן יידישע פיין אוך ליידן און יידיש נאציאנאלע והערטן וואס זיינען נעשווימען קעגן דעם שטראם פון סטאלינס ליטעראריש דיקטאטן.

"Regrowth"-וויידערוווקס–זיבן דערציילונגען, וואס שילדערען דאס יידישע לעבן אין ראטן-פארבאנד איידער, דורך, אוך נאך די נאצי אקופאציע איז אן והערטפולער בוך צו האבן אויף אותדזערע אייגענע ביכער פאליצעס אוך אויך צו געבן א כתנה צו איינעם וואס קען נישט לייענען קיין יידיש און וויל זיך באקענען מיט א שרייבער וואס שטייט ארפן העכסטן ניוואָ פון דער סאוועטישע- יידישער ליטעראטור אוך דער מאדערנער יידישער ליטעראטור בכלל.

Regrowth –Seven Tales of Jewish Life Before, During and After Nazi Occupation.
Der Nister,
Translated from the Yiddish by Erik Butler
Northwestern University Press, 2011

פון דער רעדאקציע: אויב איר האט נעפאקען וועגן אונדזער וויקלי לאָזט וויסן, דורך פאסט אדער בליץ- פאסט: cjninfo@gmail.com

ECO WORKERS: The Eco-Team at Associated Hebrew Schools' Kamin Education Centre in Thornhill is a group of Grade 5 students who take responsibility for creating and promoting ecological initiatives for the whole campus. Pictured are team members, from left, Jordyn Lasko, Ari Katchan, Dylan Weltman, Ryan Sosnowicz and David Cuttler making bird feeders to be placed outside.

CHESED PROJECT: Grade 1-7 students at Netivot HaTorah Day School took part in a chesed activity by preparing Havdalah sets for the Bikur Cholim organization in Toronto. From left are Avigial, Avivit, Maya, Kyra, Shoshana, Alexa, Jordana and Ariella.

TANACH CEREMONY: Grade 6 students at Robbins Hebrew Academy's Beth Tikvah campus – including, from left, Molly Pascoe, Daniel Neumark, and Daniel Cheskes – took part in a Tanach ceremony recently. It included a student-led Shacharit service with Torah reading and a short presentation about the Tanach, and students were presented with their own Tanach. The program concluded with a joint chevruta study session with students and parents, led by Beth Tikvah Synagogue's Rabbi Jarrod Grover and Rabbi Howard Markose and campus principal Silvia Eilath.

Mazel Tov

מזל טוב

Happy birthday to Eliyahu Chaim and Frayda Gluck! Best wishes from your father, Nissim Gluck.

Mazal tov to Jason Martin & Sabrina Cohen on their recent engagement. A fall 2012 wedding is planned.

Sara (nee Fisher) & Mark Korytowski, Vancouver, announce the birth of Jessica Margareta, Feb. 7. Grandparents are Joanne & Barry Fisher, Thornhill, and Tita Korytowski, Munich.

Naomi, Jeffrey and big brother Sammy are very happy to announce the birth of Dylan Scott, born Nov. 17th, 2011.

Mazel tov on the engagement of Rebecca Rubin & Shimshon Seligson

Mazel tov to Sally & Norman Raicek on their 60th wedding anniversary, Feb. 17. With much love from your children and grandchildren.

as featured on onlysimchas! Celebrating Jewish Life www.onlysimchas.com

Email your digital photos to cblackman@thecjn.ca or go online to www.CJNews.com and click the "Family Moments"

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What's New

By LILA SARICK

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Deadline reminder: Feb. 27 is the deadline for the issue of March 8. March 5 is the deadline for the issue of March 15. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; e-mail whatsnewcjn@gmail.com, or fax 416-391-0829.

Friday, Feb. 24

MIDDLE EAST UPDATE

John Thompson of the Mackenzie Institute speaks about recent events in the Middle East at Temple Har Zion Shabbat services, 8 p.m. 905-889-2252.

A PASTOR'S JOURNEY

An evangelical pastor and his wife discuss their decision to become observant Jews at a Shabbat dinner at Chabad of Markham. For reservations, call 905-886-0420, ext. 221.

Saturday, Feb. 25

CONFRONTING ANTISEMITISM

Paul Michaels of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs discusses "Confronting the New Antisemitism," at Brotherhood/Sisterhood Shabbat, Shaar Shalom Synagogue. Services start at 8:45 a.m.

THE KASTNER TRIAL

Gerald Ziedenberg discusses the Reszo Kastner Trial at Beth Lida Forest Hill Synagogue, 22 Gilgorm Rd. Shabbat services start at 9 a.m. www.bethlida.org.

PARENTING CLASS

Goldie Plotkin teaches a parenting class Saturdays, starting today, 10:45 a.m., Chabad of Markham, 83 Green Lane, Thornhill. RSVP 905-886-0420, ext. 227.

HAR ZION SHABBATON

Join Temple Har Zion for Shabbat services at 10:30 a.m., followed by the annual Shabbaton at 12:30 p.m. The topic is "The Religions of Ancient Israel's Neighbours and Their Influence." Participants are asked to bring a dairy potluck dish. RSVP 905-889-2252.

TEKHELET LOST AND FOUND

Scientist **Baruch Sterman** discusses "The Search for the Holy Snail: Tekhelet Lost and Found," 8:30 p.m., Or Chaim Yeshiva. www.torahinmotion.org; 416-633-5770.

Sunday, Feb. 26

HEBREW READING II

Hebrew reading Level II for adults starts today, 9:15 a.m., Beth Emeth Synagogue. The 6-week course is for people who have completed Level 1 or have a basic knowledge of Hebrew. 416-633-3838.

BABYSITTING CLASS

Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation youth department is offering a babysitting course for anyone 11 and over. Call **Rich Winkler**, 905-886-3810, ext. 135.

UNDERSTANDING MIDRASH

The Partnership Minyan is sponsoring a class on "Understanding Midrash: A Traditional Text Study of Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer" led by **Anna Urowitz-Freudenstein**, Sundays starting tonight at 8:30 p.m, 137 Millcroft Way. **Rachel Cousineau**, 905-597-5325; jrcousineau@gmail.com.

INTERCULTURAL FAMILIES

Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism presents **Rabbi Eva Goldfinger** discussing "Engaging Tots to Tweens in Jewish Culture," 10 a.m., St. Andrew's Junior High School, 131 Fenn Ave. Discussion and Purim kids' program for intercultural couples and their children. RSVP 416-385-3910 or roby@oraynu.org.

Continued on page 27

THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM
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CITY SHUL

Come meet the new innovative downtown Reform congregation led by Rabbi Elyse Goldstein
www.cityshul.com

Parlour Meeting. March 1, 7:30 PM, The Wolfond Centre, 36 Harbord St
Share your dreams and hear our vision. Free.

Bridges: Jewish and Arabic Music in Dialogue. March 5, 7:30 PM, Al Green Theatre, 750 Spadina
Concert w/ Lenka Lichtenberg and Roula Said. Tickets: 416-924-6211 or www.algreentheatre.ca
Co-sponsored with The Miles Nadal JCC and The Al Green Theatre.

Megillah Madness! March 7, 6 PM, The Wolfond Centre, 36 Harbord St
Fun for all ages. Songs, skits, hamentashen— Come in costume (adults too!) Free.
6:00 PM face-painting, food, balloon animals
6:30 PM Megillah reading (bring a mac n' cheese box as a grogger and we'll donate it after)
Co-sponsored with The Leo Baeck Day School and Hillel of Greater Toronto

Martinis, Mocktails, Munchies and Midrash. March 8, 6:30 PM, Wolfond Centre, 36 Harbord St
A Purim Seudah for adults (ages 19 +). Study, socialize, sup, sip and be silly with us.
Free by RSVP ONLY BY MAR. 1 to: gottabe@cityshul.com

Talk to us: 647-799-3557; tellme@cityshul.com

City Shul's March events are sponsored by the Sherkin-Langer family in memory of Husky Sherkin who brought a generous spirit, infectious smile, endless compassion, and love of life to everything.

Continued from page 26

JEWS FOR JUDAISM

Julius Ciss discusses "Jewish-Christian Confrontations Through the Ages," 7:30 p.m., Shaar Shalom Synagogue.

ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

Yehudit Shier Weisberg discusses "Israel and Palestine: Hadrian's Curse and the San Remo Conference," 7 p.m., the Lodzer Synagogue, 12 Heaton St. 416-636-6665.

SPECIAL-NEEDS HOUSING

An information night about housing for adults with special needs and Reena Housing at the new JCC will be held at DANI'S Place, 12 McAllister Rd. RSVP ssokol@dani-toronto.com.

Monday, Feb. 27

JEWISH MEDITATION

Shaarei Tefillah Congregation presents Jewish meditation classes with **Chashi Skobac**, Mondays starting tonight, 7 p.m. Pre-registration required. E-mail office@shaareitefillah.com; call 416-787-1631.

Tuesday, Feb. 28

THE RAPE OF EUROPA

Beth Tikvah Synagogue shows the film *The Rape of Europa*, 2 p.m., as part of its Tuesdays with Larry movie series. $5 at the door.

JEWS FOR JUDAISM

Jews For Judaism presents a 6-session counter-missionary seminar running until March 2, 8 p.m., Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St. 416-789-0020; toronto@jewsforjudaism.ca.

Wednesday, Feb. 29

WATCH THE GAME

Beth Emeth Synagogue's Brotherhood invites you to watch the hockey game on a big-screen TV, 7:30 p.m. RSVP.

Thursday, March 1

NEW REFORM SHUL

An information meeting for The City Shul, a new downtown Reform congregation led by **Rabbi Elyse Goldstein**, will be held 7:30 p.m., at the Wolfond Centre, 36 Harbord St. www.cityshul.com; 647-799-3557.

TEEN DEPRESSION

Psychologist **Sylvia Kemenoff** discusses "Signs and Symptoms of Adolescent Anxiety and Depression: When To Worry? What To Do?" Adath Israel Congregation, 7 p.m. Tickets $20 per person/$36 for 2. E-mail CBailie@youthdale.ca; call 416-368-4896, ext. 2804.

YIDDISH VINKL

Miriam Beckerman reads excerpts from the Haggadah in Yiddish, 12 p.m. at the Free Times Cafe, 320 College St. $16 (includes lunch). E-mail RSVP to yiddishvinkl@yahoo.ca.

Other News

TEATRON THEATRE

Teatron Toronto Jewish Theatre presents *Can I Really Date a Guy Who Wears a Yarmulke*, Feb. 29-March 11, Toronto Centre for the Arts, 5040 Yonge St. 416-781-5527 or www.teatrontheatre.com.

SHABBAT ACROSS CANADA

Am Shalom Synagogue, 767 Huronia Rd., Barrie, holds services and dinner as part of Shabbat Across Canada, March 2. Call 705-792-3949.

Beth Emeth Synagogue's Shabbat dinner features guest speaker **Rabbi Leslie Lipson**. Reserve by Feb. 28. 416-633-3838.

THE WALK-IN CLOSET

The Walk-In Closet, 114 Neptune Dr. (white door), a Jewish charity, offers designer clothes, shoes and outerwear for women and children. This month, fill a bag for $5. Open Sunday 2-4 p.m.; Monday 7-9 p.m. Call 416-780-1333.

BRIDGE CLUB

The bridge club at Forest Hill library is now open twice a week. Call **Lea**, 416-487-7630.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Baycrest needs volunteers to help at the information desk, lead Russian discussion groups, help with movie nights, provide assistance at meal times. Call 416-785-2500, ext. 2572.

Jewish Club for the Vision Impaired needs volunteer drivers the first Monday of the month. Call **Sheila**, 905-731-9667.

PURIM FUN

The Toronto Jewish Folk Choir performs a Purim concert in Yiddish, Hebrew, Russian and English, Bernard Betel Centre, March 1, 7 p.m. Call **Luba**, 905-669-5906.

Miles Nadal JCC holds a Purim Carnival, March 4, 11 a.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 277.

Temple Har Zion holds a Purim Carnival, March 4, 10 a.m.-noon. 905-889-2252.

Toronto Heschel School holds a hands-on art and music Purim workshop for preschoolers and their parents, March 4, 10 a.m. Pre-registration required, 416-635-1876, ext. 334; npfeffer@torontoheschel.org.

Jewish Club for the Vision Impaired holds a Purim party March 5, 7:30 p.m., Prosserman JCC. Call **Bess**, 905-508-2892.

Shaar Shalom Synagogue's Purim celebrations, pizza at 6:15 p.m.; parade, Megillah reading at 7:10 p.m., March 7. RSVP by Feb. 29, 905-889-4975, ext. 62.

Temple Har Zion's Purim spiel *Shmaltz*, and Megillah reading, March 7, 7:30 p.m.

Chabad of Markham presents Purim in the Jungle with a buffet and live animal show, March 8, 5:30 p.m. Advance tickets required. 905-886-0420; www.chabadmarkham.org.

JF&CS GROUPS

BEREAVED PARENTS

Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer** at JF & CS, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or bfeffer@jfandcs.com.

FOR SENIORS

Volunteers Needed. Join the BRAVO study linking brain health and volunteering. Participants must be over 55 and not working or volunteering for more than 3 hours a month. Study includes 1 year of volunteering at Baycrest. Visit www.baycrest.org/bravo; call 416-785-2500, ext. 3435.

Association of Jewish Seniors. Tammy, 416-635-2900, ext. 458. Feb. 23, **Rabbi Michael Skobac** on "The Elephant in the Room of Jewish Spirituality," Shaarei Shomayim, 9:30 a.m.

Haverim program at Beth Tzedec. March 5, **Barbara Rusch** shares her collection of Shanah Tovah cards and other items, 1:30 p.m. Call **Dorion Liebgott**, 416-781-3514, ext. 232, or museum@beth-tzedec.org.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park. (60+). **Valerie**, 416-395-7881. Casino Rama, March 14. Dance with live music, March 25. Tuesdays, gentle exercise, 10 a.m., first class free; Wednesdays, duplicate bridge, 12:30 p.m.; Thursdays, line dancing, 10 a.m.; social bridge, 12:30 p.m. Non-members welcome.

National Council of Jewish Women, Aviva branch, is looking for women over 70 for their group. Call 416-633-5100.

LZA Seniors Cultural Club meets Tuesdays, 10 a.m., Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell. 416-630-9444.

New Horizons is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club that offers kosher food, card games, casino trips. 416-256-1892.

Adath Israel Congregation. Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub. Refreshments $2. Call **Pearl**, 416-635-6317, or **Sheila**, 416-665-3333.

Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue welcomes new players for mah-jong and Rummikub Monday and Wednesday afternoons. 416-633-3838.

Bernard Betel Centre 416-225-2112. Feb. 23, **Jenny Lyttle** discusses "Meal Planning in the Winter Months," 1:30 p.m. Feb. 28, **Ilana Rubenstein** discusses "My Teachers: Children with Special Needs," 10 a.m. Feb. 28, learn about Ontario tax credits and benefits, in English and Russian, 1 p.m.

Active Seniors, Miles Nadal JCC, 416-924-6211, ext.155. Feb. 23, "Jewish Genealogy and the Holocaust: How to Search for Survivors and Trace the Fate of Victims Using the Internet," 1:30 p.m. March 8, artist **Laya Crust** gives an illustrated talk describing her Scroll of Esther, 1:30 p.m.

Active 55 Plus Speakers Series, Miles Nadal JCC Feb. 23, two wellness experts discuss "Stress and Its Effects on the Body," 6:30 p.m. Ext. 526.

PROSSERMAN JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com.

Drop in and play at the Fun Zone Monday-Thursday, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

New Shabbat party class, Fridays 10 -11 a.m. Grandparents and caregivers welcome.

Tic Tac Two program will be extended into the summer. Call **Kailah Rubin**, ext. 4351.

MILES NADAL JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org.

Feb. 27, **Kevin Courrier** discusses "Movies During the Bush Era," 7 p.m. Ext. 606.

Tickets on sale now for pianist **Yitzhak Yedid**, March 1; **Lenka Lichtenberg** and **Roula Said**, March 5; Night Without a Moon: Jewish Women's Cabaret, March 24. Call ext. 0.

The adult daytime choir meets Tuesdays 1 p.m. gillians@mnjcc.org.

Klezmer ensemble meets Tuesdays 7:30 p.m. music@mnjcc.org or ext. 0.

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 18

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Anti-Israel group urges boycott of Sears and Cirque

Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf
Staff Reporter

Supporters of the campaign to boycott Israel are once again targeting Canadian retailers, and the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) has launched a counter-campaign.

The latest call for a boycott of Israeli products is aimed at Sears Canada.

A group called Canadians for Peace and Justice in the Middle East (CPJME) has asked the retail giant to drop several Israeli-made products that it carries, including Ahava cosmetics, Keter Plastic and Stanley Israel products. The group says that many of the firms' "products are sourced and manufactured in illegal colonies located in the occupied Palestinian territories," it wrote in a Jan. 17 letter erroneously addressed to former Sears president and CEO Dene L. Rogers.

(Calvin McDonald, the company's current president and CEO, replaced Rogers in June 2011.)

Sara Saber-Freedman

Sears said it would not comment on the matter, and the chain is continuing to sell the Israeli-made products.

In response CIJA, through its Buycott Israel initiative – started in 2009 to encourage consumers to support Israeli-made products in response to boycott actions – sent out an alert to its followers last week to shop en masse at Sears.

Sara Saber-Freedman, Montreal-based executive vice-president of CIJA and the lead on the Buycott file, said her organization is aware of the group and that its tactics are increasingly being marginalized.

"We've seen a real decrease in the overall number of boycott calls in Canada over the last year or so, largely because those calls have proven to be such consistent failures," she said. "By acting together through programs like Buycott, we send a strong message to those who oppose a two-state solution and see boycott of Israel as a way to attain that objective."

Saber-Freedman added: "CJPME is one, but not the only player in the Canadian BDS movement. Groups like Independent Jewish Voices and Tadamon also issue boycott calls as a way of mobilizing their own base. However, these groups are learning that… calling for a boycott can have disastrous consequences, leading to a very public defeat for the anti-Israel group."

The "buycott" strategy has worked well for CIJA in the past.

In 2009, hundreds of pro-Israel consumers converged on a mid-town Toronto LCBO outlet to counter a call to boycott Israeli wines. Within a few hours, the store had sold out of its stock of about 150 cases of Israeli wine.

Last year, Saber-Freedman's initiative helped dispel rumours that the Bay had removed Ahava beauty products from its shelves as part of a boycott request from CJPME.

The Bay had in fact temporarily removed the products from its stores in order to make room for a rebranded Ahava line that it continues to sell.

In related news, earlier this month CJPME also wrote to Cirque du Soleil asking the popular acrobatic troupe to cancel its scheduled August performances in Tel Aviv as part of a cultural boycott.

Cirque du Soleil will make its first trip to Israel to perform its *Alegria* show this summer.

The troupe did not return a request for comment by *The CJN*'s deadline.

Also last week, the buycott campaign called on Vancouverites to frequent local-area beauty store Lavan Body, Mind & Soap, which was also targeted by various anti-Israel boycotters who demonstrated in front of the store just prior to Valentine's Day.

Kenney halts funding to Palestine House

Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf
Staff Reporter

Jason Kenney

Citizenship and Immigration Canada has stopped funding a settlement program administered by a Palestinian non-profit in Mississaugua, Ont.

The Palestine House Educational and Cultural Centre (Palestine House) issued a Feb. 14 statement denouncing the move and claiming its services and clients will be adversely affected.

It accused Jason Kenney, minister of citizenship, immigration and multiculturalism, of advancing a "silencing campaign" against organizations "that act or speak in support of the basic human rights of the Palestinian people."

The ministry did not respond to queries by *The CJN* in time for deadline. According to reports, Palestine House received $950,000 from Ottawa last year and has received funding for the past 18 years to provide services to the Palestinian community in the Toronto area.

A Feb. 14 report on Mississauga.com stated Kenney sent a letter to Palestine House in January indicating the funding would cease due to concerns of the non-profit's "pattern of support for extremism."

In the report, a spokesperson for the minister said Palestine House has in the last few years aligned itself with terrorist causes, including celebrating the release of terrorists and honouring the founder of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), one of the groups that formed the Palestine Liberation Organization and "in the 1960s and '70s, was responsible for numerous armed attacks and aircraft hijackings." Palestine House says it denounces all forms of terrorism and extremism.

CIJA, UJA send Pesach supplies to Cuba

Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf
Staff Reporter

The Jews of Cuba just became more gastronomically prepared for Pesach.

In an effort to bring holiday foodstuffs to the tiny island community of 1,500 families, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) and UJA Federation of Greater Toronto partnered to send a Feb. 14 shipment of kosher-for-Passover fare down south. The shipment contained 924 cases of foodstuffs totalling 20,157 pounds, along with 110 cases of wine supplied by Mazel Wines.

Foods included were salmon, sardines, tuna, horseradish, consommés, gefilte fish, matzah, matzah meal, tomatoes, cabbage and mushroom soups, tea, detergent, macaroons and grape juice. Funding for the shipment comes from federation's annual global seder telethon and campaign.

OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Shain, Gertrude	Feb. 6/12	7420 Bathurst St
Lozover, Isak	Feb. 7/12	Private
Alent, Alka Tuba	Feb. 8/12	541 Finch Ave. W
Valinsky, Charlotte	Feb. 8/12	Private
Zuckerman, Annita	Feb. 8/12	15 Shallmar Blvd
Shaked, Tal	Jan. 25/12	
Markovits, Alex	Feb. 9/12	525 Lawrence Ave
Batchina, Sheva	Feb. 10/12	89 Stillwater Cres
Zlatogorov, Vladimir	Feb. 10/12	Private
Guendlina, Lidia	Feb. 10/12	Private
Goldberg, Marion	Feb. 12/12	125 Neptune Dr
Boujor, Raissa	Feb. 13/12	Private
Meshoulam, Dalia	Feb. 13/12	Private
Greenberg, Earl	Feb. 14/12	Private
Oszlak, Pola	Feb. 9/12	4455 Bathurst St

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Harvey Kauffman	Feb 4/12	87 Willett Crescent
Ruth Young	Feb 4/12	369 St. Clair Ave. West
Betty Skolnik	Feb 3/12	500 Avenue Road
Evelyn Gilbert	Feb 4/12	755 York Mills Road
Jonas Glowinsky	Feb 5/12	80 Antibes Drive
Benjamin Kozlowski	Feb 6/12	3560 Bathurst Street
David Applebaum	Feb 6/12	662 Sheppard Ave. East
Morris Einstoss	Feb 7/12	198 Brighton Avenue
Ceceil Levinson	Feb 6/12	25 Brunswick Ave.
Shirley Sklar	Feb 7/12	484 Steeles Avenue, W.
Joan Waldman	Feb 8/12	4266 Bathurst Street
Marlene Garson-Brown	Feb 8/12	75 Weldrick Road E.
Alton Kahn	Feb 9/12	65 Spring Garden Ave.
Mildred Simkins	Feb 8/12	225 Davenport Road
Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut	Feb 8/12	260 Heath St. W.
Irka Nirenberg	Feb 8/12	505 Douglas Avenue
Elsie Klebanoff	Feb 11/12	44 Charles Street West
Allen Moldaver	Feb 11/12	7601 Bathurst Street
Mac Latner	Feb 10/12	14 Baintree East Street

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Second Limmud Winnipeg offers huge variety

Myron Love
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Torah and Israel. Jewish life in modern day Africa, music, dance and exercise are among the topics and activities to be featured at Limmud Winnipeg's second annual event Feb. 25 and 26 at the Asper Jewish Community Campus.

Limmud is a grassroots movement that promotes Jewish learning in a variety of ways. Started in London, England 30 years ago, it has spread all over the world in the last 10 years. There are now Limmud programs in Toronto; several American cities; Sao Paulo, Brazil; Buenos Aries; Cape Town, Johannesberg and Durban in South Africa, as well as throughout Europe and Israel.

"We have an incredibly exciting and amazing lineup of speakers," says Faye Rosenberg Cohen, planning director at Jewish Federation of Winnipeg and one of the Limmud Winnipeg organizers.

Confirmed speakers from out of town include a trio of prominent rabbis. Rabbi Barbara Aiello is Italy's first woman rabbi and first non-Orthodox rabbi. Although American-born and trained, she traces her ancestry on her father's side to southern Italy. She has a particular interest in working with children and adults with special needs.

Rabbi Saul Berman is a longtime associate professor of Jewish studies at Yeshiva University's Stern College for Women. He also teaches Jewish law at Columbia University and he was the first fellow (2009-2010) of the Tikvah Center for Law and Jewish Civilization at the New York University law school.

Rabbi Moshe Edelman has been the director of leadership development for the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism since 1992 and is in great demand as a teacher and lecturer.

Benyamin Cohen is a journalist and author – and the son of a rabbi – who spent 52 weeks attending a variety of American churches, an experience he described in a book called *My Jesus Year: A Rabbi's Son Wanders the Bible Belt in Search of his Own Faith*. He will be talking about how the spiritual journey deepened his appreciation for Judaism.

David Epstein is a teacher who has taught all over the world. For the past 10 years, he has been working with the Abayudaya, Ugandans who practice Judaism.

Eli Rubinstein is a Jewish storyteller from Toronto, national director of March of the Living, and the spiritual leader of Congregation Habonim. Michael Soberman, Rubinstein's fellow speaker from Toronto, is UIA Federations Canada's director of national initiatives for the next generation.

Shlomo Weinish, a former shaliach to the Minneapolis area, will speak about entrepreneurship in northern Israel and Arab-Jewish business partnerships in northern Galilee.

Jackie Stromer is an American emergency medical technician who will speak about his volunteer work with Hatzala, volunteer Jewish emergency teams in New York.

The arts will be represented by dancer and choreographer Moy Covalin, the former artistic director of the Fetsival Aviv in Mexico City; Argentine-born Sephardi Cantor Ramon Tasat, who is active in the Washington, Maryland area, and the chassidic Moroccan-born Israeli-American rapper, Brody.

The event will also include a number of local speakers. For a complete list of presenters, go to limmudwinnipeg.org.

Rosenberg-Cohen reports that about 350 Winnipeggers registered for the inaugural Limmud Winnipeg last year. "We are hoping to have at least as many, if not more, in attendance this year," she says.

Among the communal sponsors for Limmud Winnipeg are the federation, the Chesed Shel Emes, Congregation Etz Chayim, Shaarey Zedek Synagogue, Herzlia Adas Yeshurun Synagogue, Rady JCC, Winnipeg Board of Jewish Education and the Winnipeg chapter of the Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University.

Gary Carter

David Lazarus
Staff Reporter

Former Montreal Expo great Gary Carter's death to cancer Feb. 17 at only age 57 was not unexpected, but the news still rattled Jewish fans who either knew him personally or were ardent followers of "Kid" Carter during his decade in Montreal.

At the time of his diagnosis only last May, Johnny Elias, a friend for 35 years from the time Carter was a fixture at Elias' now defunct Grand Slam Baseball School in Cote St. Luc, expressed shock at the news.

Due to an early production deadline for the Feb. 23 issue a detailed article will appear in the March 1 issue.

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Gilbert Palter & Barbara Bank
Chairs, United Jewish Appeal Campaign 2012

Iran attack spells 'trouble' for Israeli market

Ram Ozeri
Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

TEL AVIV — Israel's capital market has correlated almost entirely with those in the developing world since 2009, but the trend seems to be breaking down this year. Tel Aviv's leading indices are on the upswing, but they have started losing ground to the MSCI emerging markets (MXEF) index. One explanation cites mounting discussion of a potential Israeli attack on Iran.

Several U.S. media outlets have been reporting hints that Israel intends to bomb Iran's nuclear facilities within the next few months. A *Washington Post* article said U.S. Secretary of Defence Leon Panetta believes there is a strong likelihood Israel will strike Iran this spring. NBC charted the flight paths and described the missiles that might be used. Iran, for its part, warned that its response would be "painful," and would include bombing Israel in return and closing the Strait of Hormuz, a vital route for transporting oil.

Yoram Gabai
[Miriam Alster/Flash90 photo]

U.S. President Barack Obama, referring to such a possibility, said he didn't think Israel has made a decision on the matter, the *New York Times* reported. But, the paper reports, Obama says he understands Israel's concerns. The president also said the administration doesn't see any evidence that Iran has any intention or ability to attack the United States. He said nothing, however, on Iran's intention or ability to strike Israel.

How would Israel's stock market react in the case of an escalation?

"Every war brings the market down for the first few days," said Yoram Gabai, chair of Peilim Investment Portfolio Management. "What happens afterward depends entirely on whether the war's end is within sight. The market understands the violence is temporary and corrects itself quickly when the decision on a ceasefire is in Israel's hands, or when the U.S. attacks and the outcome is certain. If things are heading toward escalation or a lengthy conflict, the market will keep dropping."

Take the performance of the benchmark Tel Aviv-100 Index during major military conflagrations in recent decades. The capital market bounced back rapidly each time Israel or the United States initiated and was capable of ending the war. But whenever the conflict dragged on inconclusively, the capital market languished.

During the Second Lebanon War, for instance, investors quickly understood that the fighting wouldn't profoundly affect the economy, Gabai said. "After three or four days, Hezbollah already had asked [then-prime minister Ehud] Olmert for a ceasefire," he explained. "The market knew this so the recovery began on the fourth day, even though fighting continued in the north."

An even better example of a military conflict not affecting the market was Operation Cast Lead in Gaza three years ago, when Israel maintained the initiative throughout, said Gabai, a former Ministry of Finance budget director. "The Palestinians didn't shoot at all and Israel could have ended the operation at any point. The market fell only one day and then resumed climbing."

The First Lebanon War and the Al-Aqsa intifadah are the other side of the coin. "The First Lebanon War is the perfect example of going to war without knowing how to get out," Gabai said. "Israel demolished Lebanon's political system, creating anarchy, and couldn't withdraw. As a result the markets sunk, Israel's economy collapsed, and inflation took off."

The Al-Aqsa intifadah 10 years ago had a similar effect. "Both [then-Palestinian Authority chair Yasser] Arafat and [then-prime minister] Ehud Barak thought at the time that if there wasn't an agreement there would definitely be an escalation," Gabai said. "The market understood that a lengthy conflict lay ahead and this led to three or four years of drops on the stock market and negative economic growth in real terms. This was on top of the direct damage caused by the uprising."

The most fascinating example of the connection between a military conflict and the capital market was the Gulf War. The TA-100 dropped about 20 per cent in the first seven trading days after Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990. The recovery began the day the Americans attacked Iraq in January 1991. "The moment victory was clear, the market began rising, even though missiles had just begun falling on Israel," Gabai said.

In the event of an attack on Iran, the market can be expected to fall for several days at first, but past experience shows that what happens afterward largely depends on who does the attacking.

"If it's the U.S. that attacks, it will obviously determine the war's fate relatively quickly," he said. "So even if the market falls it will recover fairly quickly – even if Israel is hit."

But if Israel decides to strike alone, that will be an entirely different story. "In this case we'd be in trouble. The Iranians could close the Strait of Hormuz and just fire long-range missiles at Israel."

Gabai assumes that if the United States doesn't start the war, it won't interfere later, either. This leads him to conclude that Israel can't attack Iran on its own. "Israel can't protect its population from a missile attack," he claims. "We saw this in the Gulf War. Without the ability to prevail and no mechanism to bring a ceasefire, the conflict could last for months. In this case the markets will obviously fall drastically."

In war, like investing, you need an exit strategy before starting out, Gabai concluded.

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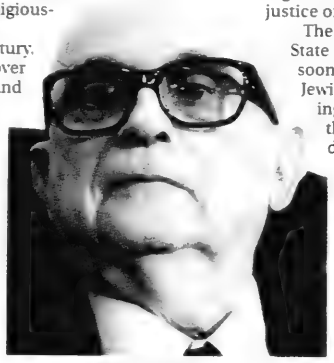
Leave God alone

Yehezkel Dror
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

We might have expected the Jewish People would have learned from our history just how dangerous it is to base policy on a supposedly divine edict. But that is not what is happening among some parts of the religious-Zionist community.

In the 16th century, King Philip II ruled over Spain and Portugal and their large empire. In 1588, the king, who was extremely religious, sent the Spanish Armada to fight against "heretic" Britain. His advisers warned him the weather was expected to be stormy, but he responded that Jesus would not allow those fighting on his behalf to fail. The outcome is well-known.


Yehezkel Dror

This is an obvious example of the confusion between religious faith and statesmanship, one in which faith is used inappropriately to justify a certain policy while relying on the assistance of the Almighty to bring about a miracle.

Treating divine order as the source of morals and good deeds is justified, but it is wrong to use an edict of that kind as the basis for policy.

The ability to adjust to specific circumstances was essential for the survival of the Jews in the Diaspora

A policy that is not concomitant with what our sages called "the way the world continues as usual" will end in disaster, as was demonstrated by the Crusades and the religious wars in Europe, among others. That is why religions with experience of statesmanship learned to hope for God's help, to declare naively that "in God we trust," but to avoid the mistaken illusion that human beings can know what the Creator's intention is and that He will intervene in human history according to their way of thinking.

This was clear to the sages when they declared that "prophecy has disappeared from Israel," forbade people to rely on miracles and declared that there was no longer a "right of the fathers."

On a deeper level, at the heart of this concept is the divine declaration: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways" (Isaiah, 55:8). In this respect, the distinction between justifying a judgment and accepting a judgment is relevant, that is, coming to terms with the fact that human beings cannot comprehend the justice of God's actions.

The establishment of the State of Israel – in which, soon, almost half of the Jewish People will be living – and victories in the War of Independence and the Six Day War were dramatic events that many believed were miracles of divine intervention. These feelings about the success of Zionism can be understood from sociological and psychological points of view. However, among some parts of the religious-Zionist community, they evoked demands for a policy they believe comes from the Almighty – out of an assurance that He will help us if we merely keep his commandments, as they interpret them.

We might have expected that Jewish history – the destruction of the first and second Temples, the exile, the expulsion from Spain, and especially the Holocaust – would have taught all of us that the way in which God has acted is beyond human understanding. Instead, God has given human beings the intelligence to weigh the wisdom of their deeds, while combining values and faith with an understanding of reality and its limitations, and accepting responsibility for decisions and their results.

This is not what is happening among some parts of the Israeli public.

Basing our right to this land on its being the "promised land" is justified from the believer's point of view, even if there is no clear historic and halachic mapping of its borders. Religious faith can espouse the commandment of settlement in all of the promised land. But this is a commandment that has no timetable. It does not free the believer from a duty to balance it with other precepts, including ensuring the existence and well-being of the Jewish state and seeking peace.

Those who believe they are permitted to act based on what they believe to be the Lord's commandment would do well to remember the passage from Proverbs (28:14): "Happy is the man that feareth always, but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into evil," and compare it with the claim that one who believes will never fear – a kind of magical adage that is contrary to the principles of Judaism and smacks of hubris, which is most dangerous and causes people to delude themselves that they are able to understand God's ways.

The ability to adjust to specific circumstances the way in which the commandments are upheld accompanied the Jews during the years of the Diaspora and was essential for their survival. Those who died sanctifying God's name are worthy of esteem, but had they not been a small minority, the Jewish people would have been annihilated. It is worth rereading the letters of Maimonides about the duty to live, even at the price of supposedly converting to Christianity or Islam, following which speedy efforts should be made to migrate to another country in which it is possible to return to living as Jews.

Judaism and Zionism are fundamentalist beliefs (just as are democracy, atheism and any firm belief). Fundamentalism tends to produce a fanatic minority of people who enter into sacred places even though they are not prepared for it. When their senses are harmed, they twist their belief and, instead of being a theory of how to live, it becomes a hallucination that leads to devastation. There is no point in complaining to them about this, but it is a duty and a "mitzvah" to confront those who follow them, from the moral and practical points of view.

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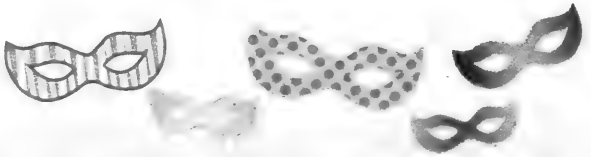
Purim Sameach

UN General Assembly calls for Assad's removal

Shlomo Shamir
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

NEW YORK — The 193-nation UN General Assembly ratcheted up the pressure on Syrian President Bashar Assad last Thursday by overwhelmingly approving a resolution that endorses an Arab League plan calling for him to step aside.

The resolution, similar to one Russia and China vetoed in the Security Council on Feb. 4, received 137 votes in favour, 12 against and 17 abstentions, though three countries said their votes failed to register on the electronic board.

Russia and China were among those opposing the resolution, which was drafted by Saudi Arabia and submitted by Egypt on behalf of Arab states. Unlike in the Security Council, there are no vetoes in the General Assembly, but its decisions lack the legal force of council resolutions.

"Today the UN General Assembly sent a clear message to the people of Syria – the world is with you," U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice said in a statement.

"An overwhelming majority of UN member states have backed the plan put forward by the Arab League to end the suffering of Syrians," she said. "Bashar Assad has never been more isolated."

The resolution said the assembly "fully supports" the Arab League plan aimed at halting Syria's 11-month crackdown on anti-Assad demonstrators and urges UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to appoint a special envoy to Syria.

It also condemns Damascus for "widespread and systematic violations of human rights" and calls for the withdrawal of Syrian forces from towns and cities. The United Nations says more than 5,400 civilians have been killed in the uprising.

Syrian Ambassador Bashar Ja'afari rejected the resolution, telling the assembly it was part of a plot to overthrow Syria's government and allow the "terrorist" opposition to take over the country. "We have deep concerns vis-a-vis the real intentions of the countries that have co-sponsored this draft, particularly that these countries are leading a political and media aggression against Syria," he said.

Those countries, Ja'afari said, are providing "all media, financial and political support to the armed terrorist groups and securing them coverage in international fora."

Russian Ambassador Vitaly Churkin said the resolution "reflects the worrying trend ... to attempt to isolate the Syrian leadership, to reject any contact with it and to impose an external formula for a political settlement."

Earlier this week, Arab countries rejected proposed Russian amendments to the resolution that would have sought to blame Syria's government and opposition equally for the violence.

Western diplomats said before the vote that a large majority in favour of the resolution would increase the pressure on Assad to comply with the Arab League plan, and would highlight the isolation of Russia and China on the issue.

Iran, North Korea, Venezuela and Bolivia were among other countries that voted against the resolution and whose delegates voiced support for the Syrian government.

France and other Western powers have suggested that they would like to make a third attempt to persuade Russia not to block action on Syria in the Security Council. But UN diplomats say there are no signs Moscow is prepared to allow the 15-nation panel to pass any condemnation of Syria.

Supporters of Syrian President Bashar Assad demonstrate on his behalf in the Druze village of Majdal Shams on the Golan Heights in Israel. ***[Flash90 photo]***

New Delhi, Bangkok arrests

JTA

NEW DELHI – Police in New Delhi arrested five suspects in connection with a bombing attack that wounded the wife of an Israeli diplomat.

New Delhi police also identified a red motorcycle that they believe was used to stick the bomb on the car carrying the wife of an Israeli Defence Ministry representative to India on her way to pick up her children from school. The driver also was injured in last week's attack.

Two Iranian men were arrested on Feb. 15 in Bangkok in connection with explosions the previous day in the Thailand capital. One of the arrested men was about to board a flight out of the country, according to reports. A third suspect, also Iranian, was arrested in Kuala Lumpur after crossing the border to Malaysia.

Also on Feb. 15, Israel's ambassador to Thailand, Itzhak Shoham, told the Associated Press that bombs found in the blown-up home of the suspects in the Bangkok bombings were similar to those used in the attacks on Israeli Embassy employees in New Delhi and Tbilisi, Georgia.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu again blamed Iran for the attacks.

"Iran's terror operations are now exposed for all to see," Netanyahu said in the Knesset plenum. "Iran is targeting innocent diplomats around the world. If this aggression isn't halted, if red lines are not clearly drawn, Iran's aggression will ultimately spread to many other countries."

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Brotherhood threatens peace treaty

The Muslim Brotherhood has threatened to "review" Egypt's 1979 peace treaty with Israel if the United States cuts aid to Egypt. Congress threatened to cut or cancel aid to Egypt after Egyptian authorities filed charges on Feb. 6 against 43 American and other foreign pro-democracy activists who worked in the country. "The aid was one of the commitments of the parties that signed the peace agreement, so if there is a breach from one side, it gives the right of review to the parties," Essam el-Erian, a senior Brotherhood leader, told Reuters in a telephone interview. Mohamed Mursi, leader of the Muslim Brotherhood-sponsored Freedom and Justice Party, said in a statement that the peace agreement "could stumble" over U.S. talk of halting the aid.

Israel strikes Gaza terrorists

Israel's Air Force struck what the military called two "terror activity sites" in the Gaza Strip. The attacks last Thursday morning were in response to four rockets fired on southern Israel Wednesday night, according to a statement from the Israel Defence Forces spokesperson. The air force pilots reported direct hits on the targets. The targets were a Hamas training centre in eastern Gaza and an Islamic Jihad training centre in central Gaza, the Palestinian Ma'an news service reported. Six people were injured in the strikes, according to the report.

Ten killed in bus crash

Nine Palestinian schoolchildren on a field trip were killed when a truck collided with their bus on a rain-soaked road in the West Bank. Dozens of elementary school-age children on the bus headed from eastern Jerusalem for Ramallah were also injured. The students were taken to Palestinian hospitals and Israeli hospitals. A teacher was also killed. The Israeli-Arab truck driver reportedly lost control of his vehicle in the bad weather. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu expressed his sorrow at the tragedy and offered the Palestinian Authority any assistance needed.

– With files from JTA

Rival European Jewish parliaments compete

Toby Axelrod
JTA

BERLIN — A new European Jewish parliament opened in Brussels last week, the brainchild of two philanthropists on a mission to shake up the status quo.

Igor Kolomoisky and Vadim Rabinovich, the Ukrainian Jewish moguls behind the body, founded the European Jewish Union last spring and feted their new parliament in ceremonies at the EU Parliament last week. According to their invitation, 120 Jewish members of parliament were chosen by 403,810 voters from all over Europe.

But who are these representatives? And what exactly will they do? That remains a mystery.

Among the candidates in the elections were soccer star David Beckham, filmmaker Roman Polanski, comic actor Sacha Baron Cohen and fashion designer Diane von Furstenburg, as well as other famous and less-famous European Jews –many of whom never expressed an interest in running and didn't know anything about the planned parliament.

Two days before the EJU was to fete the new parliament, its website did not list the representatives' names. EJU officials declined to respond to questions from JTA about the parliament before its launch.

Igor Kolomoisky

But the agenda is simple, Rabinovich wrote in a column last month in the *Jerusalem Post*: European Jewry is "a broken record" and needs change.

"The same people have remained in power, and the word that describes the situation best is 'monotony,' " wrote Rabinovich, who with Kolomoisky also founded a Jewish TV news station, Jewish News One, in September.

"There is nothing horrible about change, despite the threat it poses to the elderly activists."

The description riles European Jewish leaders who were elected by their local Jewish communities. They have been telling their EU contacts not to take the newcomers seriously, including in an open letter in December that referred to Kolomoisky and Rabinovich as "two private businessmen from Ukraine."

Critics see the EJU and its parliament as a joke at best, and at worst as a stab in the back from the two Ukrainian Jewish leaders after established groups have spent decades working to rebuild Jewish life in postwar Europe after the fall of communism.

The criticism escalated last week when word spread that the EJU had invited the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, the umbrella organization for 51 U.S. Jewish groups on matters of foreign policy, to attend the parliament inauguration while spurning elected leaders of local Jewish communities.

"Working with the EJU would offend European communities, and I am sure you would like to avoid that," Meyer Habib, vice-president of the French Jewish community, wrote in an e-mail to Malcolm Hoenlein, the executive vice-chairman of the Presidents Conference.

Hoenlein led the Presidents Conference mission to Brussels before it headed to Israel. He told JTA that his organization came to meet with EU leaders and did not attend the opening of the EJU parliament.

However, Hoenlein did acknowledge that the Presidents Conference used the EJU's facilities in Brussels and that his group had accepted an offer from the EJU to charter a plane to fly the mission's participants from Brussels to Tel Aviv.

"It was their gesture, otherwise we would have been stuck in Brussels for Shabbat," Hoenlein said, noting that the CEO of the EJU, Tomer Orni, is an old friend. Orni declined to speak with JTA for this story.

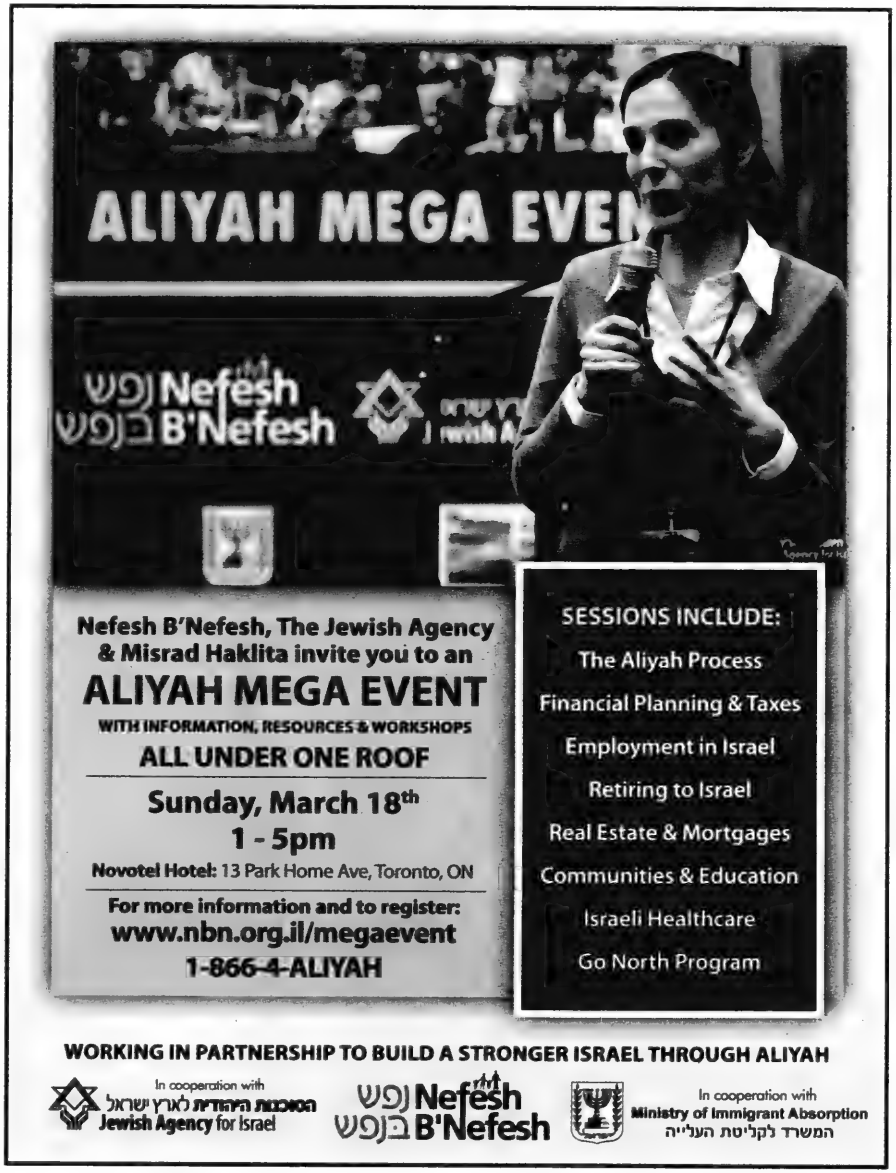
It wasn't clear whether there were any meetings in Brussels between the EJU and the Presidents Conference, but the idea that American Jewry's leading foreign policy umbrella organization might be lending credence to the EJU has riled even some American Jewish friends of European Jewish leaders.

Rabbi Andrew Baker, the American Jewish Committee's director of international Jewish affairs, told JTA that he had urged the Presidents Conference to reconsider any alliance with EJU.

"Most of the established Jewish community leadership organizations stand in a kind of formal opposition to this newly formed group," Baker said, adding that "it would be a mistake" to collaborate with them.

It's more than simple intergroup rivalry, according to Baker, noting concerns that he and European Jewish leaders have about Rabinovich's background.

Rabinovich spent nine years in a Soviet prison for theft from the state, and a 2003 *New York Times* report suggested that Rabinovich has been barred from entering the United States. Rabinovich, who did not respond to interview requests for this story made through his Jewish One channel, has said that his imprisonment was politically motivated and related to his being Jewish, and a state department official told JTA that it does not maintain a list of individuals barred from entering the country.



Thirteen ways of looking at Leonard Cohen

Of late, most of Leonard Cohen's output receives breathless celebration. This is a profound shift from his major work during the late 1960s, '70s and '80s, when records, which are now easily characterized as folk and pop masterpieces, were greeted with a mix of reverence and incomprehension. (Not to mention the novel, *Beautiful Losers*, which a major critic dubbed "the most revolting book ever written in Canada.")

Cohen's new album is receiving strong reviews; while the editorial page of the *Globe and Mail* saw fit to toast the release of *Old Ideas* with an editorial titled "Leonard Cohen, Singer of Singers," in which he is dubbed "Canada's gift to the world, at 77."

For Cohen's devoted readers, the field is a bit less lively than the music scene, though this season includes the release, from New York-based Alfred A. Knopf,

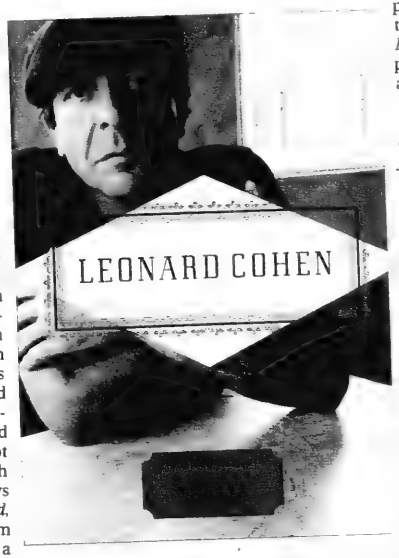
Reviewed by

Norman Ravvin

of a collection titled *Poems and Songs*. Edited by the American academic Robert Faggen, the collection is part of Knopf's venerable Everyman's Library Pocket Poets series. Readers will be right in guessing that no Canadian poet has previously been honoured with a series volume devoted to their work. John Milton is there, as is Shakespeare, Sylvia Plath, Edgar Allan Poe, Wallace Stevens, Wordsworth and Rimbaud.

One might covet the chance to edit such a volume – brushing shoulders with Leonard and adding a contemporary hitmaker to an illustrious list of canonical figures are not undesirable experiences – but there are risks in this line of editorial work.

In the volume's foreword, Faggen argues hard for Cohen's relevance and impact. His ability to erode the "artificial boundary between poem and song" is likened to King David, the French troubadours and "St. John of the Cross's Dark Night of the Soul or St. Teresa of Avila." Faggen links Cohen to his roots in Montreal, and to his native influences, including A.M. Klein and Irving Layton, but the overall goal is to universalize the poetry and song, and characterize it, like the *Globe and Mail*, as a "gift to the world." This may be the inevitable outcome of the great success Cohen is experiencing in late career. But it makes it harder to appreciate his rootedness in particular traditions, like the postwar Montreal poetry scene and the late-Beat experimentation of early 1960s New York, where he joined the late stages of the folk revival of Greenwich Village.



The last substantial retrospective collection of Cohen's work appeared in 1993, under the title *Stranger Music: Selected Poems and Songs*. There, the approach of mixing Cohen's poems with his song lyrics received an early tryout. Selections from each book and each record appeared in chronological order, offering the reader a kind of sampler of Cohen's twin pursuits. In the new Everyman's edition, the blend of poetry and song lyric is handled more aggressively, so that the uninitiated or simply uninterested need not notice when a song lyric, such as *So Long, Marianne*, shows up near to *One Night I Burned*, which is the kind of early poem that led fans to fall for him as a poet rather than a singer-songwriter.

Exactly how a song lyric should behave when it's printed among poems is an open question, and the Everyman's collection follows the lead of Stranger Music on certain fronts. If you first encountered the lyrics to songs like *Suzanne* or *So Long, Marianne* on printed lyric sheets or in Cohen's songbooks, you will notice that the anthologized versions will sometimes behave like song lyrics:

Come over to the window, my little darling
I'd like to try to read your palm
I used to think I was some kind of gypsy boy
Before I let you take me home

In other cases, the familiar verses are squared off as prose paragraphs, the chorus tacked on in italics. In this way, *Famous Blue Raincoat* reads like a prose poem or the letter it poses as, with its signature, "L. Cohen":

It's four in the morning, the end of December. I'm writing you now just to see if you're better. New York is cold but I like where I'm living. There's music on Clinton Street all [through] the evening. I hear that you're building your little house deep in the desert. You're living for nothing now. I hope you're keeping some kind of record. Yes, and Jane came by with a lock of your hair. She said that you gave it to her the night that you planned to go clear. Did you ever go clear?

This transformation of the lyric seems to follow the idea that something should be done to give the works their own status as they are detached from their musical accompaniment.

It's striking, too, to read some of Cohen's most forceful work at remove from the volumes in which they originally appeared. This effect is notable in the case of the few pieces taken from Cohen's magnificent and bitter 1972 collection *The Energy of Slaves*. There, poem after poem denounced his own poetic choices, and poetry itself, with each piece introduced by the tiny figure of a razor blade. Somehow, the punch of *Welcome to These Lines* – "There is a war on/ but I'll try to make you comfortable" – is not felt in quite the same way when it's freed of its little blade. In the same way, the contrapuntal quality of the 1978 volume *Death of a Ladies' Man* is entirely lost. In the original format, Cohen presented a poem on the left-hand page, with its own critique or commentary on the right. In the few such installments included in the new collection, the editor must add the overt designation, "Commentary," for the reader who is unaware of the poems' original context.

The poems one receives straightforwardly, which can be read without these sorts of quibbles, are the early lyrics and later works that were either appended as uncollected poems in *Stranger Music* or included in the 2006 comeback volume *Book of Longing*.

But the back third of *Poems and Songs* is clear in its goal of highlighting the song lyrics, with a large gathering from *Various Positions*, *I'm Your Man*, and other less exciting albums.

Think of Wallace Steven's masterwork *Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird* as you read through the Everyman's version of Leonard Cohen. Since it is a "pocket" poets volume, you may recline, come spring, beneath a tree with your nylon string guitar. Consider the options. It's possible you will want to take a look back at who the singer was before he became "Canada's gift to the world."

Norman Ravvin's recent novel is The Joyful Child *(Gaspereau Press). He will contribute the chapter on Canadian Jewish writing to the forthcoming* Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature.

Message to CJN Snowbirds

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Authors & Poets

The CJN is pleased to announce its

Annual Passover Literary Supplement

We invite readers to submit unpublished, original works of fiction or poetry that explore Jewish themes.

They should not exceed 2,000 words. Selected submissions will appear in the Passover Supplement of The CJN on April 5, 2012, in either our Montreal or our Toronto edition, or both. If you have a preference, please state it on your submission. Not all submissions can be published. We look for originality.

E-mail submissions to:
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Deadline for submissions is March 9, 2012.
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Comedy brings observant guy and secular gal together

Kathryn Kates
Special to The CJN

Can a secular, atheist Jew fall in love with an observant Jew? This is at the heart of *Can I Really Date a Guy Who Wears a Yarmulke?*, a fast-paced comedy by New York playwright Amy Holson-Schwartz.

The show, presented by Teatron Theatre, runs at the Studio Theatre at the Toronto Centre for the Arts from Feb. 29 to March 11.

The play, which premièred in New York City last year, draws from the life of the writer Holson-Schwartz, who is currently studying in London, England. Holson-Schwartz describes herself as a pretty committed Jewish atheist who's pretty sure she's supposed to be with a Jewish guy.

Holson-Schwartz's agent approached Teatron artistic director and founder Ari Weisberg with the script, and Weisberg loved it.

"It is a romantic comedy that tells the story of young Jews today and their dilemmas and options," Weisberg, who's also the show's director, said.

"In this particular case, we have Eleanor, a PhD candidate, who is 26 years old. Eleanor was raised as a very secular Jew, and is not sure how much Jewish identity she has or wants to have. She goes on Birthright and comes back very disappointed because of her angst vis-a-vis Judaism."

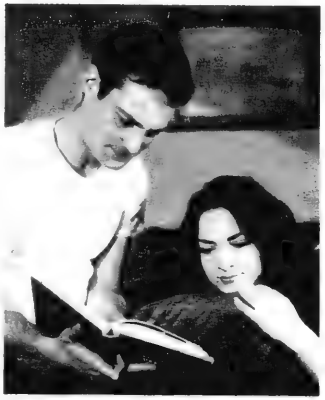
When she comes back from her Birthright trip, she is introduced to Aaron, a nice, good-looking doctor who is observant. "So here is the crux of the matter," Weisberg said. "The two are trying to breach their differences because they do enjoy each other's company and they love each other."

The Toronto-based cast of six includes Jada Rifkin – no stranger to Teatron – as Eleanor and Jesse Nerenberg, playing Aaron the doctor. Rounding out the cast are Adrianna Prosser, Scott Leaver, and Teatron Theatre veterans Reva Lawry and Ron Boyd.

Weisberg said people will not only be entertained by the show but also that audiences of all ages will relate to it. He feels it speaks to both the younger generation and to the more mature theatregoer, who may see their children and grandchildren experiencing similar situations.

"What comes out at the end of the play is that different people have their own way of reaching their goal of being Jewish. As long as you can be open to different ways, we have ways to keep our people together. It is not just a Jewish theme, it is global and in all societies. If we are open to other people's ideas and rituals, then the entire society will gain," added Weisberg, who has been at the helm of Teatron Theatre, a company devoted to producing Jewish-themed plays, for nine seasons.

Tickets at www.teatrontheatre.com, 416-781-5527 or at the Toronto Centre for the Arts box office.



Jesse Nerenberg as Aaron and Jada Rifkin as Eleanor in *Can I Really Date a Guy Who Wears a Yarmulke?*

Film delves into the world of the Ottoman harem

Sheldon Kirshner
Staff Reporter

In Middle Eastern lore, the harem was a secluded and sacred place where female members of a royal household, including concubines, resided in complete privacy in the lap of luxury.

Long associated with the Ottoman Empire, which collapsed in 1918, the harem was invariably associated with secrecy, intrigue, sex, slavery and decadence.

David Rabinovitch, a Canadian filmmaker based in the United States, was so intrigued by the harem, taken from the Arabic word *haram* (forbidden), that he has made a two-part docudrama about it.

Hidden World of the Harem, filmed in Turkey, will be broadcast by Vision TV on Feb. 29 at 10 p.m.

Turning on the world's greatest Islamic empire, *Harem* is about two royal Muslim women in a seraglio who defy convention and custom in a bid for personal fulfilment.

The first woman, Princess Hatice, seeks to emancipate herself after her father, Prince Murad, is deposed as sultan in 1876 after only 93 days as sultan.

The second woman, Halide Edib, dedicates herself to women's rights and becomes a champion of Turkish nationhood after the Ottoman Empire crumbles.

"The film is entirely factual," said Rabinovitch, who launched his career at CBC Radio in Toronto when he was still a teenager and who later produced the popular TV series *Take 30*, with Adrienne Clarkson. "The characters, the scenes and the dialogue are all inspired by memoirs, documents and contemporary accounts."

He added, "We researched the locations where the events of the story take place and interviewed descendants. Istanbul is an exotic location, and I had long wanted to make a film there."

In developing the script, he and his daughter, Zara, benefited from the insights of scholars in Turkey and North America.

Rabinovitch's interest in "hidden histories" led him to this topic.

"My previous mini-series, *Secret Files of the Inquisition*, was based on original research into church archives," said Rabinovitch, who lives in Seattle but whose production company is in Winnipeg.

Adapted from previously unreleased documents, *Secret Files of the Inquisition* told the story of the Catholic Church's struggle to remain the world's only true Christian faith.

In his current project, Rabinovitch seeks to give names, faces and emotions to the women in the imperial Ottoman harem.

He was fortunate to find the palaces, villas and city angles necessary to recreate 19th-century Istanbul.

"That's not an easy thing to do in a 21st-century megalopolis of 16 million," said Rabinovitch, whose previous films run the gamut from *The Perilous Fight: America's World War II* to *Hollywood Babylon*. "Every location is authentic."

He and his Canadian crew worked harmoniously with a Turkish cast and crew, and Rabinovitch was thrilled to hire Turkish star Pelin Batu for the role of Halide Edip.

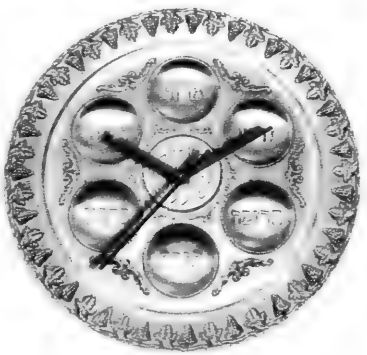
"I hope the film will speak on many levels," he said. "It's the story of strong women living inside the harem system and rebelling against it. It's a parable of a democratic leader kept under house arrest for decades. It's the juicy story of sexual empowerment and emancipation.

"It ends with the birth of the first secular democracy in the Islamic world, so it resonates with current events in countries like Egypt, Tunisia and Libya, where the people are trying to create democracies."

In short, *Harem* is a parable of sorts about our own times.

David Rabinovitch

Why wait till the last minute?



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EYE ON ARTS

By BILL GLADSTONE

GALA DINNER AND MUSICAL EVENING AIDS YOUNG ADULTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

DANI (Developing and Nurturing Independence), a Toronto not-for-profit organization that creates opportunities for Jewish young adults with physical and cognitive challenges, is hosting its sixth annual evening gala dinner and evening of music, featuring singer-songwriter **Baruch Levine** of Toronto, whose albums are popular both here and in Israel.

Also on the program is 11-year-old child prodigy and piano sensation **Ethan Bortnick**, who has appeared on *The Oprah Show*, *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*, *Good Morning America* and many other TV shows, and on stage with former U.S. president **Bill Clinton** and many show-business celebrities. He performs around the world and has helped raise nearly $30 million for charitable causes.

"Ethan stole the show," one reviewer wrote recently after seeing Bortnick, noting that "he's charming and self-assured. He easily established a rapport with his audience and told jokes... It was amazing to watch him play with those tiny hands, stretching to form the chords. But he does it with ease and advanced facility with style."

The dinner also features **Judge Dan Butler.** Terrace Banquet Centre, Sunday, March 18; dinner 5:30 p.m., silent auction 7 p.m., dessert reception 8 p.m. For tickets and sponsorship opportunities, visit www.dani-toronto.com, phone 905-731-6606, or e-mail gala@dani-toronto.com.

* * *

Zero Hour: American writer-actor **Jim Brochu** has won multiple theatrical awards for his entertaining one-man show, *Zero Hour*, about the life of the zany comic actor and artist **Zero Mostel**. Brochu's performance is energetic and gripping as he, replicating Mostel's perfect comic timing, engages in one-sided dialogue with an unseen and unheard *New York Times* reporter doing an interview.

Although we learn a lot about Mostel's experiences being blacklisted in the McCarthy era and perhaps not enough about his triumphs in (for example) *Fiddler on the Roof* and *The Producers*, the play, as directed by **Piper Laurie**, never loses steam. At the Bathurst Street Theatre, 736 Bathurst St., until March 11. $59, $69.50. 1-855-985-2787, www.ZeroHourShow.com

* * *

Documentary Screening: *Prom Night in Mississippi*, a 2009 feature documentary by Toronto-area producer-director **Paul Saltzman**, tells the story of a high-school in Charleston, Miss., that held its first-ever racially integrated prom night only in 2008, paid for by actor **Morgan Freeman**. Saltzman follows students, teachers and parents around in the days leading up to the prom. The camera reveals that change does not come so easily to a small southern town; some white parents forbid their children to attend the mixed prom and arrange a whites-only dance instead.

Sophie Milman

Saltzman, son of the late TV weatherman **Percy Saltzman**, was formerly married to filmmaker **Deepa Mehta** and is now married to **Patricia Aquino**, who co-produced *Prom Night*. The couple lives in the Toronto area. In 1968, Saltzman met and photographed the Beatles in India and in 2008 released a book of his acclaimed photographs.

Prom Night in Mississippi is being shown as part of the MINT Film Festival. Toronto Underground Cinema, 186 Spadina Ave. Feb. 24, 8:45 p.m. $15, $13. 416-707-1077, info@mintff.org

* * *

Names in the News: William (Captain Kirk) Shatner has been chosen to host the 2012 Juno Awards ceremony, to be broadcast on CTV on April 1. Nominees include **Sophie Milman** for her CD *In The Moonlight*, the **Nylons** for their CD *Skin Tight* and **Fern Lindzon** for her CD *Two Kites*. All three albums are competing in the category of vocal jazz album of the year.

* * *

Arts in Brief

• The Al Green Theatre and Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre present acclaimed Israeli pianist **Yitzhak Yedid** in a solo piano concert titled Reflections on Chagall. The original compositions were inspired by six paintings "conveying images of beauty, prayer and Jewish tradition fused with sadness and strife." $15. Thursday, March 1, 8 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 0; www.algreentheatre.ca

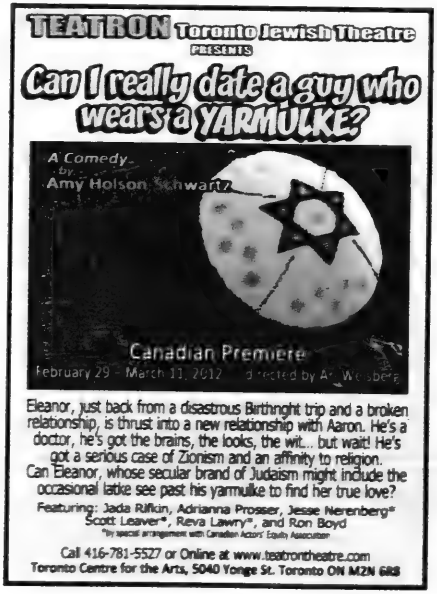
• Author-critic **Kevin Courrier** presents the next in his series of film lectures with clips in the Media Monday series, Reflections in the Hall of Mirrors: American Movies and the Politics of Idealism. The topic is "The Bush Era: Field of Dreams and True Believer." Miles Nadal JCC, Monday, Feb. 27, 7 to 9 p.m. $12, students $6. 416-924-6211, ext. 606, film@mnjcc.org

Idan Raichel

• The Toronto Jewish Folk Choir performs a Purim concert featuring songs in Yiddish, Hebrew, Russian and English. Bernard Betel Centre, 1003 Steeles Ave. W. Thursday, March 1, 7 p.m. $10; $5 for Betel members; available at the door.

• Al Green Theatre and the new City Shul present *Bridges: Lenka Lichtenberg and Roula Said* and musical guests, performing Jewish and Arabic music in dialogue. $20; patron $50. Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre. Monday, March 5, 7:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 0, www.algreentheatre.ca

• Motek Cultural Initiative presents the **Idan Raichel Project**, featuring the popular Israeli fusion artist and a 10-piece orchestra. MCI, a non-profit organization, aims to enhance understanding and appreciation of Israeli culture around the world. Queen Elizabeth Theatre, Sunday, March 18. motekculturalinitiative.com, 1-855-556-6835.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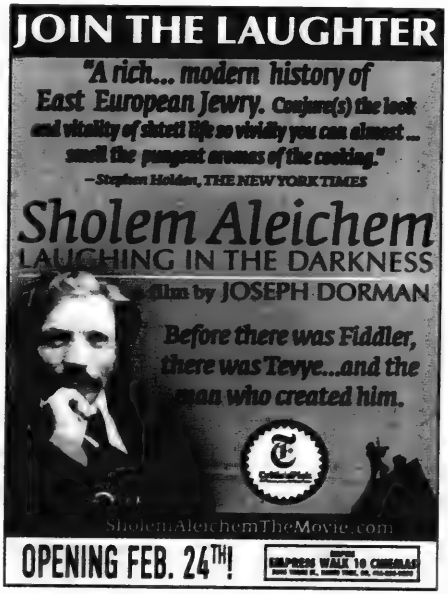
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U2 fans find what they were looking for

Cara Stern
Special to The CJN

Two women found what they were looking for when they lined up for a U2 concert in Toronto last summer: an introduction into U2 fan culture.

These are not your typical fans. These people line up days in advance to see the Irish rock stars in concert.

"I had this vision that everyone was going to be in line with guitar and drumsticks and singing and happy," says Tami Falus, who lined up with Dayna Shereck for 2-1/2 days before the show began.

The two women came equipped with video cameras and lots of patience, ready to record their weekend as they waited for the doors to open. The two documented their experience in the film *General Admission: Layin' It on the Line for U2*.

The first-time filmmakers arrived Saturday morning and grabbed the first spots in the line for the Monday night performance.

The first day went smoothly, fitting Falus' expectations of the early birds, listening to music and chatting. However, the next day, they ran into an unexpected problem: line politics.

"There were people who showed up who had done it time and time again," Falus says. "They considered themselves line leaders and it got a little political."

These line leaders had experience camping out and had put a system in place, Falus recalls, explaining that they weren't too happy about missing the front spots in the line.

"They were trying to take the power and control and weren't thrilled that Dayna and I were doing this without doing it before," she says, explaining they had specific systems to make the lineup smoother. For example, everybody would receive a number, which would allow fans to take breaks from the line and regain their spot when they got back at designated check-in times.

However, the line leaders' experience came in handy when security at the Rogers Centre kicked everybody off the property, and the line disbursed. With the system in place, everybody was able to get back into the original order when the official line opened.

Despite being kicked off the property, Shereck and Falus didn't rest. They say they spent all night documenting the experience before arriving in the official line at about 6:00 a.m. on the Monday morning.

Shereck says these diehard U2 fans stand out from what you might see in other concerts. For example, most of them are professionals who had the time and resources to take the time off to see this expensive performance. She says many fans even came from other parts of the world specifically for the show.

"We kept finding out new things about them, that fans are just so enamoured and what lengths people will go to see them," Falus says, adding that they even came across one man who had been to all 80 shows on that particular world tour.

Another common aspect to the fans is their tendency to follow the band's lead in promoting charitable causes.

"One of the themes, if you look at people's threads through their lives, a lot of them were involved in humanitarian causes," Shereck says, including herself in this group.

"When I was young, I was influenced by the music I was listening to and the values I got through it," she says, explaining that she now works at an organization focusing on helping people with AIDS and HIV.

She refers to the concept of "U2 karma," which concerns how U2 fans treat others.

"Bono talks a lot about karma, and there's this feeling that as a U2 fan, you need to treat other people at a certain level," Shereck says. "You have to be good to people."

Filmmakers Tami Falus, left, and Dayna Shereck at the beginning of their 50-hour wait to get into a U2 concert in July 2011.

Dayna Shereck joins the line on the third, and official, general admission lineup.

This involves actions like not cutting into the line, offering up a place to sleep to fans travelling from far away places, or giving away extra tickets to fans who can't necessarily afford to see the concert, she says.

"It was all along the fact that we're good to each other because of this feeling of U2 karma," she says, adding that U2 tends to attract these kinds of fans more so than many other bands. "We're going to treat someone else who's in a new city, or is out of money, the way we would want to be treated."

So was spending almost three days outdoors worth it in the end?

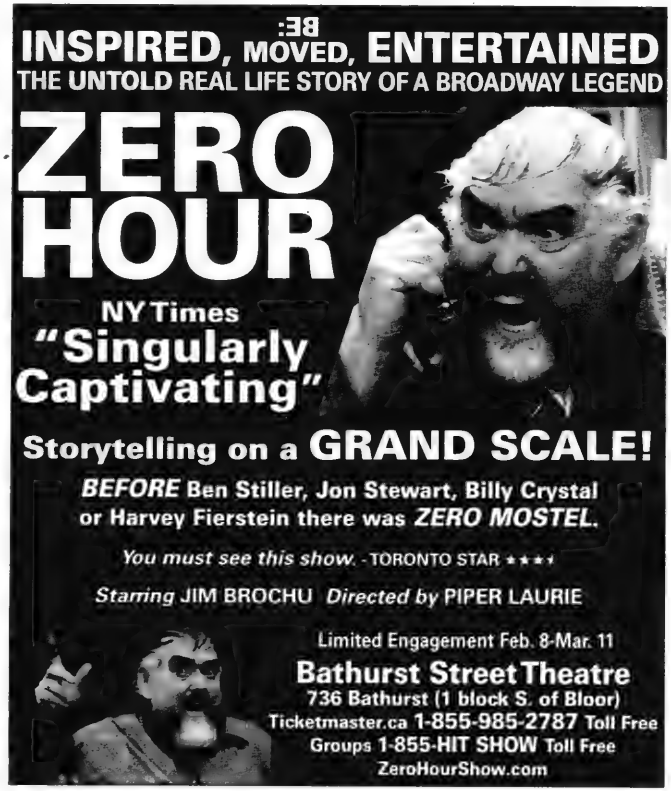
Falus says she would gladly do it again, but only if she was seeing a concert in another country.

"I think the experience would be much different," she says. "I hear in Mexico they lined up for a week. It's more of what I think I envisioned of people lining up, playing instruments."

But both women say they loved the feeling of standing right up to the stage, looking around and seeing all their new friends.

"With the people we met, and being part of such an international thing," Shereck says, "it was very much worth it."

For more information about *General Admission: Layin' It on the Line for U2*, visit www.generaladmissionthefilm.com.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Manitoba curler qualifies for national championships

Harvey Rosen
Special to The CJN

WINNIPEG — The best Jewish skip from Manitoba since the days of provincial champions Terry Braunstein (Canadian Brier winner in 1965), Bobby Robinson and Hersh Lerner may well be on the way.

Only 16, Kyle Doering qualified for the M&M Meat Shops Canadian Junior Men's Curling Championship in Napanee, Ont., and got as far as the semifinals, losing to Northern Ontario 7-3. Northern Ontario went on to lose to Alberta in the championship game by a score of 9-6.

At 16, Doering was the youngest skip competing in Napanee. Back in Manitoba, playing at his home rink, the West Kildonan Curling Club, Doering upset No. 1 seed Joey Witherspoon to capture the Canola Junior Men's Provincial Championship and propel him onto the national stage.

The win over the previously undefeated Witherspoon, who had reached the 2010 Canadian Final, didn't go down to skip's rocks, either; the final was 9-3.

Joining Doering on the provincial championship team were third Colton Lott, 16, second Derek Oryniak, 17, and lead Lucas Van Den Bosch, 17.

How could a minor who is only 16 compete so successfully against opponents who range up to an age limit of 20? Well, let the modest-to-a-fault skipper tell it like it is.

"I started to curl around the age of five, when I really started taking an interest in the game. My dad [Grant] used to build a skating rink in our backyard and he turned it into a curling rink, believe it or not. He pebbled the ice and got me rocks and built hacks, so he kind of constructed a little curling rink for me to practise on, and he kind of explained to me what curling was and how it worked and all the rules and basics of it."

The devoted dad, in his day, was an outstanding AAA hockey and baseball player and a recreational curler.

"He curled in a couple leagues. Up to this day we have a family team with my dad and his two brothers and my grandpa [on Grant's side] and we curl once a week at the West Kildonan rink."

At around the age of seven, Kyle curled at his dad's rink, the Granite Curling Club, where small rocks about one-half the weight are used and thrown about half the distance.

"I started off subbing for my dad's team at age 10 and used to play lead for him. By age 12, I started to skip," he said matter-of-factly.

Doering's mom, Bonnie Lifchus Doering, is Jewish. His zaide, Billy Lifchus, who is a pharmacist in Toronto, was also a fairly decent curler in his day.

Kyle Doering

A Grade 11 honour-roll student at Garden City Collegiate, Doering spent kindergarten to Grade 8 at public schools, where he participated in Hebrew programs. He's been with his present team going on three years.

"We won the first bonspiel we ever played in. It was at the Canada Winter Games Trials. Then we went to the actual games in Halifax, where we won the bronze, defeating New Brunswick," Doering explained.

It was there that Doering made a triple-raise takeout to score a six-ender against Ontario in the round-robin part of the tournament. His shot was featured across Canada on TSN's Play of the Day.

Curling skills aside, what is the secret of Doering's success in terms of his personality and leadership traits as a skip? Doering appears wise beyond his years, with a great deal of support throughout his formative years from his dad, whom he so much admires. "I guess I started off so early and learned so much," he said.

"Curling is a game of experience. I have patience. You have to stay calm. A lot of skips slam their brush on the ice [when things don't go so well]. I stay calm. Otherwise it hurts not just me, but the team. You have to be encouraging. You have to be positive. I learned that from my dad."

Generally speaking, what is the strategy and modus operandi of the guy who may well be the youngest junior skip ever to represent Manitoba in the nationals?

"My main job is to read the ice and know where to put the broom and I have to give them good ice," he explained. "Sweeping is a huge part of the game. Fifty per cent is me and the other 50 per cent is the sweepers. I tell them when to sweep. They watch the speed and I watch the direction. My sweepers do such a great job, and I give them 110 per cent of the credit because they deserve it," Doering said.

Every skip embraces a particular strategy or philosophy against his opponents, and Doering believes strongly that "there is no wrong shot call and everyone thinks differently. It's just someone else's opinion. My specialty is the draw. We play the finesse game," he said. "We use the freeze, tap backs and like to keep a lot of rocks in play. We know when to peel the guards."

Doering not only plays well and often, but also watches the pros regularly on television. "Everything curling I follow," he said emphatically. "Kevin Martin, Jeff Stoughton, Kevin Howard, everything pretty much, I follow."

Canadians, beware, here comes the kid with the best draw in the West!

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Maccabi Canada to host fan event

Compiled by CJN Staff

Maccabi Canada is bringing together some of Canada's foremost sports journalists and commentators in a night out for fans.

Sports Unplugged is planned as a fun, interactive night out with a group of unparalleled sports mavens. ESPN's Dan Shulman, who was voted *Sports Illustrated* Broadcaster of the Decade, will host the event. Shulman recently played for Maccabi Canada's basketball team at the Pan American Maccabi Games in Brazil.

Joining Shulman in an open mike Q & A format will be celebrity sportscasters Michael Landsberg, Nelson Millman, Elliotte Friedman, Steve Simmons, Gord Kirke, Shi Davidi and Mike Wilner.

The night out for sports fans will take place on March 5, beginning at 6:30 p.m. at Le Parc Banquet Hall. The event will include a silent auction of sports related items and souvenir program books will be available.

For more information and to purchase tickets, visit www.maccabicanada.com.

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HEEBONICS

'Against the Grain' theatre brings opera to bars

Michelle Bitran
Special to The CJN

When most people picture a night at the opera, they see tuxedos and gowns and a large, beautiful concert hall, but Toronto's Against the Grain (ATG) theatre company is creating a new, more casual way to experience opera.

There's something powerful about experiencing art in a much more intimate setting," said the theatre company's musical director Christopher Mokrzewski, 27.

ATG brings together professional musicians and performers for opera and classical music shows at small bars and art galleries. The venues are selected for their atmosphere's suitability to the performance piece and for their acoustics.

Nancy Hitzig *[Darryl Block photo]*

Mokrzewski, an accomplished pianist who has worked extensively with the Canadian Opera Company, has been a part of ATG since last year, when it was founded by artistic director Joel Ivany.

The idea, Mokrzewski explained, is to present the audience with great art on their own terms. As its quirky and charming website explains, ATG would like audience members to listen to "an aria while you curl up on a couch."

The attitude is not yet a popular one in opera circles, but the ATG style is gaining steam. So far, its experimentation in venue and musical arrangement has garnered the theatre company rave reviews in Toronto's art scene.

"I think what we do is important in attracting new audiences," Mokrzewski said, adding that while there is always a place for traditional opera performances, the casual and close-up atmosphere of a bar will bring in people who might not feel as comfortable at a concert hall.

Topher Mokrzewski *[Caitlin Coull photo]*

"I think people respond to what's different about it and what's most visceral," he said.

ATG first made waves on Toronto's art scene in December, with its sold-out performance of Puccini's *La Bohème* (translated from Italian to English for the audience's ease in understanding) at the Tranzac Club, a bar popular with the downtown indie music crowd.

Now, ATG is preparing a production of German-Jewish composer Kurt Weil's *The Seven Deadly Sins*, set to be performed in March, at Toronto's Gallery 345.

The lead soprano for the show, Lindsay Sutherland Boal, 35, agrees with Mokrzewski about the enhanced intimacy between the audience and the performers at small, unconventional venues.

"I think that you can experience so much more when you can see it and feel it and hear it and taste it when it's that close," she said, adding that she feels this type of performance is the future of performing arts.

"You're saying, 'We want you, we want you involved, we want to include you,'" added ATG's general manager Nancy Hitzig, who, along with Mokrzewski, represents the Jewish members of the executive.

Hitzig, 25, who has worked with the baroque theatre company Opera Atelier, said her day job as a fundraiser for the Institute for Canadian Citizenship has helped her in attracting diverse audiences for ATG performances, what she calls "bridging the gap" between traditional and newer opera-goers.

"The established classical music audience is coming with us because they're seeing new and innovative ways of presenting their favourite works," she said. They also get to enjoy the same calibre of performers that they might see in a concert hall. "They're not amateurs, they're really powerful and they perform tremendous art," said Hitzig.

Even among the veteran opera audience, the less familiar crowds have no reason to feel intimidated in the casual settings where ATG holds shows.

"I have had so many friends tell me how excited they are that they can drink beer and listen to classical music," she added with a smile.

The thrill of the relaxed environment is not just for the audience's benefit.

"I rather enjoy the places that we work, and it's a great opportunity for us to, so to speak, let down our hair," said Mokrzewski. "I can drink beer while I'm playing, which I like doing, but is not always OK in other circumstances," he added, laughing.

Lindsay Sutherland Boal *[Nikola Novak photo]*

Though, it's surely not just the beer that's making the crowds and the musicians happy.

"There's a power that comes with just being 100 people in the room, where it's just you, and the artist, and the piano, and your friends, and strangers," said Hitzig.

She added that while many performing-arts companies are struggling to get a younger audience in the door, ATG is having no trouble appealing to the next generation of opera patrons.

The youthful, vibrant energy in the audience gives the ATG performers a greater opportunity to discover new ways to display their art.

"What's wonderful about our group is that we're not hindered by conventional boundaries, and consequently, I think we can really explore all our options musically and artistically," said Mokrzewski. "It's good to be able to do what you want."

For more information about ATG and for tickets to upcoming performances, visit www.againstthegraintheatre.com.

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אני: מותק, את יודעת, לשמוע חוויות על טיול של אחרים זה טיפה, איך לומר, משעמם? זה כמו להקשיב לחלומות של אחרים. תוסיפי לזה תמונות, ובכלל.

טלי (עדיין דוחפת את התמונות תחת עיני הרגישות): אין דבר, תשתעממי קצת. את, רק רכילות וקניות יש לך בראש. תראי איזה נופים! אני כל כך אוהבת לנסוע לחו"ל. לנשום אוויר אחרת, לחוש תרבויות חדשות. את ריאה פה? זה צחי ואני מקשיבים למדריך. איזה בן אדם! איזו חוכמת חיים, איזה ידע. אנציקלופדיה מהלכת! ואיך הוא ידע בדיוק איפה להגיד לנו לקנות הכי בזול!

אני (בהתעוררות קלה): מה קנית? קוסמטיקה? איפה באמת המתנה שלי?!

טלי: רק בדקתי בדיקת עירנות. לא קנינו כלום. רק הרגשנו. נשמנו. חווינו.

אני: לפי דעתי? סמדי עומדת להיפרד מבעלה. אבל לא שמעת את זה ממני.

טלי (סוף סוף): לא נכון! מה קרה בדיוק? ספרי מייד כל מה שאת יודעת!

אני (מיתממת): אבל 'הרגשנו, נשמנו, חווינו'. אני בשום אופן לא יכולה לפרט. בבקשה, אל תלחצי, נו, אז מה אמרת? את רוחנית ומטוהרת עכשיו?

טלי: אז שתדעי לך, שהיא השאירה לי הודעה בסלולרי וביקשה שאני אקפוץ אליה השבוע. היא בדיוק חזרה מקובה. הם מתגרשים? מה שמעת?

אני: אני שונאת לצאת מהבית. הכל מפחיד אותי, ואני מרגישה חסרת בטחון מחרין למיטה שלי. אבל אם את קופצת אליה, קחי אותי איתך. אני רק יכולה להגיד שאומרים שבעלה, זאת אומרת שסמדי יודעת שבעלה בוגד בה כבר שנים. היו צרות בזמנו, פרידה, הלכו לייערן, ניסו לחזור, אבל כניראה זה לא הלך. הוא עדיין עם ההיא. יותר מזה לא תוציאי ממני, אני לא מספרת כלום!

טלי: שלא נדע. זוגיות זה לא דבר קל. הנה אנחנו? כל שנה ברומנטיקה. או מיאמי, או קובה, או קובה אצל אימא שלי בישראל...עם מי הוא בוגד, העלוב?

אני: חשבתי שאת מעבר לזה, 'חיית צריכה לראות את העצים פורחים'. טלי את לוקחת אותי איתך. תגידי שאני מתה לדעת פרטים...על הטיול שלה בקובה!

טלי:היא תאמין? הרי לשמוע על טיול של אחרים, זה טיפה, איך לומר משעמם?

SALMON WITH BALSAMIC APPLE TOPPING

4 salmon fillets
2 tsp olive oil
2 Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored, chopped
2 tbls balsamic vinegar
2 tbls honey
2 tbls fresh basil

Preheat broiler with rack at highest level. Coat a baking sheet with cooking spray; place salmon fillets on baking sheet. Broil 8-9 min. or until opaque throughout. Heat oil over medium heat in a nonstick skillet. Add apples and cook about 5 min. until soft, stirring a few times. Stir in vinegar and honey, cook for another 1-2 min. Plate salmon and serve apple mixture over salmon; top with chopped basil.

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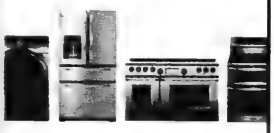

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The CJN's French-language reporter in Montreal, Elias Levy, writes about:

Member of Knesset Rabbi Haïm Amsellem who discusses why he disagrees with the positions taken by the Shas party, of which he was a member, and why he has founded the Am Shalem movement, which advocates fairness for all.

Rabbi Haïm Amsellem

French historian and journalist Didier Epelbaum, who is based in Jerusalem, talks about the Sephardi influence on Theodor Herzl and the relations between Sephardim and Ashkenazim in the years before and after the establishment of the Jewish state.

Exclusive to cjnews.com in Hebrew

How is Gilad Schalit doing now?

Exclusive to cjnews.com

Marriage columnist Lauren Aginsky writes about how a new iPad app can help avert domestic squabbles.

Dreaming about war

Judaism believes that prophecy can come through dreams. In the Torah, Joseph's dream about the years of plenty and the years of famine was relayed to Pharaoh, and it ultimately helped him form a strategy for ancient Egypt in dealing with its food supply. Through his dream, Joseph also gained parole and became an important man in the house of Pharaoh.

Abraham Lincoln dreamed of his own assassination.

Freud believed that dreams are rooted in sexual desire. Carl Jung, who parted ways with Freud, disagreed, and said that "every dream image represents a creative process that relates to the collective archetype of the soul," author Klaus Vollmar writes in *The Little Giant Encyclopedia of Dream Symbols*.

The walls of my own dreams expand so that one is oblong and another is rhombus, and the characters are diminutively tall.

One snowy night, I dreamed of Israel and saw her strategy to deal with Iran and its purported nuclear bomb. The plan was Evian-clear. In my dream, the Israel Defense Forces launched an attack against Iran, seeing that their "spring" was getting warmer, understanding that the Iranian Mujahedeen welcomed such an attack, as it secured their leadership in a pan-Islamic region and their place in heaven as martyrs. I saw this – an em-

Urban Writer

Avrum Rosensweig

brace of mass destruction and death – as Iran's advantage over Israel and the Jewish people.

In my dream, assassinations of nuclear scientists had been exhausted, and a clandestine plan to employ Iranian workers to blow up the reactors from the inside was deemed impossible because of heightened security. I saw Israel fighting on many fronts. I dreamed that I met with Israel's leadership and got a heads up on the attack, but that a plan to protect Diaspora Jewry was weak because our populations were too widespread.

When I woke up, every facet of Israel's blueprint for war, every detail, sat tidily in my imagination, folded there by my dream state.

The Talmud says that dreams will be fulfilled according to the interpretation given them. Bad dreams can be interpreted as good, and therefore no ill effects from those dreams will ever actually occur. Similarly, one has the option of going through *hatavat chalom* – a process that makes a dream good.

The Talmud says that if one has a nightmare, he or she can fast, even on Shabbat, when fasting is disallowed (except for Yom Kippur), although the person must fast another day for fasting on Shabbat. It is understood that a bad dream can cause depression in a person.

Rabbi Berel Wein, a Torah scholar, author and teacher, reminds us that the Talmud also states that "even a semi-prophetic dream contains within it fanciful visions which are inaccurate…

"Just as grain cannot be without chaff, so, too, dreams cannot be without inaccuracies and a touch of nonsense. How to separate the chaff from the grain, the nonsense from the message, lies in the dream's interpretation."

In his book, Vollmar writes that when people dream about war, they are expressing a fear of war and/or confrontation between different parts of the personality of the dreamer – the inner conflict.

Israel versus Iran. Is my dream semi-prophetic, or merely a reflection of battles going on inside of me, my "inner conflict"? Should I fast? Should I go through a *hatavat chalom*? Should I prepare myself, my family, my community for the brutal eventualities of war and antisemitism?

Sweet dreams.

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This Week

National

Jewish Heritage Month set for May. *Page 7*

Butterflies commemorate kids killed in Shoah. *Page 15*

Spice of Life

Time to share some delicious Purim treats. *Page 34*

Arts & Travel

Toronto actor is a real War Horse. *Page 41*

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Netanyahu to visit Ottawa this week

A file photo of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, right, visiting with Prime Minister Stephen Harper last year in Ottawa.

Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf
Staff Reporter

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is scheduled to make a three-day stop in Ottawa this week before a March 5 visit to Washington.

Netanyahu plans to meet with Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper on March 2, spend Shabbat in Ottawa, and then speak at a Jewish community Sunday breakfast briefing with lay leaders and other delegates before leaving for the United States later that day.

It's anticipated the two leaders will address Israel's plans regarding the continued escalation of Iran's nuclear program.

Harper's director of communications, Andrew MacDougall, told *The CJN* he expects they'll discuss "the security situation in the Middle East."

Harper has publicly stated he fears Iran would use nuclear weapons if it acquires them. In an interview with the CBC in January, he said he believes Iran is lying about its nuclear program being strictly for peaceful purposes and that he thinks its leaders would have "no hesitation about using nuclear weapons if they see them achieving their religious or political purposes."

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has said that Israel should be "wiped off the map" and that the "Zionist regime is on its way to annihilation." He is also a noted Holocaust denier.

Since coming to power in 2006, the Conservative government has shown unwavering support for the Jewish state on the global stage. Harper helped water down resolutions at the G8 summit last year that he considered to be weighted against Israel, and Canada was vocal at the United Nations last fall when the Palestinian Authority tried to get the General Assembly to recognize a unilateral declaration of independence.

The two prime ministers have reportedly also become fast friends.

Continued on page 38

A prime minister's 20th yahrzeit

Benny Begin, left, recited *Kaddish* at the grave of his father, Menachem Begin, on Monday at a memorial ceremony on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. It was the 20th anniversary of the death of the Israeli prime minister, seen here in a file photo laughing with Egyptian president Anwar Sadat during Sadat's epochal visit to Jerusalem in 1977.

[Flash90 and IGPO photos]

Tetzaveh
Candlelighting: 5:50
Havdalah: 6:54

Greater Toronto Area

WikiLeaks claims Israel destroyed Iranian nuclear facility – see page 38

CANADA

Reward Doubled

TORONTO — York Regional Police have doubled their reward for information leading to a conviction in a rash of hate crimes in Vaughan, Ont., in 2004. Overnight on March 14 and 15, 2004, black spray paint was used to deface homes and vehicles with swastikas and antisemitic messages. The $40,000 reward remains in effect until Jan. 31, 2013.

CIJA Files Protest

OTTAWA — The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) has formally objected to a proposal by the National Campus and Community Radio Association (NCRA) to regulate itself with its own code of conduct, citing a resolution the NCRA adopted at its 2011 annual general meeting to support boycotts, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against Israel.

CIJA submitted a brief on the matter to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission on Feb. 16, in response to the regulator's calls for comments. NCRA members are currently subject to the Canadian Association of Broadcasters' Code of Ethics. CIJA said the NCRA's BDS policy would "assert itself on Canadian airwaves… if the NCRA is allowed to self-regulate."

WORLD

Anti-Israel Scientist

TEHRAN — The wife of an assassinated Iranian nuclear scientist said that her husband's "ultimate goal was the annihilation of Israel." Fatemeh Bolouri Kashani, wife of Mostafa Ahmadi Roshan, told the Fars News Agency last week that her husband was highly supportive of people who fight for Palestinians' rights against Israel. Roshan, a chemistry professor and deputy director of commerce at Iran's Natanz enrichment facility, was killed by a car bomb in January. He's one of at least four Iranian nuclear scientists to have been killed in anonymous attacks since January 2010. Iran blames Israel's Mossad intelligence agency and America's Central Intelligence Agency.

Anne Frank 'Baptized' in Mormon Ritual

NEW YORK — Anne Frank was "baptized" in a Mormon proxy ritual, the third Shoah victim found to have been baptized posthumously last month.

Anne Frank

The ceremony reportedly took place in a Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints temple in the Dominican Republic. It was uncovered by Helen Radkey, an ex-Mormon who is now a whistleblower on such activity.

Only Mormons have access to the church's genealogy database, which can also be used to submit a deceased person's name for proxy baptism.

The discovery comes shortly after reports the parents of Nazi hunter Simon Wiesenthal were posthumously baptized. Wiesenthal was a Shoah survivor who died in 2005. His mother was killed by the Nazis in 1942.

Posthumous baptism allows members of the church to stand in for the deceased to offer them a chance to join the church in the afterlife. After meetings with Jewish leaders in 2010, the church agreed to halt the practice.

Anne Frank was posthumously baptized at least a dozen times between 1989 and 1999, Radkey told the Huffington Post.

Also last month, the names of the father and grandfather of Holocaust survivor and author Elie Wiesel were found to have been submitted for proxy baptism.

Wiesel called on Mitt Romney, the frontrunner in the race for the Republican U.S. presidential nomination, to tell his church to stop performing posthumous proxy baptisms of Holocaust victims.

Chief Visits Israel

JERUSALEM — Grand Chief David Harper of the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, a group that represents 30 native communities in northern Manitoba, visited the Knesset last week while in Israel on a solidarity mission. Harper toured the Knesset and met with the deputy minister for development of the Negev and Galilee, Ayoob Kara. The trip was organized by a Knesset lobby group that promotes relations with Christians worldwide, the Arutz Sheva news agency reported.

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Groups counter yearly apartheid slur

'This is about truth versus falsehood'

Sheri Shefa
Staff Reporter

A number of campaigns on Canadian campuses are in the works to give pro-Israel students the tools to counter false accusations presented by Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) organizers.

With IAW set to launch its eighth annual series of anti-Israel events on Canadian campuses March 5, organizations such as Hasbara Fellowships, Canadian Academics for Peace in the Middle East (CAPME), JerusalemOnlineU.com and Hillel of Greater Toronto are taking a proactive approach by presenting the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in a more accurate light.

Hasbara's Israel Peace Week (IPW), now in its third year, aims to counter anti-Israel propaganda with a simple message: "Israel wants peace and has demonstrated its willingness to make painful sacrifices for peace."

Hashem Hamdy, Hasbara's eastern Canada regional co-ordinator, said IPW will run alongside IAW, but he insists they have a different approach.

From left, U of T students Tamar Berger, Ahuva Goldberg and Beca Bookman presented Hot Chocolate, Hot Topic, a tabling event during which students distribute hot chocolate and information about Israel.

"Ours is positive," said Hamdy, an Arab Canadian. "We feel our message is positive and straightforward enough... We consider it to be so separate that we don't even call it a response to IAW... because it's our own campaign that we would do regardless."

Seventy-five campuses across North America, including nine Canadian schools, will host programs that promote Israel as a country dedicated to peace.

He said one of the programs being presented at Concordia University in Montreal is called Faces of Israel.

The project, led by the Israeli Ministry of Public Diplomacy and Diaspora Affairs, presents a diverse panel of Israelis, including former soldiers, Ethiopians, Muslims, Jews and Christians who will share their experiences of living in Israel.

"It'll put a human face on the issue and it shows that... Israel is a diverse and accepting place," Hamdy said.

At McGill University, McGill Friends of Israel will be hosting Liberal MP and former justice minister Irwin Cotler.

Continued on page 33

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Faith is not simple

From the editor's desk...

Last December and January, the aggressively violent and segregationist behaviour of a small sect of haredim in Beit Shemesh and Mea Shearim stunned most of us simultaneously with anger and shame.

How could it be, we asked ourselves, that the intolerant, anti-humane zealotry we so despise among extremist proponents of other religions, is also practised by our own co-religionists?

The Judaism they purport to "protect" is not the Judaism we want protected.

Of course, Judaism – the ancient-modern, profoundly life-affirming, ethical monotheism way of life and civilization that is both our magnificent inheritance and our hopeful bequest – needs no defence. And certainly not in this space. To fully explore its possibilities is to bring infinite, intergenerational connection to our finite lives.

But how propitious, nevertheless, given the earlier wide media coverage of an unrecognizably dark, ugly face of Judaism, that Koren Publishers Jerusalem has once again brought to the public a shining, thoughtful, inspiring and very beautiful representation of Jewish life through its recent publication of two seminal works, each featuring the teachings of the late Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik.

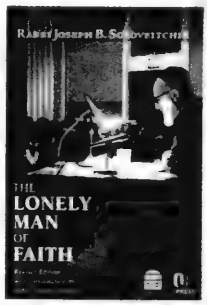
Rav Soloveitchik was and is known to a large segment of the Jewish world, not only among the modern Orthodox, science-and-Torah, Yeshiva University model of which he was and will likely always be considered the spiritual leader and pre-eminent teacher.

This space is far too small and my familiarity with Rav Soloveitchik's teachings too superficial to say more about him than a stone skipping across a napkin note of his achievements. But because he may not be known to a number of our readers, it is important that we call attention to these two new publications. They are that significant.

The Maggid Division of Koren, in cooperation with the Orthodox Union (OU) Press has re-released *The Lonely Man of Faith*, first published in 1965. The re-release contains additional material that expands, elaborates upon and enhances the original essay.

In the essay, Rav Soloveitchik discourses upon an essentially dual nature of our existence. As a starting point, he uses the two recitations of the creation of man and woman in the Book of Genesis. He adduces from the text two prototypical natures of human existence: one that conquers or masters the world and all its material contingencies, the other that struggles with the essential human loneliness striving for higher purpose and meaning.

In his helpful foreword, Rabbi Reuven Ziegler, points out that "Rabbi Soloveitchik does not wish to focus on a general, timeless theological issue, but instead to address the predicament of the contemporary man of faith, who, 'due to his peculiar position in our secular society… lives through a particularly difficult and agonizing crisis.'"



Confronting the world, playing a role in its advancement, contributing to the unfolding of God's aspirations for His creations is mankind's responsibility. But for the individual of faith, it inevitably entails struggle and an existential loneliness, which we must internalize and accept as being part of the condition of belief.

The Rav's ideas transcend a single religious orientation. They are universal in their application.

The second publication is a prayer book, a siddur, that incorporates Rabbi Soloveitchik's commentaries on prayer and worship, explanations of his personal practices and customs in prayer, and summaries of various of teachings that relate to prayer and related themes.

The *Koren Mesorat Harav Siddur, Berman Family Edition*, maintains the elegant esthetics that typify Koren Publishers Jerusalem. It has the lush, dignified features of the recently published *Koren Sacks Siddur*, including Rabbi Jonathan Sacks' translations of the prayers. In addition, and especially compelling, are introductory essays by scholars including Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein and Rabbi Sacks himself.

Rav Soloveitchik died on chol hamoed Pesach 19 years ago, in 1993. Who knows how he would react to the much fractured, intra-communal Jewish world today, what he would write today to heal those fractures, or about the many urgent, pressing, complexities and disunities of Jewish life?

In his introductory essay in the siddur, Rabbi Sacks wrote: "The life of faith is simple only to the simple. Those who have ventured deeper know that it is rarely easy or harmonious." He describes Rabbi Soloveitchik as "a thinker who lets us see our ancient tradition in a new light, like a poet describing an emotion we instantly recognize but never before were able to articulate."

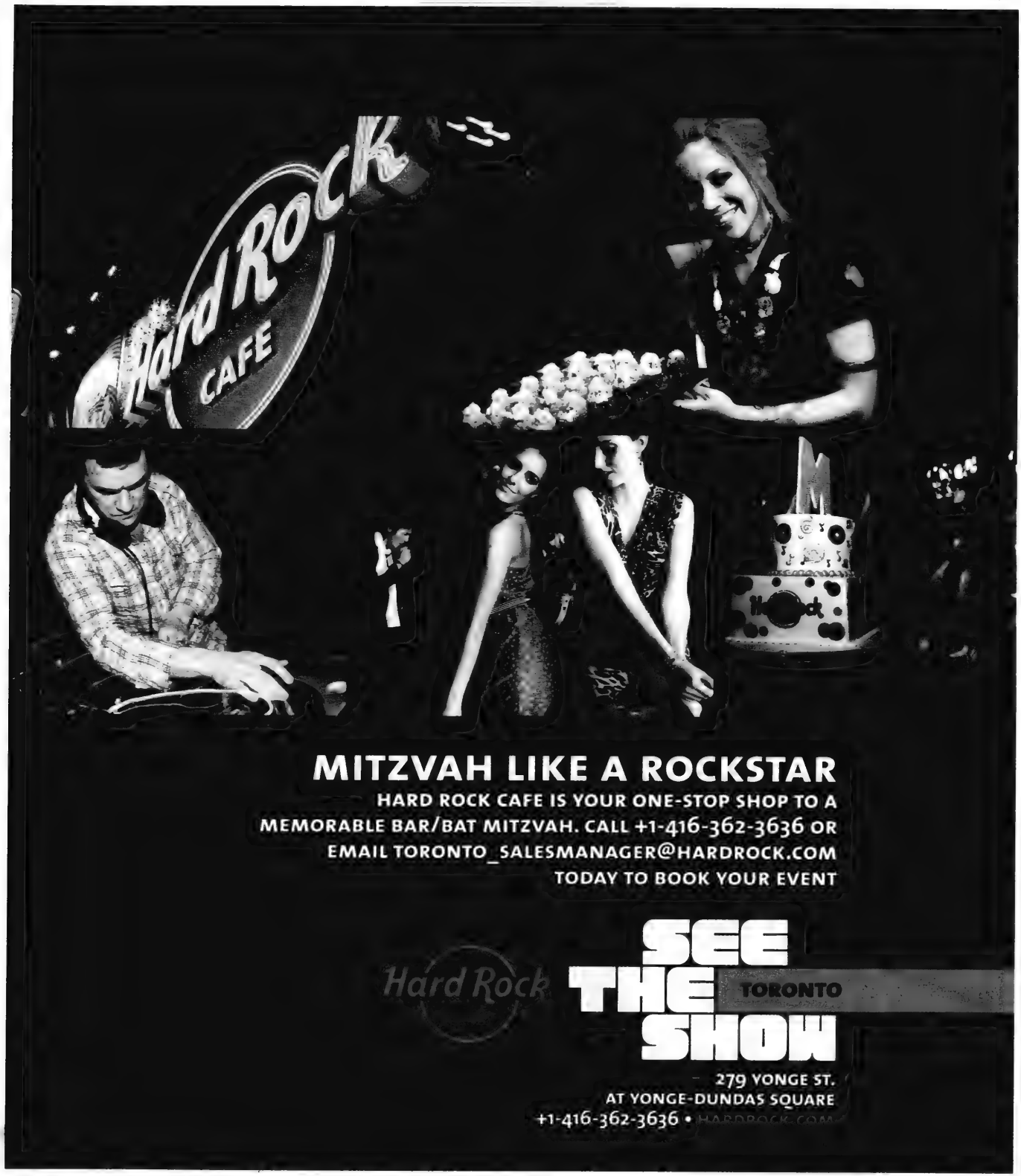
Both of the Koren publications offer us the possibilities, with Rabbi Soloveitchik's guidance, of venturing deeper and of experiencing some of those new historical, poetic, spiritual and theological emotions.

–MBD

SeeJN

PRESIDENT REGALES YOUNGSTERS

President Shimon Peres last week visited the cultural centre in Nazareth, where he met with religious, political and educational leaders as well as with a group of youngsters. *[Israel Sun]*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Canadians increased trips to Israel in 2011

Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf
Staff Reporter

Israel's tourism minister wants to thank Canadians for their growing desire to see the sights and sounds of the Holy Land.

At a breakfast briefing hosted by Israel's Ministry of Tourism in Toronto last week, Stas Misezhnikov enlightened an audience of diplomats, media and Canadian tour operators about the wonders of Israel as a premium travel destination.

Misezhnikov praised Canadians for their interest in his country, noting that of all western travellers, only Canadians increased their visits to Israel in the period from January 2010 to January 2011.

"Israel increased its Canadian tourists by three per cent" last year, he said.

He said the unfortunate reality is that many would-be travellers only know the country through the lens of its conflict with the Palestinians and neighbouring Arab countries, and therefore think it's a dangerous place to visit.

"Moses brought us to a great land, but he chose a lousy neighbourhood," Misezhnikov quipped to reporters.

When international travellers decide where they're going to go, they often look at Israel and think it's another unstable Arab country.

"They often don't know where Israel ends" and where countries such as Egypt, Lebanon and Syria begin, he said.

Add to that the recent turmoil in Egypt, which has effectively choked off all day-trip excursions by Egyptians to Israel's southern resorts in and around Eilat. As a result, Israel now must find alternative ways to generate tourism and help the sector, Misezhnikov said.

Stas Misezhnikov

To that end, he said Israel is considering lowering municipal and water taxation rates on hotel operators, and it's offering grants to hoteliers worth 20 per cent of the cost of building a hotel in Israel. That number increases to 28 per cent for hotels built in Jerusalem.

Misezhnikov said Israel's tourism industry centres on the Holy City, but his ministry is also playing up the multiple wonders of the country.

"We sell Israel as [not only] a religious, historic and cultural experience, but also as a [destination] for leisure activities like going to the beach... the night life of Tel Aviv or resorts in Eilat," he said.

Misezhnikov said his ministry has also been pushing for more collaboration with the Palestinian Authority on tourism, but so far with little success.

He said he's told the Palestinians that for every three tourists that come to Israel, two would want to visit the West Bank and experience Palestinian culture as well. He said there's economic gain to be had for both Israelis and Palestinians if they can work together on tourism.

He believes Israelis and Palestinians can begin to solve their conflict by establishing "new trust via tourism success."

"I'm trying to convince them to co-promote tourism to the region. But the PA is ignoring my calls. It's a pity, because this could be a win-win," he said.

Despite this, in January, a joint Israeli-Palestinian eco-project was launched between Jenin in the West Bank and the Gilboa regional council to create a 148-acre recreational site along the Kishon River.

Israel is also planning big changes to the Dead Sea region.

Misezhnikov said his ministry intends to develop the area over the next five years and has committed 850 million shekels ($226 million) to the project. Israel will build malls, hotels, restaurants and other tourist attractions to further boost the Dead Sea as a travel destination.

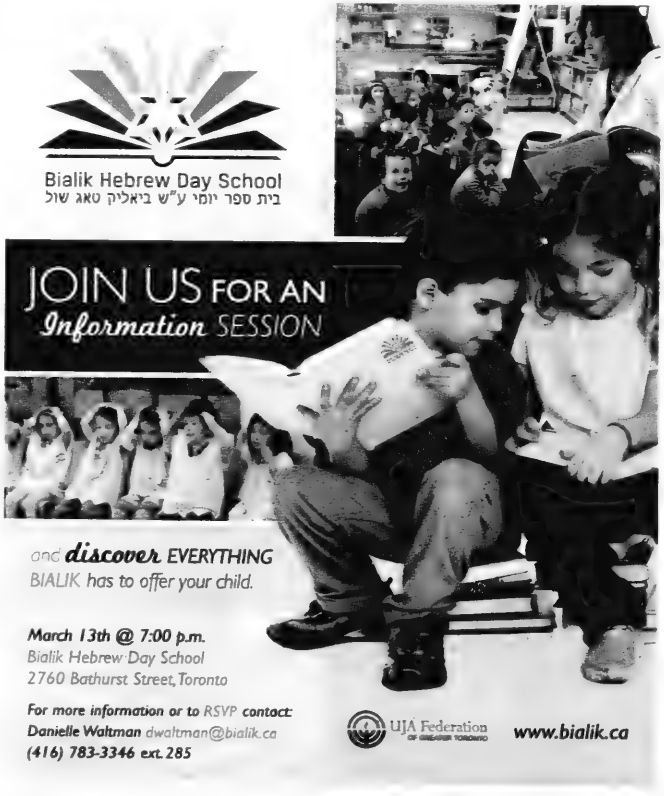
"In five years, you won't recognize the [Dead Sea] region," he predicted.

Asked whether his ministry is also investing money to halt the Dead Sea's erosion at the lowest point on Earth – its northern basin is said to be shrinking at an alarming one metre per year – Misezhnikov said part of the development money will fund research into how best to save the sea from evaporation.

Other infrastructural improvements are being planned that will help grow the Israeli economy, tourism included.

The proposed construction of a railway from Tel Aviv to Eilat is currently being debated in the Knesset. A non-stop train from Tel Aviv to Eilat would take only two hours, compared to five hours by car.

The government also plans to build an international airport near Eilat, which would increase tourist access to the Red Sea resort.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WHERE IT ALL MATTERS

May proclaimed Jewish Heritage Month

Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf
Staff Reporter

It's official. May is now Jewish Heritage Month in Ontario.

Bill 17, the Jewish Heritage Month Act, put forward in October last year by Eglinton-Lawrence Liberal MPP Mike Colle and co-sponsored by Thornhill Conservative MPP Peter Shurman and High-Park New Democrat MPP for Cheri DiNovo, passed unanimously in the provincial legislature Feb. 23.

Colle said he wanted to "honour the significant achievements of Jewish Canadians across Ontario."

Mike Colle

The act is the first of its kind to become law in Canada. Ontario is home to more than 200,000 Jews, making it the province with the largest Jewish demographic. There are an estimated 360,000 Jews in Canada.

"Jewish Heritage Month is an opportunity to remember, celebrate and educate future generations about the inspirational role that Jewish Canadians have played, and continue to play, in communities across Ontario," the act proclaims.

Speaking to *The CJN* the day after his bill passed, Colle said the Jewish community and its effects on the growth of Ontario are not discussed enough.

"Besides the list of incredible Jewish individuals in the province's history… the legacy we need to pay attention to is the dogged determination [of Jews] to fight for social and human rights. That advocacy has left an indelible mark on the province," he said.

Colle said May was chosen because it is "a significant month for the Jewish Canadian community. Various Jewish artistic and cultural events such as the UJA Walk for Israel, Toronto Jewish Film Festival and Jewish Music Week occur in May. Holocaust Remembrance Day and Israeli Independence Day also frequently occur in May."

He added its inspiration stemmed from seeing the Italian Heritage Month Act receive royal assent in 2010.

Bill 17 had widespread support among the Jewish community, including endorsements from the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies, B'nai Brith Canada, the National Congress of Italian Canadians – Toronto District, the London Jewish Federation, the Ontario Jewish Archives and the Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada.

In a statement, David Spiro, CIJA's Greater Toronto co-chair, commended Queen's Park for enacting the law.

"For more than two centuries, the Jewish community has worked side by side with Ontarians from all backgrounds to help build one of the greatest places in the world to raise a family," he said.

"Just as Jewish Heritage Month offers an opportunity to reflect on our past, it serves as a reminder for all in our province to continue building on our collective achievements for the benefit of the next generation of Ontarians."

Shurman called the bill's passage a "great day" for the Jewish community.

Now that it's law, the province and community are gearing up to celebrate this May in some form or fashion.

In a statement, Ted Sokolsky and Elizabeth Wolfe, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's president and CEO and board chair, respectively, praised the new law.

"Building and contributing to community and to society has always been a top priority for Jews since their arrival in Canada, and this honour recognizes those contributions as we continue to add to the diverse multicultural mosaic that has made Ontario a place envied by many around the world," they said.

"This announcement will call for an extra celebration at this year's UJA Walk with Israel, which for 45 years has taken place in May."

A spokesperson for Premier Dalton McGuinty said it was too soon to tell what the province would do to recognize the newly created heritage month, but the premier is looking forward to "continued work and involvement with the Jewish community."

However, Colle said McGuinty charged him with planning any event he wants and that the premier said "he'd be there whatever we decide to do."

Colle and fellow MPP Eric Hoskins, the minister of citizenship and immigration, will co-host an event in May at Beth Torah Congregation to mark the new law.

It will be a night of "glorious celebration, guest speakers, music, recitals and food," Colle said.

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Principles and values, too

In her column last week, *The CJN*'s Jean Gerber pointedly reminded us that the current agitated public debate regarding possible adjustments to Old Age Security (OAS) payments has been devoid of any reference to underlying societal values and principles.

"For them [the media and government officials] it's all about the money. Is it? Should it be?" Gerber asked. "Are we thinking about the right questions? Or is it easier to just think about the cost, without acknowledging that we don't even have the right questions?"

To be fair, the government's public pronouncements on the subject have indeed paid homage to the older generations of Canadians. In her address last week to Canadian Club of Toronto, Human Resources Minister Diane Finley, expressly acknowledged the need to provide for "the generation that built this country." She also affirmed that Canadian seniors currently collecting benefits would not be affected by future changes to the OAS.

But it was also the case that the minister took pains to direct the key message of her comments to younger Canadians. "In a speech to Toronto's Canadian Club, Ms. Finley singled out a table of students," the *Globe and Mail* reported.

And the nub of her message was that the future cost of the OAS would be a burden to them. "The total cost of benefits will be increasingly unsustainable for tomorrow's workers and taxpayers. And it's the next generation of Canadians who will have to shoulder the burden," she said.

To be sure, the affordability of OAS is a vital concern for the government. Indeed, it would be negligent, if not reckless, were the government not to plan for the future.

But in formulating that plan, the government must be reminded, as Gerber and so many others plead, that the debate must be more than exclusively economic and actuarial. The debate must also be about ethics, responsibilities, values and principles.

Since the very first moments when families gathered around a hearth or sat together at a dinner table, it has always been the lot of one generation to shoulder burdens for the other. Going off to war, raising children, tending to parents and caring for the needy – the poor, the indigent, the infirm, or in biblical terms, the widow, the orphan and the stranger – are the burdens that we carry by virtue of our humanity, by virtue of the fact that we have chosen to live together, to build a society together in a civil, mutually respectful and dignified manner.

Especially in relation to foreign policy and international relations, we have seen the government apply principles and core values in the settling of public policy.

We expect and look forward to the government doing the very same when it formulates its policies on OAS.

25 years ago in *The CJN*

Israeli foreign minister Shimon Peres and Lebanese president Amin Gemayel separately condemned Syria's 4,000-troop occupation of West Beirut. The Syrians swept into the Muslim area of the Lebanese capital in response to requests by Druze and other Muslim militias after fighting there caused $270 million in damages.

Dry Bones
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JDC helps survivors in former Soviet Union

In my article "The indigent survivor: a global emergency" (Jan. 12), I drew attention to the plight of survivors living in poverty in the former Soviet Union (FSU). Further research has revealed that I provided an incomplete picture of the situation and did not clarify the distinction between survivors (Nazi victims) and other Jewish elderly living in poverty (non-Nazi victims).

An overall picture of the precarious lives the elderly poor lead in the former Soviet Union is gained through an appreciation of the scale and scope of the American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) operation. In the former Soviet Union, the organization has a caseload of 164,000, consisting of a first tier of about 82,000 survivors (Nazi victims) and a second tier equal in number, of non-Nazi victims. Although Nazi victims qualify for additional assistance from the Jewish Material Claims Conference Against Germany, it still leaves them mired in poverty, but they are the better-off ones! Imagine the situation of non-Nazi victims! A third tier of destitution, however, exists beyond the reach of the JDC. Severely curtailed by budgetary constraints, the organization is forced to turn away an estimated 60,000 indigent elderly who can't afford a basic diet, let alone medicines.

These bubbies and zaides, Nazi victims and non-Nazi victims alike, deserve better! JDC is on the front line with a distinguished record of serving the Jewish People. It continues to burnish its reputation at times like these when a winter of exceptional hardship in the former Soviet Union has left many elderly poor with additional needs.

Dov Harris
Toronto

LET THEM GO...

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz

Canada's rabbi

Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut understood the "big picture" and lived his life accordingly ("We were blessed he was in our midst," Feb. 16). He was a man forged by the forces of the Holocaust, the disciplines of his training as a lawyer and the love of God. Rabbi Plaut had seen the devastation of Nazi Germany, not only on the Jews but on the German people. He fought for human rights and freedoms for all on a global scale. He was a man driven by his studies of the Torah and its compelling teaching that learning is not enough. We must do. He understood Proverbs 114:34: "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach of any people." He loved Canada and wanted the blessings of God to rest upon it. His dreams and goals extended far beyond his own Jewish community. He was Canada's rabbi and, in many cases, Canada's conscience.

Through his scholarship, he has given to Reform Judaism a refreshing view of the God that he loved and served. His goal was to draw the individual into an intense personal study of the Scriptures and how they should affect their lives. His legacy to all of us who follow in the pathways of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will have an impact for generations. I stand erect as a Christian, head bowed in respect, and thank my God for the life of such a man as Rabbi Plaut.

Richard G. Schmelzle
Toronto

Fight anti-Zionism with written word

The annual hate fest Israeli Apartheid Week will soon take place on North American campuses ("Journal seeks to make Jewish thought accessible," Feb. 16). Why not use the next edition of the University of Toronto Journal of Jewish Thought to deal with today's most important subject, that of countering Israel delegitimization at universities? The journal and all other Jewish academic journals ought to deal with the antisemitic, anti-Zionist programs at North American universities. While we cannot compete with the millions donated by oil-rich countries to universities, we can fight with the only tool available to us: the written word.

As total madness has captured academia, the media and other elites in the western world, contaminating the minds of uninformed youths – the leaders and voters of generations to come – it is our duty to enlighten them with the truth. There is ample material available to remind everyone of the crucial historical events and legal documents that attest to the rights of the Jewish People to the Land of Israel, notwithstanding the deniers' vociferous voices.

Goldi Steiner
Founder and Chair
Canadians for Israel's Legal Rights

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Cruel and questionable deterrence

Don Futterman
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An estimated 50,000 African refugees, mostly from Eritrea and Sudan, have snuck into Israel through Sinai over the past five years. They tend to concentrate in areas such as south Tel Aviv, taking jobs away from the poorest of Israelis, and increasing public disorder. Their arrival has changed the complexion of entire neighbourhoods and given locals the feeling they have been invaded, leading Tel Aviv Mayor Ron Huldai to demand that the prime minister save his city.

The problem is not unique to Israel –waves of impoverished illegals challenge many western countries – but Israel's size and Jewish character make it a special case.

As Jews, many of us identify with the suffering of refugees fleeing persecution, and even with those who are primarily seeking economic opportunity. When the gates of America or Palestine were open, Jews flooded through, struggled and thrived – or at least, survived. When the gates were locked, we were killed. But we also know that Israel is too small to absorb the suffering masses of another continent.

Unfortunately, intractable dilemmas like this bring out the worst in governments, and Prime Minister Netanyahu's $165-million deterrent policy, scheduled for Knesset ratification next week, is based on criminalizing desperate and largely helpless people.

Rights organizations claim the vast majority of African refugees are legitimate asylum seekers, escaping political persecution, war or genocide. But Israel grants refugee status to almost nobody and does not even examine the cases of Sudanese and Eritreans. The government maintains that most African illegal immigrants are not political refugees, but rather migrant workers seeking to improve their economic prospects. Because this argument lacks sufficient emotional charge, the government frames the discourse in terms of threats, playing off the public's fears.

Nomenclature matters and labelling the refugees as illegal work infiltrators has threatening associations, particularly since the new policy is based on legislation to counter the infiltration into Israel of Arab terrorists intent on murder, from hostile neighbouring countries.

Eritrean refugees gather in front of the Eritrean Embassy in Tel Aviv to protest against the dictatorship in Eritrea. The sign reads: "We seek sanctuary until the dictator of Eritrea is toppled." ***[FLASH90 photo]***

The funding approved by the government last week is intended to finance a 240-kilometre fence along Israel's Sinai border with Egypt. But it will also go to building the largest detention facility for illegal immigrants in the world, run by Israel's Prison Service, and increase maximum detention time from 60 days to three years. If it is determined that detainees – and this includes children – are from an area considered hostile to Israel, such as parts of Sudan where Al Qaeda is active, they will never be eligible for release, in which case we might as well just call it a prison.

Employers of illegal immigrants will be subject to fines up to 75,000 shekels (about $20,000 Cdn) and face closure of their business. In fact, Israelis helping illegal immigrants in any way could face imprisonment for up to five years. This provision was seen as so extreme that the Knesset interior committee asked to limit liability only to citizens who assist illegals caught engaging in criminal or terrorist activity.

The Jewish public is much more conflicted than the government. In the spirit that once moved us to welcome several hundred Vietnamese boat people, health professionals and other volunteers work alongside organizations like the Hotline for Migrant Workers and the Association for Civil Rights in Israel to help the refugees. Tel Aviv's Bialik Rogozin School, the subject of last year's Oscar winner for best documentary, provides children of foreign workers and illegal refugees with top-flight education.

While a fence may slow things down, and we have every right to police our borders, the other draconian measures will have questionable deterrent value. According to documentation, refugees have been robbed, tortured, raped, held captive to extort ransoms of up to $30,000 per person from family members, trafficked as labour or sex slaves and, in some cases, had their organs harvested for sale – all by the smugglers they pay to lead them through Sinai. If they continue to arrive despite these horrors, is long-term detention likely to scare them off?

There are no great options and probably no way to completely stop the immigration. History suggests that significant numbers of refugees go home when conditions allow, but this can take years. Many refugees will likely be here for an extended period, and we ought to figure out how to absorb them for the time being.

According to the most recent UN statistics available, in 2009 almost 84 per cent of Eritrean and close to 64 per cent of Sudanese asylum seekers worldwide were accorded refugee status. These figures may be what has scared our government off from even considering granting these people official refugee status, but they can hardly justify such an approach. In 2010, only six out of 3,366 applications for asylum were approved – far less than one per cent. We should establish reasonable standards to determine refugee status and begin checking the Sudanese and Eritrean illegal immigrants.

First, instead of the government's plan, we have to decriminalize the debate, since almost no one involved is a criminal, ratchet down the incitement and take the prisons authority out of the picture. We should launch a public discourse about our moral obligations regarding refugees and the limits of our capacity, as a small, and mostly Jewish, state.

Don Futterman is the program director for Israel of the Moriah Fund, a private American foundation that seeks to strengthen Israel's civil society, and is one-third of the "Promised Podcast" team."

Refugee petitions against deportation

Dana Weiler-Polak
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — A petition filed recently in court arguing against the deportation of a refugee to Eritrea alleges that the state deceives the courts in telling them Eritrean refugees deported to Ethiopia are in no danger, while the authorities know this puts the migrants' lives at risk.

According to the petitioner's lawyer, Omer Shatz, of the human rights group Anu Plitim, "the authorities know the refugees' lives are in danger – they are imprisoned as soon as they land at the airport [in Ethiopia] – but they repeatedly hide it from the courts." The petitioner, Prau Isho Hagos, is an Eritrean.

Petah Tikva District Court Judge Avraham Yaakov said at a hearing on Hagos' petition that the state's contradictory statements were tantamount to "gambling with human life."

Hagos, 24, migrated with his family to Ethiopia after the war with Eritrea that ended over a decade ago. In Ethiopia, his mother, brother and sister were murdered and the family's house was burned down. Hagos and his father and brother fled to Sudan.

When he entered Israel in 2009, Egyptian soldiers shot his brother and his pregnant wife near the border. Hagos, who was injured in the incident, was arrested in Israel and detained at the Saharonim and Givon prisons for two years.

He told the authorities he was Eritrean and therefore entitled to protection from deportation. But the Population and Immigration Authority insisted he was Ethiopian, a status enabling immediate deportation. Hagos produced documents proving his nationality, as required. The authority finally agreed he had been born in Eritrea, but argued he was also Ethiopian and therefore part of a group classified as "Ethiopians of Eritrean origin" or "mixed Ethiopians." Israel has special classifications known as "Ethiopians of Eritrean origin" and "mixed Ethiopians."

But an official from the Ethiopian consulate met Hagos in custody and refused to grant him Ethiopian papers, claiming he was not Ethiopian.

The prosecution argued that the decision to deport Hagos was reasonable because he could not prove he was Eritrean and "failed to prove he did not have Ethiopian nationality."

The state told the court last year that "mixed Ethiopians were in no danger if they were deported to Ethiopia. There is no evidence the Ethiopian authorities harassed or discriminated against people who had stayed in Eritrea or who consider themselves partly Eritrean."

But later that month Ravit Topol of the Interior Ministry's refugee status determination unit told the ministry's advisory committee on refugees that Ethiopia was not safe for "mixed Ethiopians." She also said the authorities didn't know what happened to refugees on their return to Ethiopia. "They are all in danger of persecution," she said.

The refugee status determination unit asked for a report on the situation in Ethiopia but has yet to receive it, she said.

Purim tech: the good, the bad and the cyber

Happy i-Purim! With apps on my phone that can recite the Megillah, show me the text, or drown out the name of the nefarious villain, I'm set. Who needs a scroll, a book or a *gragger*? For that matter, who needs community? I can video into a cyber-minyan, or watch one on YouTube.

And while doing that, I can pull up some rabbinic commentaries, along with blogs offering contemporary takes on the ancient story. Imagine the travails of our long-ago ancestors, crowding around the precious few handwritten documents, or our not-so-long-ago ancestors, lugging books and scheduling travel to be near a shul when Purim comes around.

If you follow articles and blogs about Jewish cyber resources, you know what I mean. In the digitized world, we carry our connections and values, Jewish or otherwise, everywhere. We live in a world no less miraculous than that of Shushan around the 14th and 15th days of the month of Adar so many centuries ago.

But in the spirit of Purim, I feel compelled to turn this paean to technology on its head. After all, our sages urge us to drink to the point of *ad delo yada* – not knowing – the difference between Mordecai and Haman. Or, put differently, between the good guy and the bad guy, or the good and the bad.

And that, I believe, is where we are with the miracle of technology.

Don't misunderstand. I'm not a Luddite. I embrace technology as much as the next guy – in fact, even more than the next guy, especially if the next guy is my husband. We have twice as many computers as people at home, and my phone is way smarter than I am. I Google, doodle and tweet. I upload, download, and sync with the clouds, and cavort in the blogosphere.

And yet.

The wonderful Jewish American writer and poet Marge Piercy wrote a marvellous science fiction novel, *He, She, and It*, that grapples with the implications of technological advances and artificial intelligence through the prism of a futuristic Jewish community and the development of a postmodern golem. No longer separate from the electronic devices that connect them to vast storehouses of knowledge and to one another, folks plug bodily into computers. They experience and define themselves through technology and cyberspace. The self and the chip become almost inseparable.

Oh, brave new world!

The thing about science fiction writing, though, is that it projects us into the future in order to examine problems of the present. And one issue that Piercy's novel foregrounds is our relationship to powerful technology – the good and the bad.

We professors see it in our classes and in our research. Want more information? Students pull it up instantly on their laptops and smartphones. Research that once took laborious hours in distant archives happens at home, instantaneously on our screens. But can we shut it off?

Sara R. Horowitz

in Toronto

Social interactions these days always involve more guests than you bargain for – hello Mr. Droid and Ms. BBerry. As for classroom dynamics, even though I tell my students to turn off anything that rings, vibrates or lights up during seminar discussions, our community of learning is quickly unravelled by the apparently irresistible pull of Facebook, messaging, e-mail, cyber-shopping and even Netflix. One student who texted all through the screening of a documentary film about the Holocaust later apologized for her "addiction." I think she got it right – it is an addiction of sorts. And like all addictions, it changes the addict in ways that the addict cannot see.

Recently, a professors' listserv was occupied for days about how to handle the "problem of technology" in our classes. And, as my colleague Eric Lawee recently observed, the pedagogic challenges are the least of the issues. Tech use starts young. How does it affect social skills, sensitivity, tenacity, the ability to focus, to hold onto and think through matters longer that 140-character tweets and more complex than "OMG ur my BFF LOL"?

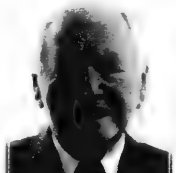
Purim is easy. Even if we momentarily lose track of the good and bad guys, we sober up and things fall back into their proper categories. But in our evolving digital world, the good and bad can't be so easily separated.

Judaism for all

My parents weren't religious, yet they were proud members of the Jewish People, as were most of their contemporaries in pre-1939 Poland. The day World War II broke out and the Germans invaded the country, we fled, with those who accurately sensed that the Nazis were bent on exterminating all Jews, whether religious or not.

When after the war we ended up in Sweden, the Jewish community there, like in other Scandinavian countries, described itself as the "Mosaic" congregation, implying that Judaism was the religion of Moses and the Jews weren't really a people. Like other newcomers, we were baffled.

The tension between Judaism as faith and Jews as a people has resurfaced of late. In his book *The Invention of the Jewish People*, the Israeli historian Shlomo Sands insists that Judaism has never been anything but a religion. He has an anti-Zionist agenda that argues that, as there's no Jewish People, Jews have no right to claim Israel as their own.



Rabbi Dow Marmur

in Toronto

By contrast, the American Jewish historian Leora Batnitzky shows in her book, *How Judaism Became a Religion*, that there has always been a Jewish People. She maintains that turning Judaism into a faith community was a modern ploy to enable Jews to claim civic equality in the countries in which they lived.

"Mosaic" may thus have been a convenient though inappropriate description of Judaism in a misguided attempt to make it correspond to other religions.

Batnitzky's agenda is to find a place within Judaism for self-proclaimed secular Jews. In the early stages of Jewish emancipation, to be secular in the western Diaspora came to express the ambition to assimilate into the surrounding culture. In Israel, as in eastern Europe, secularism has always affirmed Judaism as a legitimate expression of the people's collective identity.

Though today about half of Israelis describe themselves as secular, some 80 per cent say they believe in God thus affirming – in the terminology of Mordecai Kaplan, the founder of Reconstructionism – that Judaism is a religious civilization that's neither Mosaic nor Godless.

Religion now becomes primarily a personal commitment to God, while Jews are bound to each other as members of the same people with Israel as its historic homeland. Because of the influence that the Jewish state now has over world Jewry, Batnitzky's view is being increasingly affirmed. To describe us as adherents of the Mosaic faith has become unacceptable; indeed, the communities in Scandinavia have dropped the term in favour of "Jewish."

One of the manifestations in Israel of Batnitzky's contention is the emergence of secular yeshivot. While Jews have usually associated the yeshiva with a religious, often Orthodox, orientation, these new yeshivot affirm that there's much more to Judaism than religion.

Their curriculum includes Talmud, Midrash and Codes, like in the traditional counterparts, but they also study Bible and ancient and modern Jewish thinkers, as well as contemporary Hebrew writers. All are seen as part of the cultural and spiritual heritage of the Jewish People.

The aridity of the once allegedly widespread Israeli indifference to religion on the one hand and current haredi fanaticism on the other has prompted sensitive women and men to delve deeper into Jewish sources in search of roots, meaning and purpose.

Traditional yeshivot ordain rabbis, but that isn't the aim of the secular yeshiva. Its students are exposed to *Torah l'shma*, learning for the sake of learning and spiritual enrichment, not for professional advancement.

Of late, however, some such places now authorize women and men to function not as rabbis but as officiants at life-cycle events to respond to the public demand for rituals based on traditional practices yet without the benefit of clergy.

Though this new trend may not become the normative Judaism of tomorrow, it's attracting Jews in Israel and abroad. Secular congregations now exist in many countries, including Canada.

I belong to the world of organized religion and am very happy to be a Reform rabbi. Originally, it may have been my way of rebelling against the spiritual turmoil in which I was reared; today, it's my way of being.

Nevertheless, I view recent attempts to affirm ostensibly secular Jewish learning and traditional Jewish practices as yet another, most welcome, way of making Judaism accessible to all. To separate faith from Jewish Peoplehood is artificial and misleading. A growing number of Jews have come to realize it. They deserve our support.

She changed the crime-novel genre

V.I. Warshawski is one tough lady, an edgy private investigator in Chicago who uses her brains as well as her fists.

She's a problem solver, but has been known to break into offices in search of clues. She appreciates fine clothes, drinks Johnny Walker Black Label whisky, hums operatic arias and enjoys an active sex life.

Warshawski, a figment of Sara Paretsky's restless imagination, is the main character in her bestselling detective novel series, the first of which, *Indemnity Only*, was published 30 years ago.

"She's much braver and more physically fit than me," confessed her creator, a fairly tall, stylish, silver-haired woman in her mid-60s who was recently in Toronto to promote *Breakdown*, her 15th V.I. Warshawski novel. Brimming with suspense and laced with razor-sharp wit, it is set against the backdrop of contemporary politics and pop culture.

By creating Warshawski, Paretsky, a feminist, revolutionized the crime novel genre, shattering clichés about women fostered by male writers running the gamut from Raymond Chandler to Rex Stout. "I wanted to counter these stereotypes," explained Paretsky in an interview. "This is what really motivated me."

In her memoirs, *Writing in an Age of Silence*, published in 2007, Paretsky elaborated on this point.

"I wanted to create a woman who would turn the tables on the dominant view of women in fiction and in society. The more I read, the more I realized that a woman's moral character was determined by her sexuality. If she were chaste, she was good, but helpless, unable to act. If she had sex, she could act, but she could perform only evil deeds."

To Paretsky, a woman's place in hard-boiled detective novels was irretrievably fixed. "Women could be vamps or virgins. These stereotypes defined women in 20th-century crime fiction."

Rebelling against traditional notions about women, Paretsky set about transforming the image of women in the popular genre.

She may be the best-educated crime fiction writer who has ever lived, holding a PhD in American history and a postgraduate degree in business administration, both earned from the University of Chicago.

Paretsky's education has proved useful. "It's given me a framework to understand contemporary events in a historical context and maybe made my work richer." And, she added, her rigorous academic training

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

has helped her in research.

Paretsky, whose husband is a physicist at the University of Chicago, was a marketing manager in the financial services industry when she produced the first V.I. Warshawski novel. "I was trying to create a woman who was a person, not an angel or a monster."

She clung to her day job after writing the first three Warshawski novels, but with the success of *Deadlock* (1984) and *Killing Orders* (1985), she felt confident enough to quit and strike out on her own.

She has never looked back. "I'm able to support myself with my writing," said Paretsky, who won last year's coveted Mystery Writers of America's Master Award. "I feel very fortunate, especially in this lagging economy."

Left-of-centre politically, she infuses her novels with a passion for social justice. "There are things going on around me," she noted. But Paretsky does not use her novels as platform for her views.

However, she is not averse to tackling current political or social issues.

In *Bitter Medicine*, her fourth novel, she took on the medical profession. In her next novel, *Blood Shot*, she embraced the environmental movement while blasting chemical companies. And in *Guardian Angel*, readers accompanied her into the world of high finance.

When she sits down to compose a new novel, she usually starts with a crime. "I play around with it until I have characters who come to life. I do a lot of stopping and starting. I'm always throwing out material."

V.I. Warshawski is neither Jewish nor Polish. "She identifies herself as an American," said Paretsky, who considers herself Jewish and American.

Paretsky was born in Ames, Iowa, in the American heartland, on June 8, 1947, as her father, a New Yorker, was completing a PhD in bacteriology at Iowa State College. Later, he taught at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, where Paretsky was raised.

His family arrived in the United States from Lithuania in the early 20th century, after his grandfather was murdered in a pogrom near Vilna in 1908. Family members who missed the opportunity to settle in the United States or Palestine before World War II perished in the Holocaust. She was named after a grandmother who was killed during that period.

Not surprisingly, Paretsky's newest novel is peppered with references to the Nazi occupation of Vilna. "I keep revisiting these themes," she said. "The Holocaust weighs on me."

Sara Paretsky
(Steven E. Gross photo)

Paretsky's mother, a librarian who never finished an advanced degree in science, was descended from British and Dutch Protestants who arrived in America in the 17th century.

Paretsky's highly literate parents were devoted to the written word. Her father could read German, Yidddish and Greek. Her mother, a natural storyteller with a dreamy personality, was drawn to fiction and history. "I grew up in a household of readers," she recalled.

In Lawrence, a white-bread Anglo town with a handful of Jews where ethnocentrism was the norm, Paretsky was something of an oddity.

Although she was never directly the victim of antisemitism, she felt rather isolated. "There were a few ugly incidents. But our appliance repair man didn't charge us for a job because he thought Jews were the children of God."

Her brother, Jeremy – a gifted linguist who converted to Christianity and is now a Dominican priest and professor at the University of California – taught Paretsky how to read. "I followed him around like a pet duckling."

In high school, Paretsky was fortunate enough to have been taught by an English teacher who appreciated her talents as a budding novelist. "He encouraged me to write and kept me writing. Without him, I might have quit."

At 20, she began thinking seriously of becoming a writer, but after working as a community organizer in Chicago during the 1966 race riots, an experience that broadened her horizons, she decided to continue her education.

Having majored in political science at the University of Kansas, she switched course, finishing a doctorate dissertation titled *The Breakdown of Moral Philosophy in New England Before the Civil War*.

Since teaching positions in university history departments were scarce when she graduated, Paretsky had to "retool" herself. She took a degree in business.

Long before Barack Obama was elected president and was still an obscure Illinois state senator, Paretsky worked with him on the board of an organization dedicated to improving the lot of mentally ill homeless people. "He was really smart and exuded charisma. I wrote a letter urging him to run for the U.S. Senate."

Although she has no idea how many more V.I. Warshawski novels will flow from her pen, she is sanguine. "I hope my brain keeps working," said Paretsky, who has already started the research for her next novel.

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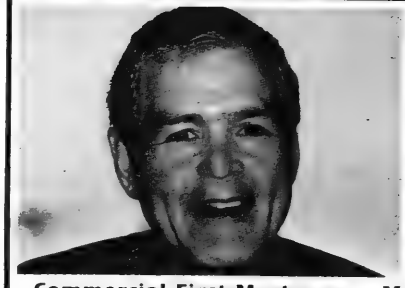

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Israel-hatred on campus seen as threat to existence

Sheldon Kirshner
Staff Reporter

The growing phenomenon of Israel-hatred on American university campuses poses a threat to Israel's very existence, claims the author of a new book on the subject.

Calling the "intellectual jihad" against Israel part and parcel of a wider "stealth campaign" aimed at western culture, values and political ideology, Richard Cravatts charged that this "unrelenting assault" on Israel places Israel at real risk.

Cravatts, a faculty member of the Simmons School of Management in Boston, makes these accusations in *Genocidal Liberalism: The University's Jihad Against Israel & Jews*, published by the David Horowitz Freedom Center in Sherman Oaks, Calif., a group associated with conservative causes.

In an interview, Cravatts said that Israel's detractors on campus want to delegitimize it by transforming it into a pariah state whose racism, brutality and militarism should no longer be tolerated.

If they succeed in changing Israel's image into that of a loathsome state, the political cost of supporting Israel may be so onerous that it "may well go unprotected when it is put at existential risk by enemies who wish its elimination," said Cravatts, who was in Toronto late last month.

According to Cravatts, anti-Israel enmity has become "a covert and surrogate form" of antisemitism.

Typically, haters of Israel deny Israeli Jews the right of self-determination by claiming that Israel is a racist entity, apply double standards to it, use classic antisemitic symbols and images to define it, compare it to Nazi Germany and hold Jews collectively responsible for Israel's actions.

"So when Israel's campus enemies disingenuously claim that they are merely critiquing its policies, while actually demonizing, delegitimizing and slandering it, they often cross the line into actual antisemitic rhetoric and thought."

Prior to the Six Day War, Israel was admired for its democracy and pluck and could count on the liberal left for support and an ideological nod of approval, he noted.

But after its post-1967 rise as a military and economic power, Israel was increasingly regarded in a far different light. "Many of Israel's sympathizers began to lose their affection for Israel and began conflating their negative view of the United States, capitalism and imperialism with the Jewish state," he observed.

Richard Cravatts

This trend manifested itself as Israel's Arab foes waged a successful propaganda war against it.

At universities, Israel was lambasted and targeted as two watchwords of higher education, diversity and multiculturalism, came into vogue, he said.

"Diversity has seen university administrations bending over backwards to accommodate the sensitivities of minorities and perceived victims of the majority culture, usually at the expense of fairness and rationality.

"Multiculturalism has brought with it a type of moral relativism in which every country or victim group is equal, regardless of what vagaries, weaknesses or fundamental evil may underpin its social structure."

In his view, several other factors have played into the anti-Israel discourse. The notion of "social justice" has been conflated with the victims of unjust western societies and with imperialist and capitalistic nations such as the United States and Israel.

Cravatts added the cult of "Palestinianism" has been fed into this narrative. He defined Palestinianism as an obsession with achieving Palestinian statehood while spewing animus at Israel.

To the academic left, Israel's existence is not about self-determination for the Jewish people, but about greed, globalism, colonialism, exploitation and undeserved political and economic might.

Cravatts said that Israel's image as a racist state was fostered by two events – the 1975 United Nations' proclamation equating Zionism with racism, which was retracted, and the second Palestinian uprising, which erupted in September 2000.

Branding these critics hypocritical, he said they denounce Israel as a criminal state but regularly excuse or apologize for "genocidal Arab terrorism" as an "acceptable and inevitable result of a weak people, the Palestinians, suffering under western oppression and the legacy of imperialism." Further, they accept Arab violence because it is deemed to be the fault of the strong nations that have subjugated them.

Universities in California are at the centre of this form of Israel bashing, he said.

And Jewish academics play a role in this phenomenon, he noted, singling out Joel Beinin of Stanford University, Jennifer Loewenstein of the University of Wisconsin, Sara Roy of Harvard University and Marc Ellis of Baylor University, among others.

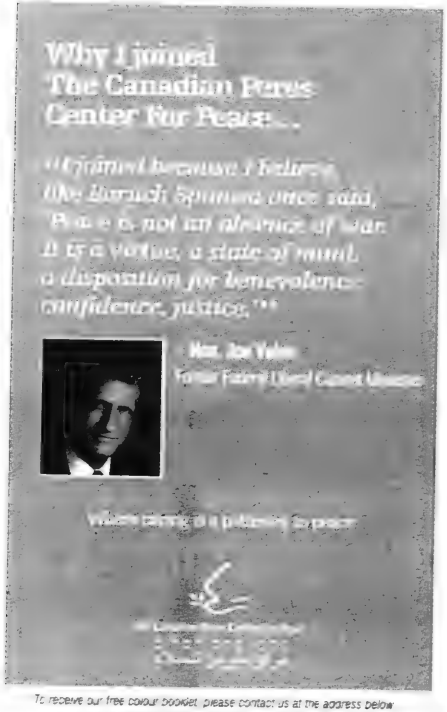
To Cravats, the "paradigmatic libeler" is Norman Finkelstein, the son of Holocaust survivors and formerly of DePaul University.

Some Middle East studies departments, funded in part by Arab states, have become havens for antipathy to Israel, he said, citing Columbia University and Georgetown University.

Cravatts is less than surprised that Israel has become an object of admiration in conservative rather than liberal circles.

"Liberals in the West, having expressed reverence for Third World victims and support for Palestinianism, have made Israel the focus of their rage against what they perceive to be its colonial, oppressive, racist and militaristic character. Conservatives feel they are in battle to protect western values, culture and the Judeo-Christian tradition now threatened by radical Islam and the jihad against western democracies in general and against Israel in particular."

Although many conservatives do not back Israel out of any fondness, they understand that it is essentially "the canary in the mineshaft of western civilization," said Cravatts, who supports a two-state solution.



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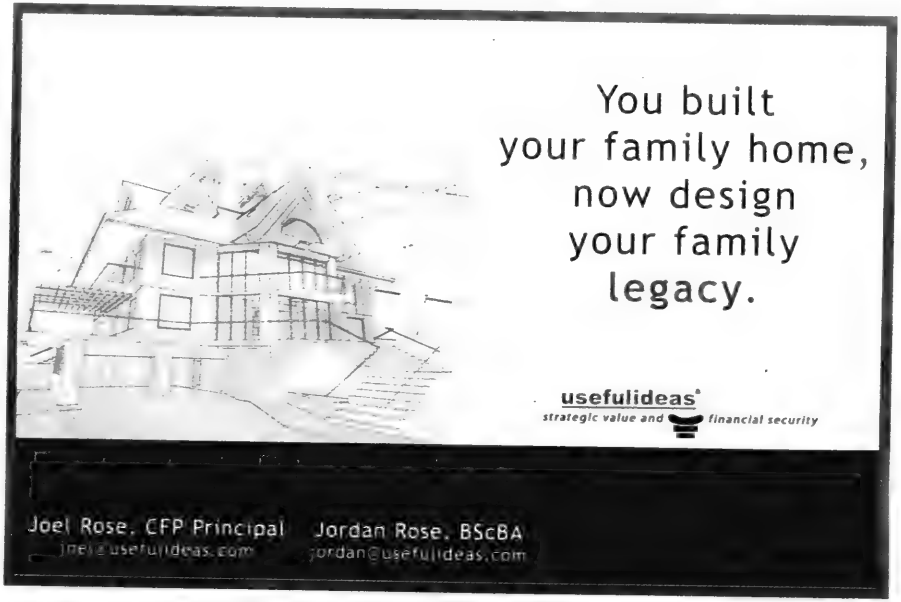

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Renee & Irwin Nadal Festival

Beth Tzedec mounts major Purim Shpiel

Compiled by CJN Staff

For the seventh year in a row, Beth Tzedec Congregation is producing a full-scale musical theatre production for the greater Toronto community, and this year it's bigger than ever.

Megillah Mia: The Scandinavian Purim features the familiar melodies of Abba, but beyond that, everything about the production is original.

The play, written by the dynamic husband-wife team of Simon and Aliza Spiro, sets the story of Purim up north in the land of Vikings, trolls and Swedish meatballs.

"We wanted to use the music of Abba, because *Mamma Mia* is so popular today with kids and their parents," said Simon, Beth Tzedec's cantor, who is creating new orchestrations and conducting the 15-piece professional orchestra (whose members, coincidentally, played in the pit for *Mamma Mia* during its Toronto run).

"Since Abba is from Sweden, we thought it would be more whimsical if we threw in everything that people associate with Scandinavia."

That includes a Viking King, a Swedish chef and a storyteller named Hans Jewish Anderson. The lyrics were written by Aliza, an award-winning American songwriter, and the two will direct and oversee the cast and crew of more than 100 Beth Tzedec congregants and staff.

Over the years, each new production has become more sophisticated than the last.

The sets in the very first show were painted bed sheets, and the inexperienced actors used auto-cue to ensure the flow of the story.

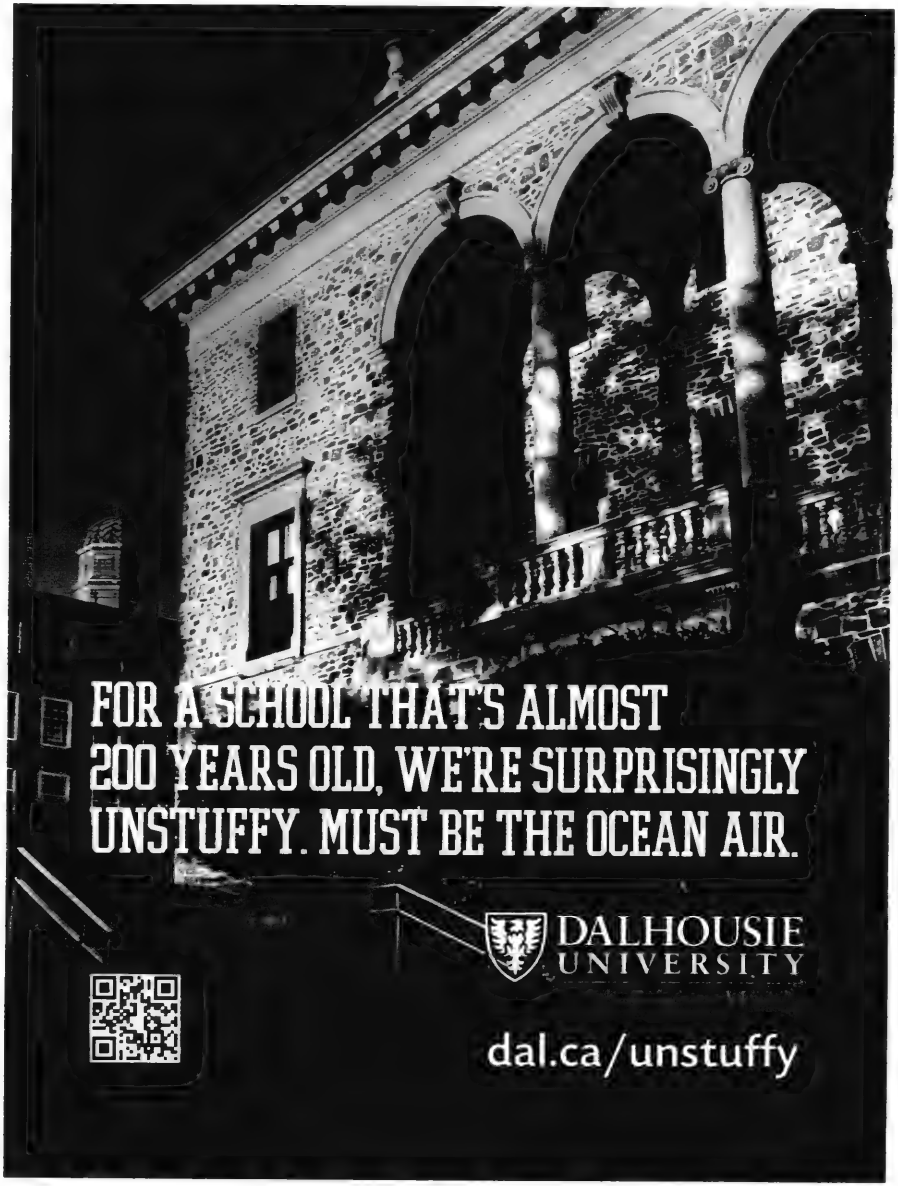
Now, after seven years, the stage has expanded, sets are created by one of Toronto's leading theatre designers, there's state-of-the-art lighting, and most of the actors have developed a polish that belies their amateur status.

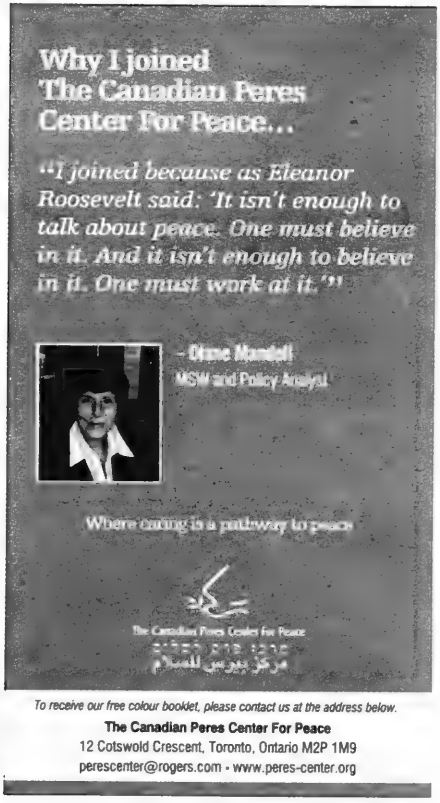
Costume consultants, a dance captain and choreographer, front-of-house managers and an enormous crowd of volunteers round out the team that helps bring this production to the community.

The audience has expanded, as well. In addition to public shows, *Megillah Mia* will have a private performance that the Masorti Organization will use as a fundraising event, and there will be special daytime performance for school groups and senior centres.

"It's very exciting to see 500 middle schoolers watch the Purim story come to life, albeit in a ridiculous setting," Aliza said. "But that's what makes it such fun – they not only see the story of Esther, but they understand that Purim is a holiday of revelry and ridiculousness."

Megillah Mia: The Scandinavian Purim is playing at Beth Tzedec from March 7 – 11. Tickets are available at 416-781-3511. For more information, contact Aliza Spiro at alizasara@aol.com.

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Butterfly Project recalls kids killed in Shoah

Carolyn Blackman
Staff Reporter

When Brenda Lass, an arts specialist at Baycrest's Donald and Elaine Rafelman Creative Arts Studio, read about Holocaust Museum Houston's Butterfly Project, she wanted to help out.

Inspired by the poem *The Butterfly* by Pavel Friedman, who perished in Auschwitz in 1944 (see sidebar), the museum is collecting 1.5 million handmade butterflies, to commemorate the 1.5 million children murdered in the Holocaust.

Lass said that residents, volunteers, students and staff who work in the centre are joining in the effort by creating handmade butterflies using various artistic mediums.

"We have young volunteers and students from all over the world, and some have learned very little about the Holocaust. Participating in [this project] has opened their eyes to a historical event that they need to know more about. It will benefit them and everyone they share the story with."

It's hard to believe, she said, that there are young people today who have not heard of the Holocaust.

"Working on the project alongside Holocaust survivors provides unmatched opportunities for discussion. It also serves as a springboard for these individuals to search out more information on the subject, and to share their findings with their own communities.

"Many of our clients and older volunteers are Holocaust survivors, and participating in this project gives them an opportunity in a meaningful social action program."

Lass said her studio plans to have its own butterfly exhibit when enough butterflies have been created. "Butterflies are painted on paper or on silk, some are ceramic, and others are being stuffed as pillows.

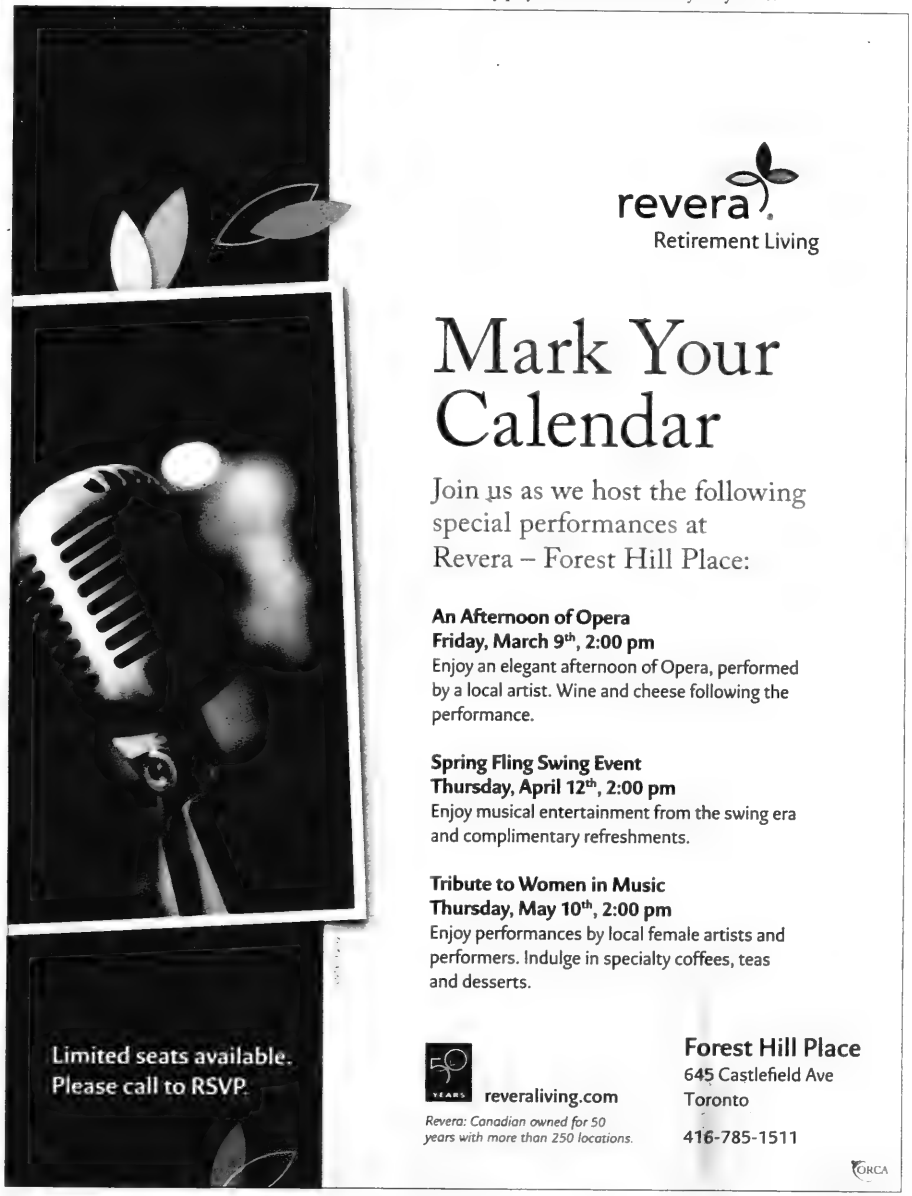
"Everyone has the ability to create something, despite any physical limitations they may have."

Julia Neagu

George Erdman

The Butterfly
Pavel Friedman

The last, the very last,
So richly, brightly, dazzlingly yellow.
Perhaps if the sun's tears would sing
Against a white stone...
Such, such a yellow
Is carried lightly 'way up high.
It went away I'm sure because it wished to
Kiss the world good-bye.
For seven weeks I've lived in here,
Penned up inside this ghetto.
But I have found what I loved here.
The dandelions call to me
And the white chestnut branches in the court.
Only I never saw another butterfly.
That butterfly was the last one.
Butterflies don't live in here,
In the ghetto.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In honour of a true hero

Lars Henriksson and Amir Gissin

As we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the birth of Raoul Wallenberg, it is incumbent on us to recall the story of his endeavours during the Holocaust and teach them to the next generations so that his heroism will not be forgotten.

Wallenberg could have led a life of luxury. Born into a prominent aristocratic banking family in Sweden, he was destined to succeed in life. But he was not predestined to be a hero, to save the lives of thousands of strangers – that was his choice.

Guest Voice

In the spring of 1944, the western world was awakening to the horrors of the Holocaust, as authenticated eyewitness reports of the Auschwitz extermination camp were circulated. The United States established the War Refugee Board, whose goal was to save Jews. The WRB's representative in Sweden organized a committee to locate someone to lead a rescue mission in Budapest. Raoul Wallenberg decided to lead the mission and thus try to save the Jews of Hungary from the Nazi death camps following Hitler's invasion of March 1944.

Fortunately, Wallenberg did not have to start his mission from scratch. Per Anger, a junior diplomat in the Swedish Legation in Budapest had already started passing out provisional passports to Jews who had relatives or business colleagues in Sweden. Per Anger also issued special certificates to Jews who had applied for Swedish citizenship.

One of Wallenberg's first tasks as the head of the department for assisting the Jews was to design a Swedish protective pass. These documents had no real standing in international law. However, Wallenberg had an excellent understanding of Nazi bureaucracy because of his previous business dealings in Germany and Nazi-occupied France. He knew that the official-looking passes, with stamps, signatures and the coat of arms of Sweden, would command respect. Wallenberg managed to negotiate a quota of 4,500 passes with the Hungarian authorities, yet in actuality issued three times that number.

Wallenberg didn't stop at issuing protective passes. He also opened "Swedish houses" where Jews could hide. Protected only by a flag and Wallenberg's declaration that these buildings were Swedish territory, 15,000 Jews were given refuge.

Although he held the rank of first secretary at the legation, Wallenberg was not a conventional diplomat. At first, his unique activities stunned his fellow Swedish diplomats. But his success at helping the Jews soon won them over. Then legations of other neutral countries followed suit, issuing protective passes, and a number of other "national houses" were opened.

Though the end of World War II was in sight, the extermination of the Jews continued. SS officer Adolf Eichmann, who was in charge of implementing the "Final Solution" for the European Jews, instituted death marches to deport the Jews of Hungary. Starting in November 1944, tens of thousands of starving Jewish men, women and children were force-marched for hundreds of kilometres in the harsh winter, with many dying along the road.

Raoul Wallenberg did not remain passive in the face of this horrendous crime. He chased the marches in his car, handing out food, clothing, medicine and his special passes.

Raoul Wallenberg

Continued on page 17

Annual Chancellor Rose and Ray Wolfe Lecture in Holocaust Studies

Ilya Altman

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Despite threat to his life Wallenberg saved Jews

Continued from page 16

Using threats and bribes, he rescued those Jews who possessed Swedish passes, taking them back to Budapest despite himself being threatened by the guns of the Iron Cross guards.

When deportations took place by train, Wallenberg displayed extraordinary courage, climbing onto railway cars destined for Auschwitz and handing protective passes to the Jews already inside the train. He would then demand that the Jews with passes be taken off the trains – all this under the watchful eyes of armed Nazi soldiers.

Eichmann planned to massacre all the Jews in the largest ghetto, in mid-January 1945. Wallenberg found out about the plot and went into action. Unable to stop the massacre by himself, he turned to the only person who could do so, the commander-in-chief of German troops in Hungary, Gen. August Schmidthuber. Using a trusted go-between, Wallenberg sent a letter to the general, threatening that if the massacre was carried out, he would be held personally responsible and tried as a war criminal when the war was over. The threat worked, and the massacre was cancelled at the last minute.

Mere days later, the Russians entered Hungary. Some 120,000 Hungarian Jews had escaped the Final Solution. It is not known exactly how many owed their survival to the efforts of Raoul Wallenberg, but he is credited with having saved tens of thousands of Jewish lives at the very least.

After the war, Wallenberg should have returned to Sweden a hero. He should have been feted and honoured, lived a long life of happiness, forever treasured by those he saved, their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Sadly, that was not to be.

On Jan. 17, 1945, Wallenberg was escorted by Soviet troops to their military headquarters east of Budapest. On his way, he told one of his colleagues that he was not sure if he was going to be the Russians' guest or their prisoner. Raoul Wallenberg has been missing since that day, and his true fate has never been disclosed.

In 1944-45, when Europe was imprisoned in a veil of darkness, an orgy of mass murder and attempted extermination, Wallenberg's feats shone brightly like a singular ray of hope. That's why his legacy lives on in all our memories, in books and TV shows about his life, in the streets and schools named after him and in generations of Jews who are alive today because of his efforts. Wallenberg was awarded honorary American citizenship in a motion put forward by Congressman Tom Lantos, whose life Wallenberg had saved. He was also made an honorary citizen of Israel and of Canada.

In Toronto, as in many other cities, a street was named after Wallenberg, and his statue stands in Earl Bales Park. In May 2008, a campus of the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto was renamed after Wallenberg.

That decision itself is significant not only because it enabled many young Jewish Torontonians to be exposed to Wallenberg's courage, vision and humanity, but also because the decision to rename the campus was made through a democratic vote by the students themselves.

Commemorating 100 years since Raoul Wallenberg's birth, we remember his legacy to humankind, especially as antisemitism is on the rise again. Wallenberg must never be forgotten.

Lars Henriksson is the honorary Swedish consul in Toronto. Amir Gissin is the consul general of Israel in Toronto.

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Alcohol and the Jews

"Women, ministers and Jews do not get drunk, as a rule, at least they carefully avoid all appearance of it." – Immanuel Kant. **[http://bit.ly/jdrink1]**

When Kant wrote those words in the late 18th century, he wasn't alone in believing that Jews could handle their liquor better than their non-Jewish neighbours (or at least hide it better). While there may be some anecdotal and scientific justification to that belief, alcoholism is a serious problem in Jewish communities around the world.

The Tanach contains dozens of references to wine and spirits, some of which are positive:

- "Your love is more fragrant than wine" (Song of Songs 1:2).
- "Wine gladdens the heart" (Psalms 104:15).

Others references are less positive: "Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that tarry late into the night, till wine inflame them." (Isaiah 5:11) **[http://bit.ly/jdrink2]**

Rabbi Daniel Siegel of the Alliance for Jewish Renewal examines Judaism's ambiguous relationship with alcohol, usually wine. Wine is central to the Passover seder and merits being the only liquid that has its own, specific blessing (*boray pri hagafen*). But the rabbis warn of its dangers. Rabbi Meir says: "That tree, from which Adam ate was a grapevine, for there is nothing that brings calamity on a person more than wine" (Sanhedrin 70a-b). **[http://bit.ly/jdrink3]**

"Do Jews really drink less than other people? And if so, why?" *Time* magazine asked those questions back in 1958. The Yale Center of Alcohol Studies had just published a study that suggested that although Jews drank regularly, their rate of alcoholism was negligible compared to other religions. The *Time* article also reprinted the lyrics to the popular Yiddish song, *Shikkur Iz a Goy* (*Drunken Is a Gentile*), which reinforced the perception that the real drinking problem lay elsewhere. **[http://bit.ly/jdrink4]**

Jewish & Digital

Mark Mietkiewicz

The Yale report mentioned some reasons that drinking problems were lower among Jews: since Jews spend a lifetime of rituals around wine, excess is avoided. Also, because of the Jewish emphasis on food, "'compulsive' eating is more likely to be selected as a means of alleviating psychic tensions [than] addictive drinking."

Fast forward a few decades. In Confronting Addiction, Marcia Cohn Spiegel and Rabbi Yaacov Kravitz say that the "rate of alcoholism among Jews appears to be less than that among the general population. This difference is probably a product of both cultural and genetic factors." **[http://bit.ly/jdrink5]**

Genetic factors are what Columbia University's Dr. Deborah Hasin was looking for in a study of Jewish Israelis. She found that 20 per cent carried a gene that helped them resist alcoholism. **[http://bit.ly/jdrink6]** "This finding adds to the growing body of evidence that this genetic variation has a protective effect against alcoholism among Jewish groups." But Hasin notes that recent immigrants from Russia have a history of heavier drinking despite sharing the protective gene. Hasin concludes that the heavy drinking environment found in Russia could overcome the protective effects of the gene. **[http://bit.ly/jdrink7]**

And she adds the somewhat sobering observation: Younger Israelis are more likely than older Israelis to drink heavily and to experience alcohol dependence symptoms. **[http://bit.ly/jdrink8]**

Which brings us to next week's topic, drinking and Purim.

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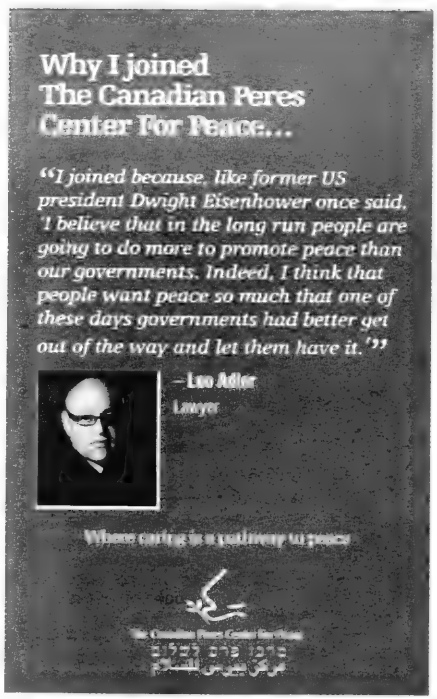
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Moving beyond the child's Purim

Purim is an educator's dream.

The Megillah offers a compelling narrative, which can be taught through plays, puppet shows and text study. Like a good Western, the lines are clearly drawn between the heroes and villains, enabling children to cheer and scowl at the appropriate junctures. The customs and rituals – dressing up, gragging graggers, baking hamentashen, delivering mishloach manot, giving matanot le'evyonim, eating a Purim seudah – are engaging and deeply rooted in the messages of the holiday.

With the educator's job made easier, it is no wonder that Purim has evolved into a pediatric holiday. I use this term in two senses. First, it is a holiday centred on children. We ogle over children's costumes, permit noise in the synagogue that would be frowned upon during the year, dole out candy, and have Purim carnivals specifically for children. Children are at the centre of any Purim celebration, demonstrated by the fact that most synagogues do not run separate children's services during Megillah reading, as they would on other holidays. On Purim, the synagogue becomes the children's service.

The pediatric approach to Purim is also manifest in our teaching of the holiday. In many respects, our study of the Megillah and the messages of Purim is stuck in an underdeveloped, elementary phase, rarely seeing the light of fresh, critical, adult analysis. Too often, we allow the narrative of Mordechai and Esther to stagnate in the narrow setting of Shushan without considering its implications for contemporary ethical study, or querying the characters, their actions and decisions.

Class Act

Daniel Held

In instances when we do depart from the Megillah's story, the themes often seem designed more toward engagement than critical analysis. As an observer of high school curriculum and pedagogy, I have seen countless classes and activities focused on the question of drinking on Purim – "*ad delo yada,*" until you cannot discern between Haman and Mordechai – exploring questions such as: Are we required to drink? Permitted to drink? And if so, how much? While a study of alcohol consumption and abuse, and the parameters articulated in rabbinic texts is both engaging for teens and important to discuss, when this represents the outer limit of our teaching of Purim, we miss the boat on the depth of the Megillah's potential as a cornerstone text for teaching complex issues.

The Purim story is ripe with ethical questions for debate: domestic violence, sex trafficking, poverty, slavery, exile, identity conservation and assimilation, consumerism, genocide, and the death penalty.

This year, in addition to dressing our children up in costumes and celebrating with them at a Purim carnival, let's study the Megillah with new lenses. Let's question issues of consumerism and gluttony at Achashverosh's lavish banquets and his wanton treatment of women. Let's explore Mordechai's conflicted relationship with the state and Esther's willingness to conceal her Jewish identity. Let's consider the ethics of the death penalty handed down to Haman and his sons, and of the Jews' request for an extension of their immunity to kill their aggressors.

It's time to free Purim of its tight casting as a children's holiday and view it as a rich opportunity to engage both the young and old.

Bar mitzvahs are a big deal

Our son, Meir Yaacov, recently became a bar mitzvah, and it was a living reminder for us of our family's remarkable and ancient history.

According to Jewish law, a Jewish boy reaching the age of 13 becomes a bar mitzvah and is responsible for assuming the mitzvot of Jewish adulthood. (A girl becomes a bat mitzvah at the age of 12.) Once a bar mitzvah, a boy can be counted in a minyan (prayer quorum) and can lead religious services in the family and the community.

The bar mitzvah age was selected because it roughly coincides with physical puberty. Prior to a child becoming a bar mitzvah, the child's parents are responsible for the child's actions. At this age, bnai mitzvah bear responsibility for their own actions with respect to Jewish ritual law, ethics and tradition and are able to participate in all areas of Jewish community life.

Upon a boy's becoming a bar mitzvah, a celebration is made in his honour. The current scale of celebrations is much greater than it used to be in the *mellah*, or shtetl, of the old countries. In the old days, this rite of passage was a joyous matter of course for every Jewish child without exception. In more recent times, however, this religious milestone is unfortunately not as absolute as it once was. Hence, we celebrate the occasion with more ostentation to highlight the cherished continuity of our heritage.

Sephardi Window

Rabbi Ilan Acoca

In the Moroccan community, we have many unique customs.

On the eve of the celebration, the bar mitzvah gets a haircut in the presence of his family and, as in every Moroccan celebration, traditional henna is put on his hand.

On the celebratory day, it is customary for the family to help the bar mitzvah boy to don tallit and tfillin, thereby showing him how dear this mitzvah is.

Many had the custom to take the boy to a mikvah, stressing the idea of purity and holiness.

Some had the custom of snatching the tfillin from the boy, so that the father would be obliged to redeem them with money, thereby demonstrating their importance.

When the bar mitzvah is called to the Torah, it is customary for the women to ululate "lulululu." This custom originates from a Kabalistic source stating that in every holy and happy occasion, the evil inclination, the *yetzer hara*, is challenged to act. Thus, the women scream out in order to confuse and to chase away the *yetzer hara*.

It's hardly an exaggeration to say that the future of the Jewish People depends in large measure upon the bar (and bat) mitzvah event. Education, and particularly education of our young, has been and remains the means by which we continue to thrive, indeed to exist. Is it any wonder that we celebrate with such gusto, as families and communities, this uniquely Jewish simchah, by which we renew ourselves and our time in Jewish history?

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Friendship through soccer

These Jewish and Muslim girls, standing outside their school in Ein Kerem, Israel, play on the same soccer team. The soccer league is facilitated, in part, by the Peres Center for Peace. In the past, the Canadian government has helped sponsor the girls' soccer program for the peace centre. Some of the girls are still wearing their Canadian-imprinted uniforms. ***[Flash90 photo]***

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Judt generates controversy from beyond the grave

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

The letters to the editor sections of book review journals are often among the most entertaining, and instructive areas of print journalism. It's an opportunity for authors whose ample egos have been bruised by even one negative comment to lash out that the reviewer has misconstrued their work. Occasionally, the argument is made that the reviewer, often a major figure in his or her own right, is unqualified to pass judgment.

Such was the case with Timothy Snyder's letter in the Feb. 19 *New York Times Book Review*. Snyder, a prominent historian of Europe, helped Tony Judt, an eminent academic and public intellectual, then paralyzed with Lou Gehrig's disease (from which he died in 2010), write the posthumously published *Thinking the Twentieth Century*.

Francis Fukuyama is every bit Judt's intellectual equal, if not his intellectual superior, and the famous author of the *End of History*. It was Fukuyama's Feb. 5 review of Judt that elicited a stinging rebuke from Snyder.

Fukuyama began his review by drawing attention to what was most controversial about Judt: "Tony Judt was known to many people as the public intellectual who aroused a firestorm of criticism for an article he wrote in The *New York Review of Books* in 2003, calling for Israel to become a binational state and to lose its specifically Jewish character. That essay, as well as biting critiques of the Iraq war and the Israel lobby, earned him considerable enmity in some quarters."

Tony Judt
[University of Indiana photo]

Fukuyama commended Judt for taking on, in an earlier work (*Past Imperfect*), leftist French intellectuals such as Jean Paul Sartre who, in the post-World War II period, blindly supported Stalinism in the naive belief that it was a progressive liberation movement. Fukuyama, quoting Judt, said that he rightly criticized "how so many smart people could have told themselves such stories, with all the terrible consequences that ensued."

Concerning Judt's last book, Fukuyama acknowledged Judt's rebuke to a number of writers, himself included, who had endorsed then-U.S. president George W. Bush's 2003 invasion of Iraq (something Fukuyama later regretted). However, Fukuyama argued that Judt failed to be introspective about some of his own views, foremost his denunciations of Israel. This is an important point, given the tremendous influence Judt has had among leftists and critics of Israel.

It's worth citing Fukuyama at length here: "[Judt] argues that Israelis and their American supporters have used the Holocaust as a 'Get Out of Jail Free card for a rogue state,' but seems to think that his own Jewishness and the fact that he lived in Israel at one point give him the authority to be as morally obtuse in return. Judt seems intent on transferring the lessons learned in eastern Europe, where genuine liberalism mostly replaced ethnic nationalism, to a part of the world where such liberalism just won't work. His proposal for a binational state was put forward with the self-certainty of an intellectual who has never had to deal with the realities of practicality and power. But he remained little inclined to give ground to critics he believed could be motivated only by bad intentions."

It's interesting that Snyder, replying on behalf of Judt, steered clear of any mention of Judt's position on Israel, which occupies so much of Fukuyama's review. Instead, Snyder attacked Fukuyama for something Fukuyama had already admitted being wrong about – Iraq. Citing what Fukuyama, as noted above, recognized as a significant question raised by Judt, Snyder asked "why he and so many other brilliant people could generate so much persuasive error on [the Iraq war]." Yet, again, Snyder refused to consider how this same question applies to Judt on Israel. Criticizing Fukuyama for even being wrong about "the nature of history in general," Snyder claimed that "denying the significance of the past generates poor decisions."

Ironically, with respect to Israel and Zionism, this is the very sort of denial of history, including Israel's recent one of seeking a compromise with the Palestinians, that weighs against Judt.

Paul Michaels is director of research and media relations at the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs.

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Hamilton doc to be honoured by West Indies U

Holly Ginsler
Special to The CJN

HAMILTON — Physician, former president of Temple Anshe Sholom, Jewish community leader, mohel and philanthropist Tony MacFarlane is all of these things.

He will receive the University of the West Indies' Vice-Chancellor's Award March 10 at the Four Seasons Hotel in Toronto at the third annual benefit gala hosted by the university.

Tony MacFarlane

MacFarlane is bequeathing his Hamilton home to the University of the West Indies in Jamaica, which was established in 1948. "You donate the house, you live in it until you die, and then the university takes it over," MacFarlane said.

He has also donated 2,000 classical CDs to the university and sends it money every year for a scholarship fund and a prize. The Vice-Chancellor's Award "recognizes what I have been doing for the alumnus association," he said.

MacFarlane was born in Salisbury, Jamaica, in 1937, where he grew up on his grandparents' plantation.

"My grandmother was the most important person in my life," he said.

He attended four elementary schools because his grandfather was able to afford the tuition. He was surrounded by poverty and said he was the only boy in the school who could afford shoes.

MacFarlane was a student at the University of the West Indies from 1957 to 1959. He then came to Canada, originally on a 10-week holiday, and ended up staying and completing a two-year pre-med course at McMaster University in Hamilton. He attended the University of Toronto medical school from 1961 to 1965. After interning in emergency medicine in Hamilton, he decided to take a year off and travel to Paris. He learned to speak and read French fluently so that he could read books in the original form. He also had the opportunity to study the piano.

After he returned to Hamilton and opened an office, MacFarlane began collecting rare books and has donated parts of his book collection to McMaster University, York University and the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library at the University of Toronto.

MacFarlane had known as a child that his grandmother, Agatha Mendes, was Jewish. She was the illegitimate child of David Pereira Mendes. But it wasn't until MacFarlane came to Hamilton in 1959 and attended Temple Anshe Sholom that he became interested in his Jewish background.

The congregants at the Reform temple had never heard of the Jewish surname Mendes, and MacFarlane eventually recognized that the congregation's members were primarily Ashkenazi Jews.

"I went into the library and looked into the Jewish Encyclopedia and found six pages of the name Mendes," he said. He realized then that his roots were Sephardi, and traced his ancestry back to the Portuguese Jews who left Spain, moved to Portugal and eventually emigrated to the Caribbean and Jamaica.

"I came to Canada, I stayed, I discovered my Jewish roots," he said.

In 1988, Hurricane Gilbert struck Jamaica. MacFarlane took the first flight back to check on the status of a house he owned on the northern coast. He found himself in Kingston on Erev Yom Kippur and attended services at a Reform synagogue that had been badly damaged by the hurricane. When MacFarlane inquired if the services were still taking place, he was told that part of the roof had been torn off and they had no electricity. They suggested that he bring his own umbrella and his own folding chair.

"This synagogue has sand on the floors," MacFarlane said. "It's an old Morrano custom. It's supposed to deaden the footsteps of the people when they are in the cellars praying."

The Morranos, or Conversos, were the Jews of the Iberian Peninsula who converted to Christianity but secretly practised Jewish customs.

The service was an awakening for MacFarlane. "I went to the Kol Nidre service, and that's when I felt Jewish. Because when you convert, how do you know when you're going to feel Jewish? I always assumed it would happen, but I didn't know when. And it happened in Jamaica."

Every year, MacFarlane returns to the same Jamaican Synagogue for the High Holidays.

In 1992, Rabbi Irwin Zeplowitz at Temple Anshe Sholom was looking for people to become mohels, as the Reform movement was beginning to certify mohels. He encouraged MacFarlane to complete the course, and the doctor practised as a mohel in the Hamilton area for many years.

"It was an interesting experience being a mohel, meeting different kinds of people," MacFarlane said.

"Everything came together for me, and all because of Hamilton, of all places. Who knew?" he said.

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Crown will not prosecute nursing home death

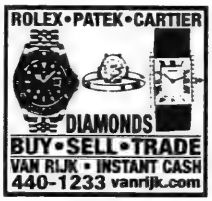
Myron Love
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Manitoba's Justice Department has declined to prosecute in the October 2010 death of Lilyan Peck, a 93-year-old resident of the Simkin Centre, Winnipeg's longtime Jewish nursing home.

Shortly before her passing, Peck was transferred from the home to a hospital, where it was found she was suffering from severe, untreated bed sores. She died shortly thereafter. As a result, one nurse at the Simkin Centre – also known as the Sharon Home – was fired, while seven others received short suspensions.

For Peck's daughter, Marsha Palansky, that wasn't enough. She was joined in demanding answers by Harvey Berkal and his sister, Harriet Berkal Sarbit – whose father, the late Rabbi Louis Berkal, was a Simkin resident for the last year of his life – and others who were unhappy with the level of care at the seniors home.

Last fall, after several reviews into the Simkin Centre's operations, with follow-up reports recommending changes, the Berkals and Palansky launched a private prosecution related to Peck's death.



Speaking for the province late last month, Crown attorney Colleen McDuff said she met with the complainants, who gave her a lot of material to review.

"A number of Crown attorneys in addition to myself went over the material," she said. "Criminal negligence is very difficult to prove. After reviewing the material, we determined that the evidence did not support a case beyond reasonable doubt."

McDuff said that out of courtesy, and in light of the complainants' efforts, she agreed to forward the case materials to police to determine if there is enough evidence to file a criminal complaint.

"The Crown won't be pursuing any further action," she said.

While expressing disappointment about the Crown's decision on behalf of Palansky, his sister and himself, Harvey Berkal, who is a lawyer, said the three are pleased that police might become involved.

"There should have been a police investigation a long time ago," he said. "The coroner should have looked into Lilyan Peck's death, too. We still don't know what led to her death.

"We want to make sure that this kind of thing doesn't happen at the Sharon Home ever again. We would like to see the Sharon Home setting the standard for quality care for the elderly."

Berkal believes the seniors home should have a full-time nurse practitioner on staff. Nurse practitioners in Manitoba are licensed to perform many of the functions of a doctor.

"We are also not happy that residents are forced to be treated only by Sharon Home-approved doctors instead of their own family doctors," Berkal said.

Bill Brownstone, acting chair of the Simkin Centre, said that "the Crown intervened in the private prosecution brought by Mr. Berkal against the Simkin Centre and has dropped all charges, because there was no reasonable likelihood of conviction.

Referring to a press release issued by Berkal about the Crown's decision, Brownstone added: "The Simkin Centre understands that the Berkal prosecution has been terminated, and it knows of no factual basis for the suggestion [by Berkal] that the Crown has recommended further investigation or that any criminal proceedings of any kind are being contemplated by any authority."

Tourism minister says 'bienvenue'

Janice Arnold
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — It was Israeli Tourism Minister Stas Misezhnikov's first visit to Montreal, but he felt at home.

Growing up in the Soviet Union, he, like many of his compatriots, was a huge hockey fan and the Montreal Canadiens were then the most revered team in the sport.

"I remember, I think it was 1979, the Canadiens came to Moscow to play the top Soviet team. There was no school, no traffic on the street. Everyone stayed home and watched the game," said Misezhnikov, who was 10 at the time.

That's the kind of icebreaker Israeli tourism officials are hoping will help win over the Quebec market, which it's paying a lot more attention to these days. Misezhnikov is the first Israeli tourism minister to make an official visit to Quebec in more than 10 years.

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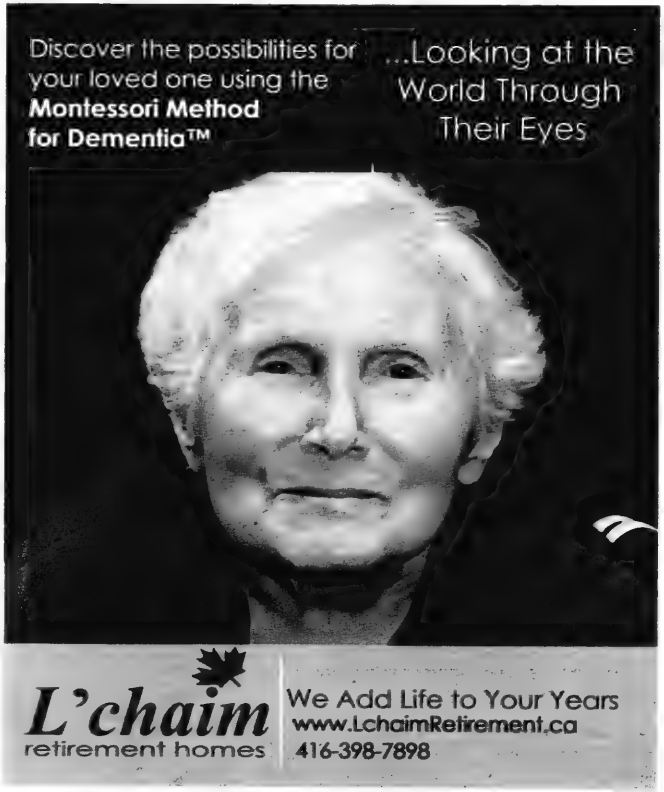
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'New' Middle East not so new: scholar

David Lazarus
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — The Arab Spring is more like an Islamist winter, says Arab-world scholar Mordechai Kedar, with countries degenerating into fragmented, tribal strife, violence and Islamic fundamentalism.

But in some ways that could be to Israel's benefit, Kedar, a lecturer at Bar-Ilan University who is associated with the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, argued at the Canadian Zionist Federation eastern region's recent annual Zave Ettinger Memorial Lecture in Montreal.

Mordechai Kedar

"The Syrian state is fragmented, so that's good for Israel," Kedar said to an audience of about 100 at Beth Israel Beth Aaron Congregation.

The Syrian regime under Bashar Assad, who is now reportedly killing his own people because they want his ouster, failed to create any sense of "awareness" of one peoplehood that could have helped the country move toward independence, instead of continuing on as an Iranian client-state.

"Assad was seeking legitimacy, but that is not going to happen," said Kedar, who speaks Arabic fluently.

Kedar said he recently launched another research centre at Bar-Ilan that will require scholars to have knowledge of Arabic and other languages, because that is essential for proper understanding of the Arab world.

He is still asked about his controversial 2008 interview in Arabic on the satellite TV news channel Al Jazeera – still viewable on YouTube – in which he asserted that Jerusalem belonged to the Jews, "when your forefathers… were burying girls alive and worshipping pre-Muslim idols…"

During his synagogue talk, Kedar was less polemical but still characteristically blunt. The Arab Spring and the democratic "new Middle East" that was supposed to come about after the Egyptian government fell about a year ago is obviously not going to happen, in Kedar's view.

"This, of course, became the mantra of journalists," but, he asked, is the "new" Middle East really new?

In Egypt, he said, three-quarters of the Egyptian regional council is "very Islamist."

In Libya, leader Moammar Gadhafi is dead, but "everyone is fighting each other."

In Morocco, there are now free elections, ostensibly a positive development, but that is tempered by the success of Islamists in those same elections. In Tunisia, Kedar said, tribalism abounds, as does Islamist encroachment and influence. Iraq, he noted, has 74 tribes, with its many clans fighting among themselves in a relatively small country, not to mention the ongoing strife between Sunni and Shiite Muslims.

"It's not like Canada," Kedar said, "where you have 20 rivers every 10 kilometres. Iraq is a failing state."

In spite of the influence of modernism from the West, Kedar said, the vast majority of the Middle East has not budged from the mores and traditions that have kept the Arab world prisoners of its past.

In this environment, he said, Israel remains the only real democracy in the Middle East, and a society where issues like women sitting in the rear of public busses pales by comparison.

"Israel is a bastion of stability and sanity," he said.

Even if you think Israeli-Arabs are "second-class" citizens in Israel, "they would prefer to be second class there than first class somewhere else in the Middle Eastern alternatives," Kedar said.

Complaint against Radio-Canada upheld

Coverage of Israel biased, says ombudsman

Janice Arnold
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Radio-Canada's ombudsman has upheld complaints that its Middle East coverage has been biased against Israel.

Pierre Tourangeau was responding to five specific instances of alleged bias lodged against the French-language public broadcaster by HonestReporting Canada. They concerned radio reports by Middle East correspondent Ginette Lamarche that aired from Dec. 19 to 23.

In a 12-page review issued Feb. 14, Tourangeau concluded that Lamarche's reporting violated Radio-Canada's standards for balance, impartiality and accuracy.

HonestReporting is a pro-Israel media monitoring group. "Significantly, Tourangeau found a lack of 'diversity of opinion' as required for news coverage of controversial subjects, use of unverified facts and failure to challenge claims which led to 'at least an appearance of bias'," said HonestReporting's Quebec regional director, Michelle Whiteman.

It's the second rebuke Lamarche has received from the ombudsman in the past year in response to complaints from a pro-Israel group.

Last year, Tourangeau upheld a series of complaints by the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) about her reporting from June 5 to 7 on the deadly clash at the Syrian border between pro-Palestinian demonstrators and the Israeli army.

The latest complaints cite Lamarche's reporting, without factual backup, on years-long imprisonment of Palestinian youths "for participating in a demonstration or throwing stones," the claim Israel imprisoned almost as many people as it released in exchange for captured soldier Gilad Schalit, and that the security barrier and Jewish settlements around Bethlehem prevent Palestinians from leaving the city without permission.

She also reported that Christian Palestinians are fleeing because of the barrier and that Israel's control of tourism is of little benefit to Bethlehem.

Radio-Canada did correct one error cited by HonestReporting. On Dec. 22, Lamarche used the Arabic term nakba that Palestinians use to refer to the 1948 creation of the State of Israel without explaining that it means "catastrophe." That revision was aired prior to the ombudsman's review.

Tourangeau found fault with these reports because they offered only a Palestinian viewpoint, and he said data Lamarche provided were not verified or challenged, and sometimes not attributed.

He expressed the hope that the management of Radio-Canada and its journalists will engage in a serious discussion of its methods of news gathering and reporting.

In other news related to Israel's portrayal in the Quebec media, representatives of B'nai Brith Canada, Quebec region, met with the management of the V television network to express their concerns about program host Stéphane Gendron. The organization described his on-air comments on Israel as "grossly offensive."

B'nai Brith said in a Feb. 17 statement that it found the exchange "positive."

"The network provided its guarantee of increased vigilance to prevent such comments making it to air," said legal counsel Steven Slimovitch. Measures to be put in place include a six-second delay for live programming.

"B'nai Brith accepted these guarantees and agreed to collaborate with the management of the network in future programming initiatives."

Gendron, co-host of the talk show *Face à Face*, said on Dec. 29 that Israel "doesn't deserve to exist." It was the latest in a history of remarks about Israel and Jews dating back to 2006 that have offended Jewish groups.

On Feb. 1, representatives of CIJA and HonestReporting also met with V managers to discuss their objections to Gendron and emerged satisfied with the outcome.

Correction

In the article "ICRF's Next Generation learn from the experts" (Feb. 23), Revolving Tables participant Alan Bekerman was incorrectly identified. He is the founder and CEO of iQ Food Co.

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ZERO HERO: Senior kindergarten students at Leo Baeck Day School's south campus at Holy Blossom Temple celebrated the 100th day of school with Zero the Hero on Feb. 22. Zero is a hero because he makes numbers bigger. Pictured with the kids are teachers Ilana Opert, left, and Ashleigh Rosenthal.

LEGION HONOURS: Students from Robbins Hebrew Academy's Beth Tzedec campus received awards for their writing and art at a recent ceremony hosted by the Royal Canadian Legion. Pictured are, front row, from left, Ally Shap, Samantha Stein, Natalie Urbach, Jennifer Scoler and Sheridan Anisman, along with their teacher, Donnie Friedman, back left, and legionnaires Robert Fletcher, centre, and John Holoway. Not pictured are award winners Matthew Zitzerman, Jillian Weisleder and Madison Nikolaevsky, who were unable to attend the ceremony.

Mazel Tov

מזל טוב

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What's New

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Deadline reminder: March 5 is the deadline for the issue of March 15. March 12 is the deadline for the issue of March 22. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; e-mail whatsnewcjn@gmail.com, or fax 416-391-0829.

Thursday, March 1

NEW REFORM SHUL

An information meeting for The City Shul, a new downtown Reform congregation led by **Rabbi Elyse Goldstein**, will be held 7:30 p.m., at the Wolfond Centre, 36 Harbord St. www.cityshul.com; 647-799-3557.

TEEN DEPRESSION

Psychologist **Sylvia Kemenoff** discusses "Signs and Symptoms of Adolescent Anxiety and Depression: When To Worry? What To Do?" Adath Israel Congregation, 7 p.m. Tickets $20 per person/$36 for 2. E-mail CBailie@youthdale.ca; call 416-368-4896, ext. 2804.

YIDDISH VINKL

Miriam Beckerman reads excerpts from the Haggadah in Yiddish, 12 p.m. at the Free Times Cafe, 320 College St. $16 (includes lunch). E-mail RSVP to yiddishvinkl@yahoo.ca.

Friday, March 2

SHABBAT ACROSS CANADA

Am Shalom Synagogue, 767 Huronia Rd., Barrie, holds services and dinner as part of Shabbat Across Canada. Call 705-792-3949.

Beth Emeth Synagogue's Shabbat dinner features guest speaker **Rabbi Leslie Lipson**. 416-633-3838.

CUPCAKE SHABBAT

Temple Har Zion holds a cupcake Shabbat family service at 7 p.m. Following a musical family Shabbat, decorate your cupcake. 905-889-2252.

INCLUSION SHABBAT

Yehoshua and **Elisheva Hoffman** will be speaking as part of North American Inclusion Month, March 2, at the Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation at 9 p.m.; March 3 at Aish HaTorah, 949 Clark Ave., Thornhill, at 11:15 a.m. galya1@rogers.com.

DANFORTH JEWISH CIRCLE

Danforth Jewish Circle holds Shabbat services at 7 p.m. at Eastminster Church, 310 Danforth Ave. www.djctoronto.com.

Sunday, March 4

JEWISH GENEALOGY

The Jewish Genealogy Society presents a workshop on writing ancestor biographies and memoirs led by **Lil Blume**, 1-4:30 p.m. at Edithvale Community Centre. Pre-register at program@jgstoronto.ca.

CLOSER LOOK AT TANACH

Torah in Motion sponsors a workshop on "A Closer Look at Tanach," featuring **Rabbi Hayyim Angel, Rabbi Nathanial Helfgot, Tammy Jacobowitz, Rabbi David Silber, Rabbi Baruch Weintraub**, 9:15 a.m.-2 p.m., Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue. 416-633-5770, www.torahinmotion.org.

Monday, March 5

JEWISH DIABETES CHAPTER

Bonnie Stern and **Fran Berkoff** discuss "10 Super Foods and What to Do with Them," at the Jewish diabetes chapter meeting, 8 p.m., Pride of Israel Synagogue. www.diabetes.ca or 416-363-0177, ext. 7403.

Continued on page 27

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To apply for this position (25 – 30 hrs/wk), please reply in confidence to **Ted Rechtshaffen** at **tedr@tridelta.ca**

congregation habonim of toronto
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Continued from page 26

Tuesday, March 6

THE MATCHMAKER

Beth Tikvah Synagogue shows the film *The Matchmaker*, 2 p.m., as part of its Tuesdays with Larry movie series. $5 at the door.

CONNECTED PARENTING

Jennifer Kolari discusses Connected Parenting with the Lev Zahav chapter of CHW, Holy Blossom Temple, 7:30 p.m. For tickets, www.chw.ca/toronto or 416-630-8373.

UNITED CHESED EVENING

United Chesed of Toronto is having a special performance of Teatron Toronto Jewish Theatre's *Can I Really Date a Guy Who Wears a Yarmulke?*, 8 p.m., Toronto Centre for the Performing Arts. E-mail: unitedchesed@sympatico.ca or 416-250-7373.

Other News

BRIDGE CLUB

The bridge club at Forest Hill library has reopened and is looking for new members. Call **Lea** (evenings), 416-487-7630.

HARBORD REUNION

Harbord Collegiate Institute is holding its 120th birthday party, April 26-27. Alumni and teachers invited. www.HarbordClub.com.

THE ART OF SAMUEL BAK

Icons of Loss: The Art of Samuel Bak, will be on display at the Columbus Centre's Joseph Carrier Art Gallery, 901 Lawrence Ave. W., March 1-April 30. Bak, an internationally renowned artist, made the Holocaust the subject of his work.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Baycrest needs volunteers to help at the information desk, lead Russian discussion groups, help with movie nights, provide assistance at meal times. Call 416-785-2500, ext. 2572.

Jewish Club for the Vision Impaired needs volunteer drivers the first Monday of the month. **Sheila**, 905-731-9667.

Reena needs volunteers for its March break program, March 12-16, 927 Clark Ave. W., Thornhill. Female volunteers are also needed for the swim program, Tuesday evenings, Garnet Williams Community Centre.

Call **Mille Chadwick**, 905-889-2690, ext. 2112, or mchadwick@reena.org.

PURIM FUN

The Toronto Jewish Folk Choir performs a Purim concert in Yiddish, Hebrew, Russian and English, Bernard Betel Centre, March 1, 7 p.m. Tickets $5/$10 at the door. **Luba**, 905-669-5906.

Miles Nadal JCC holds a Purim Carnival, March 4, 11 a.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 277.

Temple Har Zion holds a Purim Carnival, March 4, 10 a.m.-noon. 905-889-2252.

Toronto Heschel School holds a hands-on art and music Purim workshop for preschoolers and their parents, March 4, 10 a.m. Pre-registration required, 416-635-1876, ext. 334; npfeffer@torontoheschel.org.

Temple Emanu-El holds a Purim carnival and Purim shpiel March 4, 11 a.m.

Morris Winchevsky School holds a Purim celebration with singer **Mitch Smolkin,** Purim shpiel *Mama Megillah*, crafts and games, March 4, 11 a.m., 918 Bathurst St.

Jewish Club for the Vision Impaired holds a Purim party March 5, 7:30 p.m., Prosserman JCC. Call **Bess**, 905-508-2892.

Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue presents *The Megillah According to the Beatles*, March 7. Megillah reading begins at 6:10 p.m.; Purim shpiel 8 p.m.

Temple Kol Ami's Purim celebrations begin March 7 at 6 p.m. with Megillah reading, Purim shpiel and carnival.

Shaar Shalom Synagogue's Purim celebrations, pizza at 6:15 p.m.; parade, Megillah reading at 7:10 p.m., March 7. RSVP by Feb. 29, 905-889-4975, ext. 62.

Temple Har Zion's Purim shpiel *Shmaltz*, and Megillah reading, March 7, 7:30 p.m.

Women's Megillah Reading at Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue, March 8, 9:30 a.m.

Chabad of Markham presents Purim in the Jungle with a buffet and live animal show, March 8, 5:30 p.m. Advance tickets required. 905-886-0420; www.chabadmarkham.org.

Friends of Yiddish hold an afternoon of music, dancing and Purim fun with the Yenevelt Klezmer Band, March 11, 2 p.m. at Beth Tikvah Synagogue. RSVP by March 8 to **Sandy**, 416-458-1440, 416-736-8073 or yiddish18@yahoo.ca.

JF&CS GROUPS

All programs require pre-registration and are open to all members of the community. To register, call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or www.jfandcs.com. All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst, St., unless otherwise noted.

Mind, Body Connection for Women: An 8-session group for women who want to lean mindfulness and meditation. Topics include stress and anxiety reduction, enhancing your self-esteem. Starts March 27, 7 p.m.

When You're About to Separate, What to Tell the Kids: A workshop for parents in the early stages of separation. March 29, 6:30 p.m.

BEREAVED PARENTS

Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer** at JF & CS, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or bfeffer@jfandcs.com.

FOR SENIORS

Volunteers Needed. Join the BRAVO study linking brain health and volunteering. Participants must be over 55 and not working or volunteering for more than 3 hours a month. Study includes 1 year of volunteering at Baycrest. Visit www.bayerest.org/bravo; call 416-785-2500, ext. 3435.

Haverim program at Beth Tzedec. March 5, **Barbara Rusch,** founder of the Ephemera Society, shares her collection of Shanah Tovah cards and other items, 1:30 p.m. Call **Dorion Liebgott,** 416-781-3514, ext. 232, or museum@beth-tzedec.org.

Falls Prevention Program at Baycrest. An 8-week program provides education and exercise for older adults who have experienced 1 or more falls or who fear falling. Starts March 12. Call **Maureen Smith,** 416-785-2488.

Association of Jewish Seniors. **Tammy,** 416-635-2900, ext. 458. March 15, **Jamie Golombek** discusses "Tax and Retirement Tips for Seniors," Shaarei Shomayim, 9:30 a.m.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park. (60+). **Valerie**, 416-395-7881. Casino Rama, March 14. Dance with live music, March 25. Tuesdays, gentle exercise, 10 a.m., first class free; Wednesdays, duplicate bridge, 12:30 p.m.; Thursdays, line dancing, 10 a.m.; social bridge, 12:30 p.m. Non-members welcome.

National Council of Jewish Women, Aviva branch, is looking for women over 70 for their group. Call 416-633-5100.

LZA Seniors Cultural Club meets Tuesdays, 10 a.m., Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell, 416-630-9444.

New Horizons is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club that offers kosher food, card games, casino trips. 416-256-1892.

Adath Israel Congregation. Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub. Refreshments $2. Call **Pearl**, 416-635-6317, or **Sheila**, 416-665-3333.

Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue welcomes new players for mah-jong and Rummikub Monday and Wednesday afternoons. 416-633-3838.

Bernard Betel Centre 416-225-2112. March 1, **Tanya Loor** discusses "Credit and You," 1:30 p.m. March 6, **David Lipovitch** discusses "The Archeology of Ancient Israel," 10 a.m. March 8, **Janice Lisker** discusses "7 Principles to Successful Aging," 1:30 p.m.

Active Seniors, Miles Nadal JCC, 416-924-6211, ext.155. March 8, artist **Laya Crust** gives an illustrated talk describing her Purim Scroll of Esther, 1:30 p.m. Beginner's computer course, 8-week session, starts April 17.

PROSSERMAN JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com.

Drop in and play at the Fun Zone Monday-Thursday, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

New Shabbat party class, Fridays 10 -11 a.m. Grandparents and caregivers welcome.

Tic Tac Two program will be extended into the summer. Call **Kailah Rubin**, ext. 4351.

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org.

MILES NADAL JCC

March 5, **Kevin Courrier** discusses "Movies During the Clinton Era," 7 p.m. Ext. 606.

Israeli pianist **Yitzhak Yedid** performs March 1, 8 p.m.; **Lenka Lichtenberg** and **Roula Said** present Jewish and Arabic Music in Dialogue, March 5, 7:30 p.m.; Night Without a Moon: Jewish Women's Cabaret with **Marcia Beck, Tova Kardonne, Marni Levitt** and **Ilana Newman** 8 p.m., March 24. All shows at the Al Green Theatre, ext.0.

The Diary of Anne Frank by Shakespeare in Action runs March 15-31, Al Green Theatre.

The adult daytime choir meets Tuesdays 1 p.m. gillians@mnjcc.org.

Klezmer ensemble meets Tuesdays 7:30 p.m. music@mnjcc.org or ext. 0.

The Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursdays at 7:15 a.m. and Sundays at 8 a.m. Call **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200.

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 30

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Educator recalled as 'witty' and 'fearless'

Sheri Shefa
Staff Reporter

Those who knew educator, feminist, and Jewish studies enthusiast Selma Sage say the Jewish community lost a vibrant, "feisty" woman.

Sage, 79, who died suddenly from natural causes at the Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre in Toronto on Feb. 19, was always eager to share the wisdom she had gathered throughout her years as a lifelong student and educator.

Rebecca Oyen, Sage's granddaughter, said she was a "dynamic" teacher.

"She didn't know how to live without teaching," Oyen said. "She always made it abundantly clear that education came before anything else."

Lois Sage said her mother was a brilliant woman.

"She didn't suffer fools gladly. I'll tell you that. She was the brightest woman I have ever met, and she could speak on almost every subject," Sage said.

She skipped two grades as a child and entered her first year of university at the University of Pennsylvania when she was just 16.

After obtaining her master's degree at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, she specialized in teacher training and curriculum design for religious schools at the Chicago and Great Lakes Regional Office of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

She went on to serve as educational director at the Olin-Sang-Ruby Union Institute Camp in Wisconsin and the Washington Hebrew Congregation in Washington, D.C., before she was recruited by the late Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut to join Toronto's Holy Blossom Temple as educational director.

Oyen said that for her grandmother, teaching and learning went hand in hand.

"She would listen to everyone's perspective. Nothing was lecture, it was always discussions and seminars."

Rabbi Lori Cohen, who leads Temple Shalom in Kitchener-Waterloo, met Sage 11 years ago when she joined Temple Sinai Congregation in Toronto as an associate rabbi.

In addition to teaching her own courses at the shul, Sage often attended the Torah classes that Rabbi Cohen led.

"She came to my Torah classes all the time. There were people who feared her presence, because she could take over and be opinionated. I loved her wit and her humour, and I always thought she added so much to the discussions," Rabbi Cohen said.

"She was abrasive, she was witty, she was feisty," she said.

And when it came to one of her passions, feminism, Oyen said Sage was not afraid to speak out.

Selma Sage, second from right, with her grandchildren, from left, Alexander, Rebecca and Veronica Oyen

"She used to live across the street from a very Orthodox synagogue, and they would invite her to come to services," Oyen recalled.

"She did, and they made her sit upstairs. She then spoke to the rabbi and said, 'I'm sorry, I can't do this because my voice needs to be heard, too, and I should have an equal voice. I should be able to sit where everyone else sits, and I won't be coming back.'"

Sage said her late mother also led feminist seders for Hadassah-WIZO that would include symbols of female oppression – such as girdles and aprons – in the centrepiece.

Rabbi Elyse Goldstein, who served as an assistant rabbi at Holy Blossom and until recently as the director of Kolel: The Adult Centre for Liberal Jewish Learning, also remembers Sage, whom she met when she first moved to Toronto in 1983, as an unapologetic feminist.

"She was really fearless about putting forth women's agendas and making sure women were represented on committees in synagogues, on the bimah, in leadership. It was a passion of hers," Rabbi Goldstein said.

"She was a great teacher. She taught at the Kolel for many years and she was always supportive of learning, and I will remember her as a great educator and one of the foremost Jewish feminists in town."

Having known Sage since 2001, Rabbi Cohen said she noticed a change in her following the passing of her husband of 28 years, Sam Siegelman, last May.

Sage was battling health issues and living at the Thorne Mills retirement home in Thornhill, and Rabbi Cohen said she felt Sage had given up on her passions.

"She really was so crushed after he died. It was so sad."

Unfortunately, Sage was no stranger to coping with devastating loss.

Lois, Sage's only daughter, said her mother suffered the loss of her 24-year-old son, Robert, as well as another child, who died three days after birth.

But Sage was a resilient, spirited woman, and as Rabbi Cohen remembers her, a "powerful presence."

"Wherever you met her, she filled a room. She called on people to be the best they can be. She challenged people," the rabbi said.

"She was the most wonderful, giving, loving [woman]," Lois added.

"She made everyone feel as though they were special."

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Allan Moldaver	Feb 11/12	7601 Bathurst Street
Mac Latner	Feb 10/12	14 Baintree East Street
Henry Kay	Feb 12/12	484 Steeles Avenue W.
Martha Rosenberg	Feb 12/12	53 Tanbark Crescent
Marvin Sinukoff	Feb 13/12	3303 Don Mills Road
Irving Dobbs	Feb 14/12	5 Old Sheppard Avenue
Sary Stone	Feb 14/12	7 Laureleaf Road
Pesia Zimerman	Feb 16/12	1101 Steeles Ave. West
Steven Friedlich	Feb 16/12	561 Avenue Road
Sadie Lessinger	Feb 15/12	718 Sheppard Avenue
Margaret Hart	Feb 16/12	2500 Bathurst Street
Paul Witz	Feb 16/12	24 Orchid Court
Betty Tansky	Feb 18/12	2550 Fairgrounds Road

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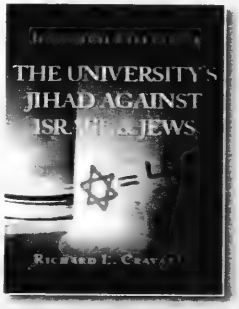
THE NEW ANTISEMITISM ON CAMPUS

A FREE presentation featuring:

Dr. Richard L. Cravatts
President, Scholars for Peace in the Middle East



Dr. Cravatts explores the growing problem of Israel-hatred and covert antisemitism on university campuses, which pose a fundamental threat to North American society.

Community Event
Wednesday, February 29
7:30 pm – 9:30 pm
Beth Sholom Synagogue
1445 Eglinton Avenue West, Toronto, ON

McMaster University
Thursday, March 1
7:00 pm – 9:00 pm
Bldg. T13 Rm 125, Hamilton, ON

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Host of Sun TV's The Arena

Carole MacNeil
Anchor of CBC News Now

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Host of CFRB Radio's The Tarek Fatah Show

Jonathan Kay
Managing Editor National Post

University of Toronto
Thursday, March 1
7:00 pm – 9:00 pm
Sandford Fleming Bldg., St. George Campus
10 King's College Road, Toronto, ON

ISRAEL: A STRANGE OBSESSION

A FREE panel featuring:

Prof. Salim Mansur
Author of *Delectable Lie: A Liberal Repudiation of Multiculturalism*

Prof. Aurel Braun
Chairman of the Board – Rights and Democracy
Author of *Middle East in Global Strategy*

York University
Monday, March 5
7:00 pm – 9:00 pm
Vanier College Rm 135, Toronto, ON

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Stark was a pioneering orchestra conductor

Compiled by CJN Staff

MONTREAL — Ethel Stark, credited with being the first Canadian woman to achieve international recognition as a symphonic conductor, died Feb. 16. According to biographical sources, she was born in August 1916.

A trailblazer for women in classical music, Stark was conductor and co-founder in 1940 of the Montreal Women's Symphony Orchestra (MWSO), as well as an accomplished violinist.

At a time when women were almost totally excluded from professional symphony orchestras, Stark created the orchestra, composed of over 80 women, the first of its kind in Canada. She conducted it for more than a quarter of a century.

In 1947, the MWSO became the first Canadian orchestra to play at Carnegie Hall in New York, and it later performed around the world.

Born in Montreal, Stark was the first Canadian – male or female – to win a scholarship in a worldwide competition to the Curtis Institute of Philadelphia, where she studied from 1928-34, after attending the McGill Conservatory of Music.

She toured and broadcast as a violin soloist, nationally and internationally.

She guest conducted orchestras in Canada, including the Toronto Symphony in 1946, as well as in the United States, Israel and Japan.

Stark was also an educator and taught for 11 years at Le Conservatoire de Musique de Québec à Montréal and later at Sir George Williams University (now Concordia University). She did research on the orchestral repertoire for the Library of Congress.

Stark received many honours in her lifetime, including the Order of Canada in 1979, the Ordre nationale du Québec in 2003, an honorary doctorate from Concordia University in 1980, and the annual award of the Concert Society of Jewish People's and Peretz Schools in 1976.

In an interview with *The CJN* more than 25 years ago, Stark commented on the MWSO's Carnegie Hall performance: "We had a great success. I can't believe our nerve."

Although there were opportunities elsewhere, Stark remained loyal to her city and country.

שישאר בינינו

גידי קורן וחברים

הערת שוליים על "הערת שוליים"

לפני מספר חדשים דווחתי לכם על סרטו של יוסף סידר "הערת שוליים" והבעתי את דעתי שזה, לטעמי, הסרט הישראלי הטוב ביותר שראיתי אי פעם. זהו סיפורם של אב ובן, שניהם פרופסורים לחקר התלמוד באוניברסיטה העברית, והמתח שביניהם על רקע אישי ומקצועי. נשמע כמעט משעמם- אבל סרט מדהים שהיה יכול לקרות בכל מקום בעולם. בינתיים זכה הסרט בפרסים רבים והוא מועמד לפרס האוסקר לסרט הזר, מה שאומר שהוא גבר על יותר ממאתיים סרטים ממדינות אחרות. עוד יותר מרשים- במאי הסרט יוסף סידר הגיע לאוסקר גם בסרטו הקודם "בופור"- הישג שרק מעטים בעולם זכו לו.

עד כאן הבשורות הטובות. הבשורה הלא כל כך טובה היא שאחרי סופשבוע שבו ראיתי שניים ממתחריו-אני חושש שהוא לא יזכה...

הראשון- הסרט האיראני "פרידה"-מספר את סיפורו של זוג אירני בתהליכי גירושין. סיפור קטן, לא פוליטי, מה שאיפשר לממשלת אירן לאשר אותו. סיפור נוגע ללב על מה שעובר על משפחה בזמן תהליך גירושין- כביכול היה יכול לקרות בכל מדינה בעולם- אבל יש לך הרגשה כבדה סביב האוירה הקשה באירן. הסיפור מסופר היטב, אם כי היה אפשר לחתוך לטעמי איזה עשרים-שלושים דקות מבלי לפגוע בסרט. תשע בסולם קורן.

הסרט השני הוא קנדי צרפתי ממונטריאול- "מסייה לאזאר"- על מהגר אלג'יראי שמתקבל לעבודה כמורה מחליף בכיתה של ילדים שהמורה האהובה שלהם התאבדה בתלייה בבית הספר, ואחד מתלמידיה מוצא אותה תלויה בכיתה. ווואו- איזה סרט רגיש, חזק ומושלם. הילדים והמורים- עושים עבודה נפלאה ומספרים סיפור סוחף ומדהים. מוקד הסיפור הוא איך מתמודדים עם אובדן. אחת עשרה בסולם קורן.

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חבל. אבל שישאר בינינו.

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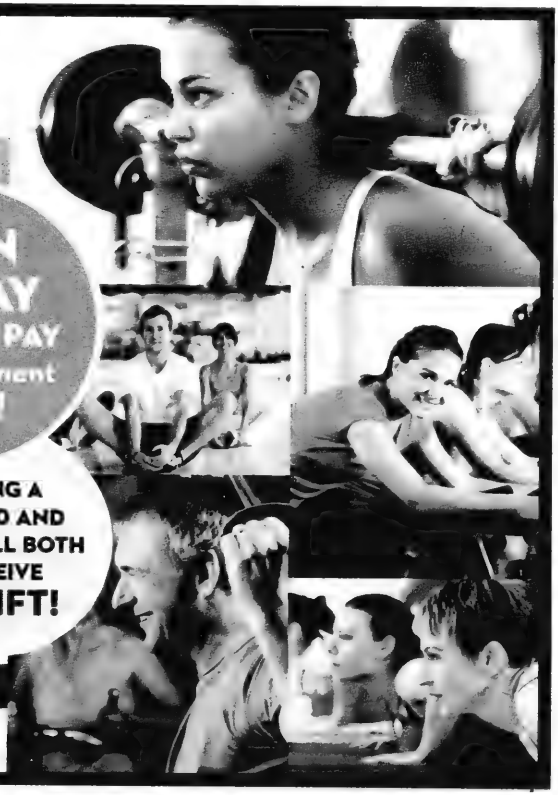

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Hatred: Coming to a campus near you

Opinion

Dore Gold

Anti-Israel hatred on campus crests each year during an event called Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW).

With an ominous name and programs that thrive on ignorance and blind disregard for the facts, tens of thousands of college students are urged to rise up against Israel – painfully evoking the types of racist characterizations of the Jewish people that defined attitudes once heard in Europe in the middle of the last century.

Warning: this year's display will come to a campus near you next week.

These campus initiatives were incubated in 2001 at the first Durban anti-racism conference, proclaiming "no apartheid South Africa in the 20th century and no apartheid Israel in the 21st."

This battle cry sparked the BDS movement calling for boycotts, divestment and sanctions to punish Israel, and it evolved into an invective-loaded campaign that found a degree of favour on campuses coast to coast, not to mention among some labour unions, churches, media and cultural institutions. But it is based on a lie.

Typically, those hurling these charges against Israel hope that their audiences are ignorant of the facts. In apartheid South Africa, blacks were not allowed to use white hospitals, they could not attend white universities and they could not participate in the South African parliament.

Visit Hadassah Hospital today, or any other health facility in Israel, and see Jewish and Arab doctors caring for Jewish and Arab patients. Witness Jewish and Arab professors teach students of different backgrounds. Go to the Knesset and observe the debates between Jewish and Arab parliamentarians.

Given this reality, Justice Richard Goldstone, a former judge on the South African Supreme Court, wrote in the *New York Times* that the "charge that Israel is an apartheid state is a false and malicious one that precludes, rather than promotes, peace and harmony."

Goldstone, it should be remembered, did not have a problem criticizing Israeli policies in the aftermath of its 2008-09 military operation in the Gaza Strip. But when it came to calling Israel an apartheid state like the old South Africa, with which he was intimately familiar, he firmly rejected the charge.

No group cherishes or champions freedom of speech more than the Jewish People. But the systematic dissemination of hate-based lies is not what freedom is about. This crosses the line. No one has a licence to lie, manipulate or manufacture falsehoods.

Make no mistake, the primary characteristics of IAW programming are terrible, unjustified charges expressly aimed at demonizing Israel.

Unsubstantiated allegations, constantly repeated, take a toll on North American opinion, despite bedrock gut support for Israel, which, thankfully, exists as a strong counter-force to this mass exercise in propaganda.

Studies confirm that when accurate information about Israeli policies, society and values is provided, the false arguments are uniformly rejected.

Our most critical challenge is to educate the young and to begin this process during high school years or earlier – long before they arrive on college campuses.

Our students feel confident and empowered when they know the facts and can challenge group-think favouring Israel's isolation, dismantlement or destruction.

We are duty-bound to engage students in creative, effective ways, through the media they best relate to: Facebook, Twitter and other social media.

We must knock down the posturing of the IAW agitators, who don't care about promoting peace or helping people in the Mideast.

Encouraged by foreign governments that do not share Israel's commitment to democracy and human rights, they are the purveyors of hatred, akin to many others who have preceded them.

Here's the good news: friends of Israel are not backing off or ignoring the challenge. Important new initiatives are already in the works to roll back the hatred.

We must spare no effort to protect full legal rights and freedom of speech for pro-Israel students on campus.

Specifically, I conclude with a vitally important call to action, as easy to do as it is effective: I invite you to watch a film of monumental importance called *Crossing the Line.*

This powerful 30-minute documentary exposes the growing anti-Israel sentiments taking root on college campuses across North America.

Once you understand the problem, I hope you will join me in my quest to make sure all Jewish students are educated and empowered with the facts about Israel.

If modern Jewish history has taught our generation anything, it is that no threat to our existence should ever be ignored. Generations to come will judge us for what we do – or do not do – today to secure Israel's future.

Dore Gold is president of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs and former Israeli ambassador to the United Nations. He is a senior adviser to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. To find out about a screening of Crossing the Line *in your area, visit www.stepupforisrael.*

ISRAELA ORON, BRIGADIER GENERAL (RET.)

GENDER, SECURITY AND RELIGION IN ISRAEL: NEW CHALLENGES, NEW VOICES

Israela Oron is an analyst and commentator on Israeli security and strategic affairs, with a broad background on gender issues. Serving in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), Oron broke through numerous gender barriers. She was the first woman IDF deputy spokesperson, the first woman who served on the faculty of the National Defense College and, as commander of the IDF's Women's Corp, she initiated significant reforms for women in the IDF and in Israel. She has also served as deputy national security advisor at Israel's National Security Council. She currently serves on The New Israel Fund International Council, as well as other leading social justice organizations.

Oron will speak about the impact of religious extremism on gender equality, democratic values and the IDF.

SUNDAY, MARCH 25TH 2012, 7:30 PM

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Fact cards to be distributed on campuses

Continued from page 3

Pro-Israel students at campuses such as the University of Ottawa, York University, Ryerson University and the University of British Columbia will distribute fact cards and posters produced by Hasbara, as well as screen a documentary called *Israel Inside* and provide advocacy training.

"This isn't an issue of spin for us. This is about truth versus falsehood," Hamdy said.

CAPME's response to IAW is to run a speaker series this month that presents a balanced view of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Tel Aviv University professor David Menashri, University of Maryland professor Yoram Peri, Notre Dame University professor Alan Dowty, and Italian photojournalist Ruben Salvadori will visit Canadian campuses on the speaking tour.

Another organization dedicated to addressing the anti-Israel narrative on campus is JerusalemOnlineU.com, which provides video-based education about Israel and Judaism.

Amy Holtz, JerusalemOnlineU.com president, said its new campaign, called Step Up For Israel, also aims to counter IAW with a film called *Crossing the Line: the Intifada Comes to Campus*, which can be viewed on the group's website.

The idea behind the film and the campaign – chaired by Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz and former Israeli ambassador to the United Nations Dore Gold – is to expose the anti-Israel movement on campus as being largely antisemitic.

"It's a powerful film, and it really is designed to make people understand the problem, and they need to prepare their kids," Holtz said.

She said it's important to educate students before someone else does.

"I want our kids to know the truth about Israel so they don't hear about it for the first time from an anti-Israel guy with a one-sided agenda... I want our kids to know that this isn't the truth. Israel is not an apartheid state."

Holtz said her organization is also working with Canadian Jewish groups to screen *Israel Inside* in Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa.

Hillel at Ryerson president Mitch Reiss said one of the approaches Hillel has adopted is to partner with other campus groups to give a positive image of Israel.

He said Hillel has developed relationships with groups such as AEPi and Delta Pi, the Jewish fraternities, as well as the Catholic Students' Association and the Jewish Business Network.

"We really built a network of different groups and work together, with each group taking on their project and angle for advocacy," Reiss said

"Rather than it being a response to IAW, it's a week of education to let people know about the amazing things that are going on in Israel."

Taking place weekly until the end of the semester on GTA campuses is a campaign called Hot Chocolate, Hot Topics.

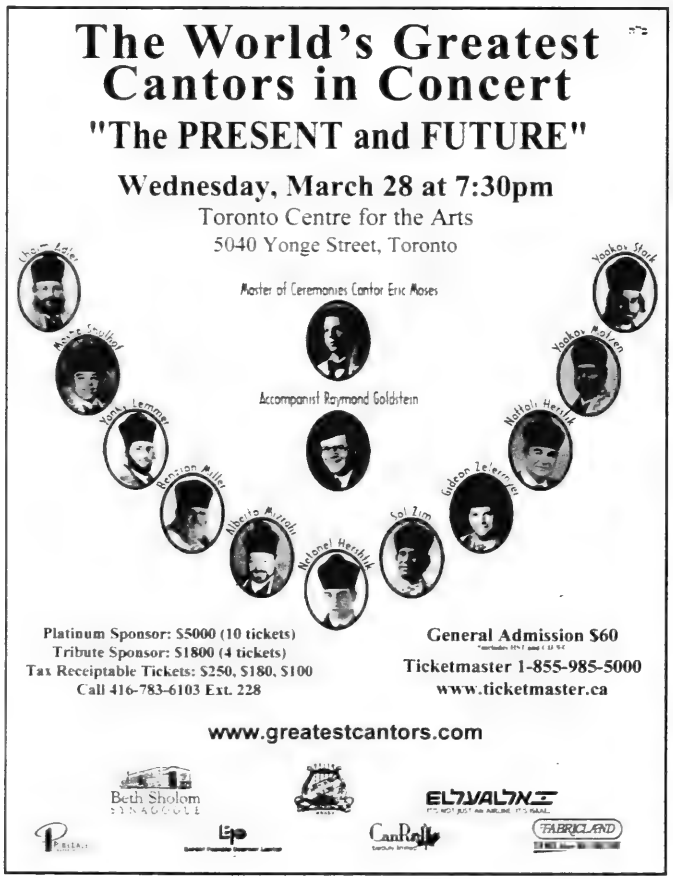
"We'll be handing out hot chocolate while presenting information about a hot issue, whether it be women's rights, LBGT issues, or the environment," Reiss said.

Last week, Hillel students at the University of Toronto set up an informational table to promote Save A Child's Heart, an Israeli-based international humanitarian project that provides free cardiac care for poor children with life-threatening heart disease in Third World countries.

"We're definitely trying to be more proactive to plan programming that we're excited about and not just a response. It's what we want to showcase about Israel," said Beca Bookman, Hillel's U of T Israel committee chair.

Later this month, Hillel will present an event with Chefs for Peace, an Israeli nonprofit organization that uses culinary arts to build bridges between different faith communities. Three Israeli chefs – a Jew, a Muslim and an Armenian – will tour GTA campuses in the second week of March giving cooking demonstrations.

"We think it'll be a good opportunity to open dialogue and discussion," Bookman said.



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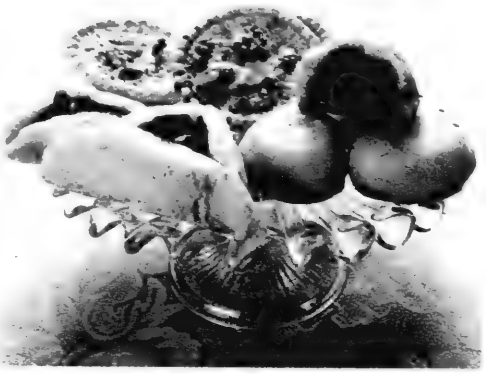

Purim is a celebration of justice, where evil was dealt a fatal blow and life continued, if only for a little while, happily.

At Purim, as with most holidays, Jews can state, "They tried to kill us, we won, let's eat."

However at Purim we must add an addendum: "Let's help others eat as well." We are traditionally obligated to send mishloach manot, sometimes called shalach manot, a gift of at least two different items of food, drink or sweets that can be eaten immediately. These should be sent not only to our families and friends, but to those less fortunate than ourselves.

Food is a celebration of life. It keeps us well, and at the same time, it's a source of joy and delight. The gift of food is also an opportunity to help the community and strengthen relationships among people.

Purim baskets are easy to put together, and making them can be an enjoyable family event.

First, make a list of the recipients of your baskets and decide what you want the baskets to contain. Fruit, nuts, dried fruit, small bottles of grape juice or wine, hamantashen and other baked treats as well as candies are popular choices.

Next, select your containers. Visit the dollar store, where you will find a treasure trove of interesting containers, baskets and boxes to fill, or be creative and design your own container from paper or fabric. Don't forget the transparent wrapping paper and shredded coloured tissue paper to line the bottom of the baskets or containers! Settle on what you plan to bake and write a shopping list. When you have everything you need, prepare the baked goods and wrap them in plastic wrap. Assemble and wrap the baskets. Plan to deliver the baskets on Purim. If you have young children, it's great fun to let them help deliver the baskets while wearing their Purim costumes.

The Purim pastries below are fun to make, scrumptious to eat and great to share.

HAMANTASHEN WITH CHOCOLATE GANACHE FILLING

These dainty pastries are sweet and unique. They are sure to become a brand new holiday tradition.

4 1/4 oz. bittersweet chocolate, chopped
4 oz. heavy cream
3 eggs
1/2 cup sugar
3/4 cup margarine or butter
2 1/2 tsp. orange zest
3 cups flour
1 tbsp. baking powder
1/4 tsp. salt

Place chopped chocolate and cream into a glass bowl and melt in the microwave for one minute on high.

Continued on page 35

Baycrest

Do you or a loved one have a fear of falling?

Learn how to prevent a fall by registering for the Falls Prevention Program at Baycrest.

This eight week program begins on Monday, March 12, and runs Monday and Wednesday mornings for older adults who live in the community, and who have had one or more falls, or have a fear of falling.

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Purim baskets made easy

Continued from page 34

Remove the chocolate from the microwave and whisk until all lumps are gone. Chill in refrigerator until filling is firm.

Preheat oven to 350. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper. In a food processor, beat eggs and sugar until light and fluffy. Add margarine or butter and orange zest. Add the flour, baking powder and salt into the batter to form dough. Cool in fridge for about 20 minutes.

On a floured board, roll out dough to 1/4-in. thick, and with a glass or cookie cutter, cut dough into 3-in. circles. Spoon 1 tsp. of filling into centre of each circle. Pinch edges tightly to form three corners. A small amount of the filling should peek out. Bake for 12-15 minutes, until golden brown. Place cookie sheets on wire racks until cool. Makes about two dozen hamantashen.

STUFFED MIDDLE EASTERN PURIM COOKIES

Purim's answer to how they get the caramel into the Caramilk bar!

1 1/2 cups margarine or butter
1 cup sugar
1 tsp. orange zest
4 cups flour
6-8 tbsp. water
1/2 cup coarsely ground walnuts,
12 oz. pitted dates
2 tsp. fresh orange juice
1 tbsp. orange zest
icing sugar for rolling if desired

Place margarine or butter, sugar and orange zest in food processor and process until combined. Add flour and process until it is a crumbly consistency. Add water until soft dough forms. (Dough will form a ball shape in processor.) Cover for about 30 minutes.

In a separate bowl, combine the next four ingredients.

To bake: preheat oven to 350. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper. Form dough into walnut-size balls. Flatten slightly and make a hole in the centre with your thumb. Fill with a heaping teaspoon of filling. Press sides together to close the dough. Roll in your hands to reform into a ball. Place on cookie sheet 1-2 in. apart. Make a design on top with fork tines. Bake 25-30 minutes, or until light brown in colour. Cool on wire rack. When cool, roll in icing sugar. Makes about 80 cookies.

ORANGE PECAN TARTS

3 packages of frozen tart shells (36 tart shells)
3 eggs
1 cup honey
1/2 cup brown sugar
1/3 cup margarine or butter
2 tsp. pure vanilla
zest of one large orange
2 tbsp. Grand Marnier
1/4 tsp. salt
1 1/2 cups pecan halves

Preheat oven to 350. Place tart shells on a baking sheet and par-bake for 10 minutes. Remove from oven. In a large bowl or processor, combine eggs, honey, brown sugar, margarine or butter, vanilla, orange zest, Grand Marnier and salt. Divide pecans between the tart shells. Spoon mixture into each tart shell covering over the pecans, tart shells should be full. Return to oven and bake for 20 minutes, or until tart edges are light brown and the filling is golden. Cool on wire rack.

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New blood test offers early cancer detection

Nicky Blackburn
Israel21c.org

A woman undergoes chemotherapy treatment at the Chaim Sheba Medical Center at Tel Hashomer. *[Photo Flash90]*

Israeli researchers have developed a simple and cheap blood test that was found to provide early detection for many types of cancer in clinical trials.

The promising new blood test, developed by scientists at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (BGU) and Soroka University Medical Center in Be'er Sheva, can detect minuscule changes in the blood of a person with a cancerous growth somewhere in the body, even before the disease has spread.

Early diagnosis of cancer could save thousands of lives. Every day in the United States, 1,500 people die of cancer, according to the American Cancer Society. Cancer is the second most common cause of death in the States after heart disease, accounting for one in four deaths.

Medical specialists believe that earlier detection greatly increases the chances for successful treatment. It also prevents the need for long, painful and costly treatments when the cancer reaches a more advanced stage.

The researchers, led by Prof. Joseph Kapelushnik of BGU's faculty of health sciences, have developed a device that illuminates cancer cells within less than a teaspoonful of blood. The test uses infrared light to detect tiny changes that indicate cancer, because the light is absorbed slightly differently due to various molecules released into the bloodstream.

In a clinical trial involving 200 patients and a control group, the test identified specific common cancers such as lung and ovarian cancer in 90 per cent of the patients and found other types of cancer, as well.

"This is still research in the early stages of clinical trials," said Kapelushnik, who is also head of the department of pediatric hemato-oncology at Soroka hospital.

"But the purpose is to develop an efficient, cheap and simple method to detect as many types of cancers as possible. We want to be able to detect cancer while a patient is still feeling good, before it has a chance to metastasize, meaning fewer treatments, less suffering and many more lives saved."

More clinical trials will be conducted in the next 18 months.

Psychiatrist writes about midlife meltdowns

Lauren Kramer
Pacific Correspondent

If you've ever wanted to be a fly on a psychiatrist's sofa, pick up a copy of *Keeping Your Cool Thru Your Mid-life Meltdown* by Dr. Fred Shane. The Winnipeg native moved to Vancouver two years ago and put his 35 years' psychiatric experience to creative use assembling a series of stories from his practice, all of them fairly typical of individuals experiencing a midlife crisis.

"I think these are important issues," he says, adding that each chapter represents a collage of experiences rather than the story of an individual patient. Names have been changed, circumstances altered and anonymity strictly protected. Each story is followed by a paragraph of Therapist's Notes, in which Shane speculates on the significance of a particular midlife meltdown and how the particular one he described was resolved.

They're the kind of stories many of us have read about in newspaper and magazine advice columns. The married man who has a cyber-affair, the obese woman trying to lose weight, the WASPy mother up in arms because her son is dating a black woman and the millionaire whose kids are at odds with his new fiancée.

In each story we get the perspective of the psychiatrist and learn how Shane has responded to and assisted his patients. He touches on Botox, domestic abuse, erectile dysfunction and phobias among other issues. For the fly on the couch, this book is an excursion directly into his office.

Keeping Your Cool is available online as an e-book. Visit keepingyrcool.com for more information.

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Iran characterizes Oscar win as victory over Israel

JTA

LOS ANGELES — Iran's state television on Monday described the country's Academy Award win for best foreign-language film as a victory over Israel, in a gesture of official approval of an Iranian movie industry criticized by hardliners.

The official reaction to the Oscar win by *A Separation* in Sunday's awards ceremony was cast in nationalist terms and in the light of Iran's confrontation with its arch-foe, which also had a film, *Footnote*, competing for the foreign-language Oscar. The broadcast said the award won by *A Separation* succeeded in "leaving behind" a film from the "Zionist regime." It emphasized that the film won several Iranian awards in 2011, too. To portray a film award as a nationalist triumph is a departure for the state media.

Iran has an extensive movie industry, and the country's films have won wide international acclaim, even as other sectors of the economy face sanctions and other forms of pressure over Tehran's controversial nuclear program.

Meanwhile, the Israeli and Iranian filmmakers sat together on a panel discussion.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences had invited the five directors vying for the Oscar in the best foreign-language film category to discuss their craft at a symposium.

In light of Tehran's policy of no contact between its citizens and Israelis, there was some quiet concern that an incident might mar the occasion. Last week, an Iranian soccer team pulled out of a match with a Serbian team because the latter was coached by an Israeli, Avram Grant.

But before a full house at the Academy's Samuel Goldwyn Theater on Saturday, the directors faced the audience in a single row, flanking Mark Johnson, chair of the selection committee.

The directors were seated by the alphabetical order of their respective film titles: *Bullhead* by Belgium's Michael Roskam; *Footnote* by Israel's Joseph Cedar; *In Darkness* by Poland's Agnieszka Holland *Monsieur Lazhar* by Canada's Philippe Falardeau; and *A Separation* by Iran's Asghar Farhadi, who was accompanied by a translator.

During the two-hour panel discussion, Cedar and Farhadi did not speak to each other directly, but joined their colleagues in chuckling at each other's jokes and politely applauding their respective remarks.

The same applied when Holland discussed her film about a dozen Jews hiding in underground sewers during the Nazi occupation of Poland, a theme directly contradicting Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's insistence that the Holocaust never happened.

All of the panellists used hand-held microphones except for Cedar, whose stationery mike was fastened to the armrest of his chair, because of the Jewish Sabbath. The symposium is always held on the Saturday preceding the Sunday Academy Awards and Cedar, who is a Shabbat observer, walked two miles from his hotel to the theatre.

In 2007, when Cedar's war film *Beaufort* also was among the five finalists, he consulted his rabbi and was told that he could not use a mike during the symposium. As a result, only those in the first few rows could hear his remarks. This time Cedar consulted a different authority, who advised that the director could speak into a mike, as long as he did not actually hold it in his hand.

With files from Ha'aretz

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WikiLeaks: Israel destroyed Iranian nuclear installation

JTA

Stolen e-mails from a U.S. intelligence firm indicate that Israel has destroyed all Iranian nuclear infrastructures on the ground.

The e-mail from the Stratfor company, released by WikiLeaks on Monday, cited a "confirmed Israeli intelligence agent." It is one of five million e-mails that the anti-secrecy website plans to release in the coming days.

The e-mails are rumoured to have been hacked by the Anonymous hackers group, which has threatened in a YouTube video to launch cyber attacks on Israeli websites.

The Israel-Iran e-mail comes in the wake of a November 2011 explosion that killed 17 workers at an Iranian Revolutionary Guard base near Tehran, which Iran said was an accident.

"I think this is a diversion. The Israelis already destroyed the entire Iranian nuclear infrastructure on the ground weeks ago. The current 'let's bomb Iran' campaign was ordered by the EU leaders to divert the public attention from their at home financial problems," read the e-mail from the Israeli source. The operation was undertaken with the help of Kurdish rebels, according to the e-mail.

The Stratfor company said in a statement Monday that the e-mails published "may be forged or altered to include inaccuracies; some may be authentic."

Stratfor is a global security analysis company that has been likened to a shadow CIA. Its clients include American government agencies such as the Department of Homeland Security, the Defense Intelligence Agency and the Marine Corps, and the Dow Chemical Company.

A military strike of Iran's nuclear facilities would bring about "catastrophic" consequences, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin wrote in a widely circulated article on Monday.

Vladimir Putin

Putin's comments weren't the first time Russian officials expressed opposition to the possibility of military action in Iran, with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Gennady Gatilov saying last week that "any possible military scenario against Iran will be catastrophic for the region and for the whole system of international relations."

"Therefore I hope Israel understands all these consequences ... and they should also consider the consequences of such action for themselves," Gatilov said at a news conference.

In the article published on Monday, the Russian PM said that his country was "worried about the growing threat of a strike on Iran," adding: "If it happens, the consequences will be truly catastrophic. Their real scale is impossible to imagine."

He said that the international community must acknowledge Iran's right to conduct uranium enrichment in exchange for placing the program under close supervision by the UN nuclear watchdog.

Iran has insisted that its controversial uranium enrichment program is aimed at producing energy and medical isotopes, but the West believes it's a cover for developing nuclear weapons.

"The West has gotten carried away trying to 'punish' some nations," Putin said. "It reaches out for sanctions or even a military club at the drop of a hat."

He said the western emphasis on using force could encourage more countries to seek nuclear weapons in a bid to protect themselves.

Referring to Russia's rejection of UN action on the Syrian crisis, Putin said the West had backed the Arab Spring to advance its interests in the region, and that instead of promoting democracy, the revolts had given rise to religious extremism.

In the lengthy article, Putin defended the Russia-China decision last month to veto a UN resolution condemning Syrian President Bashar Assad's crackdown on protests, saying that Moscow wouldn't allow a replay of what happened in Libya, where NATO airstrikes helped Libya's rebels oust Moammar Gadhafi's regime.

In related news, United Nations nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), said in a report on Friday that Iran has tripled its capacity to enrich uranium to elevated levels.

Iran's enrichment of uranium of up to 20 per cent has caused concern in the West because it is theoretically much easier to turn such material into bomb-grade material than uranium enriched at below five per cent.

Iran has doubled the number of centrifuges for enriching to 20 per cent at its fortified underground site at Fordo, according to a report by the IAEA.

Iran has now made more than 100 kilograms of higher-enriched material, less than half the amount needed for a nuclear warhead, the document said.

Last week talks between the UN nuclear watchdog and Iran on an agreement to monitor the latter's nuclear program ended without progress. Negotiators for the IAEA left Iran, after two days of talks, and without being allowed to inspect the Parchin military base near Tehran, a military site thought to be used for explosives testing. The failure came in the wake of increasingly tough sanctions against Iran by the international community.

Last week, Iran sent a letter to European Foreign Policy chief Catherine Ashton saying it would bring new initiatives to the talks.

- With files from Ha'aretz

2012

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Providing the Jewish community with quality service, as well as quality product, is the Mazel Wines priority. With over 40 years of unique experience, educating the consumer is a responsibility they take very seriously. Mrs. Adler pulls out a creased piece of paper with a few typed sentences on it. "I read this somewhere, I can't recall where, but it has become our motto," she explains. It reads: "Excellence is more than just a word. It is a commitment in our relationship with our clients, our employees and our community. We strive to promote and encourage excellence within and beyond our company.

"If you make a *simcha*," Mrs. Adler says, "I will not just say, 'Go to the store and buy my wines.' No. You come here, we sit down with you." Mazel Wines has experts (and the expertise) to help not only select the appropriate wines and liquors, but also help plan the occasion, from picking the wines to choosing the after dinner liqueurs.

"As an established, registered agent," says Mrs. Adler, "we work together with the LCBO to have a sizable number of fine kosher wines and spirits available. This year for Purim and Pesach we have Les Floreales Moscato, rated best in quality and very competitively priced at $11.95. There's also Armon Kosher for Passover Vodka, and the Armon Cream Rose (9% alcohol content) is a fruity, mild wine that's perfect for the seder."

Although Mrs. Adler insists that her role is to help her customers enjoy the greatest selection and quality of wines available, her favourite role is in helping people by offering convenience and the benefit of her expertise. "We service our clients with the whole package, including purchasing all of the wines, liqueurs and liquor for their *simcha*. We are, in essence, a one-stop provider with the expertise to advise on what wine is best suited to the food being served and to advise on what quantities are needed."

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ADVERTISING FEATURE

Netanyahu will meet with community members

Continued from page 1

Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird and Finance Minister Jim Flaherty spent a week in Israel last month on a diplomatic mission.

Shimon Fogel, CEO of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), said his organization was asked to brief both Canadian and Israeli officials "on the issues of the day, the political landscape and backdrop informing the situation at this particular juncture."

He also said he was "delighted" that Netanyahu had agreed to meet with about 60 community representatives on Sunday morning at an event that CIJA is arranging on behalf of the Israeli Embassy in Ottawa.

Fogel said there was a tremendous interest by the community to meet with Netanyahu and hear Israel's position on numerous topics.

He said members of Jewish federations across the country have been invited to the breakfast meeting, as have representatives of B'nai Brith Canada, Israel Bonds, the Jewish National Fund and other pro-Israel groups.

"Clearly, people are very anxious about the overall set of challenges facing Israel and are signalling their desire to connect both with the issues and the central personalities like Netanyahu, who can offer insight into where things are at and where they are going," Fogel said.

He concurred with MacDougall's assessment of the topics likely to be discussed by Harper and Netanyahu.

"The topic that will surely dominate the discussion is the threat posed by Iran, which continues its determined drive to acquire nuclear arms," Fogel said.

Other topics on the table will probably include the "deteriorating situation in the aftermath of the so-called Arab Spring" and "the growing influence of Hamas and Hezbollah on Israel's doorstep," he added.

"I imagine some attention will be given to the effort to reinvigorate the peace process with the Palestinians and, of course, the mutual desire to strengthen the [Canada-Israel] bilateral relationship across the spectrum of economic and social sectors."

Libel conviction of Israeli in al-Dura case overturned

Avi Issacharoff
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

PARIS — A French appeals court has overturned the libel conviction of an Israeli physician who was sued by the father of Mohammed al-Dura, the boy whose shooting death in September 2000 became a powerful symbol of the second intifadah.

Jamal al-Dura had displayed to international media outlets scars on his son's body he claimed were caused by bullets fired by Israel Defence Forces soldiers.

In a 2008 interview with a French Jewish weekly, an Israeli orthopedic surgeon, David Yehuda, disputed the elder Dura's claim. Yehuda said the scars were not related to the incident in which Mohammed, who was 12 years old, died.

Rather, Yehuda said, they were the result of an assault on Mohammed by Hamas militants who accused him of collaborating with Israel, as well as subsequent surgery performed by Yehuda himself in 1994.

Yehuda, together with the reporter and editor of the French publication, were convicted of libel by a French court in April and ordered to pay thousands of euros in compensation.

The ruling was the result of Yehuda's appeal of his conviction.

The photographs of the Duras, father and son, taking cover behind a barrel during an exchange of gunfire between Israeli forces and Palestinian militants, near the Netzarim junction in the Gaza Strip, remains one of the most enduring images of the second intifadah.

Israel initially apologized for the boy's death but issued a retraction when subsequent investigations indicated the boy was most likely killed by Palestinian fire.

David Yehuda, left, met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu two weeks ago in the prime minister's office. Yehuda was a guest of honour at the weekly cabinet meeting, where Netanyahu called the physician "an Israeli hero." *[Israel Sun photo]*

Netanyahu accuses Abbas of incitement

Barak Ravid
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday harshly condemned Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas for a speech given at a conference in Qatar in which Abbas claimed that Israel is "trying to erase the Arab, Muslim and Christian nature of Jerusalem."

"This was a speech of severe incitement coming from the mouth of someone who supposedly claims that he seeks peace," a statement from Netanyahu's office said. "The time has come for the Palestinian leadership to stop denying the past and distorting reality. For thousands of years, Jerusalem has been the eternal capital of the Jewish people. Under Israeli sovereignty, Jerusalem will continue to be open to members of all faiths. There is complete freedom of worship for everyone and Israel will continue to devotedly protect the holy places of all religions."

In his speech, Abbas compared Israel's control of Jerusalem to the Roman and Crusader occupations of the city. Abbas cast doubt on the existence of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem and accused Israel of trying to harm the al-Aqsa Mosque. He also called on Muslims from around the world to come to Jerusalem.

"Abbas knows well that there is no foundation for his allusions, including the baseless claims regarding the al-Aqsa Mosque," the statement from Netanyahu's office said. "Israel expects that someone who seemingly stands for peace will prepare his people for peace and coexistence and not spread lies and incitement."

Abbas asserted that Israel is using various means to conduct ethnic cleansing against the Arab residents of east Jerusalem.

"[Israel's] goal is to Judaize Jerusalem and position it as the capital of the occupation state," Abbas said.

Israel Briefs

Yeshiva exemption nixed

Israel's Tal Law, which allows yeshiva students to delay their military service, will have to be extended despite being declared unconstitutional, Israeli Interior Minister Eli Yishai said. Yishai, who is also the leader of the Shas Party, said the law will likely be extended for at least a year, until new legislation can be drafted. The Israeli Supreme Court last week deemed the law unconstitutional. The Tal Law, named for retired Supreme Court justice Tzvi Tal and enacted in 2002 under then-prime minister Ehud Barak, allows full-time yeshiva students to delay army service until age 23. At that time, students either can continue to study full time or perform a shortened army service or a year of national service. Afterward they can choose to join the workforce. The Knesset last week rejected two bills that would have required all Israeli citizens, including haredim, to serve in the military or national service.

Temple Mount riot

Police dispersed Muslim rioters on the Temple Mount who reportedly had been spurred by reports Jewish extremists planned to enter the site. Reports said the rioters, among the Friday worshippers at the site's mosques, hurled rocks at the Mughrabi Bridge entrance, prompting a rare incursion by police, who used stun grenades. At least 11 police and 15 rioters were hurt and four people were arrested.

Files from JTA

I.L. Peretz Folk School Yiddish Teaching Fellowship, University of Manitoba

The University of Manitoba, in Winnipeg, Canada offers a two-year Yiddish teaching fellowship beginning July 1, 2012. The successful candidate will have opportunities to teach a second-year Yiddish language and literature course at the university, teach Yiddish at the Winnipeg Jewish high school, develop an integrated Yiddish language curriculum for both institutions, and engage with the Yiddish-speaking community in the city.

The University of Manitoba encourages applications from qualified women and men, including members of visible minorities, Aboriginal peoples, and persons with disabilities. All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply; however, Canadians and permanent residents will be given priority.

For complete details on the position visit http://umanitoba.ca/judaic_studies/

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Committee calls for dismantling conglomerates

Eran Azran
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — The economic concentration committee delivered its final recommendations last week, which were stricter than the interim report delivered some months ago.

In contrast to that draft report, the committee recommended the Apax Partners fund and the Ofer family must choose finance holdings or industry. They are considered too big and influential to keep both.

Apax, an international investment fund, owns Tnuva, the biggest foods manufacturer in Israel, and Psagot, Israel's biggest investment house. The Ofers own interests in a slew of industries and in Bank Mizrahi-Tefahot.

The interim report had already singled out three tycoons – Nochi Dankner, Yitzhak Tshuva and Zadik Bino – as having to choose finance or non–finance (companies that provide goods or services). The addition of Apax and the Ofers, while short of a surprise, had not been obvious, but the committee tightened the criteria and they made the short list.

The chief problem with a huge business conglomerate owning both finance and non-finance companies is conflict of interests: the finance companies could lend to the goods and services firms based on the personal interests of the figure at the top of the pyramid, not necessarily in the companies' best interests. Also, the finance companies could deny credit to the real companies' rivals.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, centre, speaks at a press conference attended by Israeli Finance Minister Yuval Steinitz, left, and governor of Bank of Israel, Stanley Fischer. ***[FLASH90 photo]***

Tshuva is on the list for his holdings of Delek Group, which owns real estate and oil and gas exploration companies, the Phoenix Insurance Company and the Excellence-Nessuah Investment House.

The committee gave the affected groups four years to decide and sell assets.

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Action needed on Israeli 'economic concentration'

Guy Rolnik
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Analysis

It took less than 10 years for the Israeli economy to become an atrophied, corrupt playing field for oligarchs.

But the downslide ground to a sudden halt when the prime minister, the governor of the Bank of Israel and the finance ministry stood before the people of Israel and categorically admitted the economy is concentrated in the extreme. This situation is harmful to freedom, competition, competitiveness, economic growth, wages and the very fabric of democracy itself.

Economic concentration means the economy is dominated by a handful of players who run things for their own benefit, not the public's.

Two years ago, the prime minister and the governor of the Bank of Israel decided to take action to pre-empt the final implosion of Israeli democracy while the leveraged tycoons danced into the night.

Predictably, the establishment of a committee to study concentration in the Israeli economy, reach conclusions and make recommendations encountered a belligerent campaign by most of Israel's newspapers and business editors. They set out to defend their bosses and milieu tooth and claw.

A year after the committee was set up, despite all the facts it had compiled, it seemed doomed.

And then came the grassroots upheaval. It began over the exorbitant price of cottage cheese, an Israeli favourite for breakfast, lunch and dinner. The phrase "economic concentration" began to be bandied about.

Gradually, politicians, academics and others found courage and began to speak out. The words "economic concentration," "monopolies" and "competition" became common parlance.

As the bandwagon gained momentum, more and more economists, academics and political leaders jumped on.

The composition of the committee, and the fact it did most of the job with haste after the summer protests shook up our leaders, means that not all Israel's structural ailments were addressed.

Economic concentration will not suddenly evaporate with the enactment of new laws. The committee's recommendations will be undergoing lots of corrections and changes in the months to come. That's the work of the Knesset.

Parliamentarians, aided by economists, business people and the public, must make their message crystal-clear: we believe in the free market and in entrepreneurship. We are committed to strengthening Israeli business and excellence. We will succumb neither to "social justice" populism nor to the fury of the tycoons. We shall stay focused on our mission to build a better economic structure, diversified and free. This is crucial to democracy, to true social justice and to equality of opportunity.

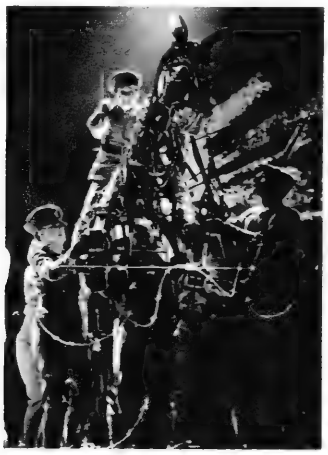
In the heart of a WarHorse

Kathryn Kates
Special to The CJN

Toronto-based actor Troy Feldman has done a lot of things. He's a breakdancer, parkour (urban acrobat) artist, acrobat and stuntman.

But the Hamilton native knows his latest role inside and out – literally. Feldman is performing the role of the horse's heart in the award-winning show *WarHorse*, playing at Princess of Wales Theatre in Toronto until June 30.

"It takes one actor who with a steel pole manipulates the head with cords and triggers on it," Feldman says. "Then me, I'm the heart. I control the front legs and the breathing, which is done through my own breathing and through the legs of the horse. Another actor is the hind."



War Horse **Canadian cast 2012** ***[Photo by Brinkhoff / Mögenburg]***

WarHorse begins in England, at the start of World War I. Joey, the beloved horse of young Albert, is sold to the cavalry and shipped to France. Joey is soon caught up in enemy fire. Fate takes him on an extraordinary journey. Albert, never forgets Joey, and embarks on a treacherous mission to find his horse.

It takes three actors to manipulate each puppet horse. The puppets were created by Adrian Kohler and Basil Jones of Handspring Puppet Company. The horses are life-size and lightweight, yet very strong so that they can be ridden. Each horse's skeletal frame is made of cane and detailed with wood, elastic, leather and wire. Feldman's team rotates playing horses Joey, Topthorn and the German gun-team horses. He also plays a crow puppet.

Feldman was trained to manoeuvre the puppets especially for *WarHorse*; before this production, his closest role was some mascot work. Feldman enjoyed learning this new skill, which is constantly evolving for him and the other actors, six teams in all that perform within the horse puppets. Feldman says he strives each night for a perfect show, which he feels takes a lot of strength and endurance.

"When you get onstage, for me it is a bit harder to see because the head and mane is right in front of me. The hind has more vision. It is super important when you are in the horse to use your peripheral vision, because when you are in the horse it is teamwork. For example, the person playing the head is running backwards most of the time. He is the only one out of the horse, and he can see everything behind us as we are going forward."

In the starring role of Albert is Alex Furber. Also joining Feldman onstage in lead roles are Brad Rudy, Tamara Bernier-Evans, Steven Yaffee, Patrick Galligan, Melanie Doane and Richard McMillan, who Feldman worked with in Mirvish Production's *Lord of the Rings*.

Feldman's other theatrical offerings have included *The Forbidden Phoenix; Off The Wall: A Soldier's Tale* and *Jesus Christ Superstar*. His film credits are *Score: A Hockey Musical, White Collar Criminals, Stepping Up 2* and *Stuntman*.

WarHorse is produced by the National Theatre of Great Britain, National Angels, Bob Boyett and David Mirvish. It is based on a novel by Michael Morpurgo and adapted by Nick Stafford, in association with Handspring Puppet Company

For more information go online to: www.mirvish.com or www.warhorseonstage.com.

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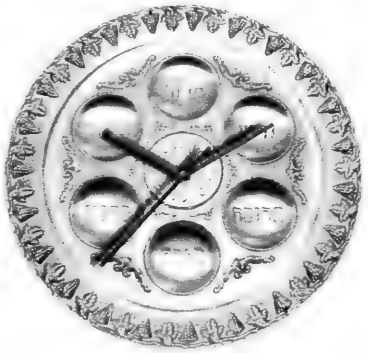

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EYE ON ARTS

By BILL GLADSTONE

CELEBRATION OF IRVING LAYTON COMING TO HARBOURFRONT

Authors at Harbourfront Centre is hosting an Irving Layton Centenary Celebration on March 14 to mark the 100th anniversary of the birth of the Canadian poet. Participants include **Margaret Atwood**, **Barry Callaghan**, **Joseph Kertes**, **Max Layton**, **Dennis Lee**, **Rosemary Sullivan** and **Moses Znaimer**. Writer-publisher **Anna Porter** will also participate with a pre-recorded presentation.

Authors at Harbourfront Centre also presents Toronto novelist **Lilian Nattel** as part of an evening of readings on March 7. Nattel is author of *The River Midnight* and *Web of Angels*. Also taking part are **Richard Mason** (*History of a Pleasure Seeker*) and **Carrie Snyder** (*The Juliet Stories*).

A Crime Showcase on March 21 features authors **David Rotenberg** (*The Placebo Effect*) and **Howard Shrier** (*Boston Cream*), among others. York Quay Centre, 235 Queens Quay W. Layton centenary $15, members $5; all others $10, members free. 416-973-4000, readings.org

* * *

New in Print: The scholarly **Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman** of Hebrew Union College in New York introduces the cream of *Jewish Literature in One Hundred Great Books: Three Millennia of Jewish Conversation*, a recent publication of Bluebridge Books (www.bluebridgebooks.com).

Hoffman's 100 includes works of biography, spirituality, poetry, fiction and history: his choices are uniquely revealing and interesting of themselves. There is much here to invigorate our recollection of books read – and to entice us to open books as yet unread. I am enjoying dipping into these thoughtful, well-written pieces.

Another new title, *Defying Evil* by **Benjamin Wood**, describes how military officials in Fascist Italy defied their Nazi German allies to save Croatian Jews during the Holocaust era. www.historypublishingco.com

* * *

Lorie Wolf

Friends of Yiddish: A Purim Freylekhs hosted by the Friends of Yiddish features the **Yenevelt Klezmer Band**, consisting of some of Toronto's finest klezmer musicians including **David Wall** and **Lorie Wolf**. Refreshments, door prizes and more. Members $5, guests $15. Beth Tikvah Synagogue, 3080 Bayview Ave. Sunday, March 11, 2 p.m. RSVP by March 8 to Sandy, 416-458-1440, yiddish18@yahoo.ca

* * *

Names in the News: Actor **George Clooney** has optioned film rights to **Robert M. Edsel's** book *The Monuments Men: Allied Heroes, Nazi Thieves and the Greatest Treasure Hunt in History*. The book tells the true story of American and British art experts who tracked down art works looted by the Nazis, mainly from Jewish owners, during World War II.

* * *

Arts in Brief

• *Zero Hour*. **Jim Brochu**'s celebrated one-man show about **Zero Mostel**, continues at the Bathurst Street Theatre, 736 Bathurst St. below Bloor, until March 11. 1-855-448-7669.

• *Can I Really Date a Guy Who Wears a Yarmulke?*, Teatron's production of the comedy by **Amy Holson-Schwartz**, opens this week and runs to March 11 at Toronto Centre for the Arts, 5040 Yonge St. 416-781-5527, teatrontheatre.com

• Shakespeare in Action, Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre and Al Green Theatre present the **Wendy Kesselman** adaptation of the stage play *The Diary of Anne Frank*, with **Sascha Cole** in the title role. Al Green Theatre, March 15 to 31. 416-924-6211, ext. 0, algreentheatre.ca

Sascha Cole

• Critic **Kevin Courrier** presents his latest film lecture with clips on the theme of American Movies and the Politics of Idealism. His next topic is "The Clinton Era: *Primary Colours, Forrest Gump, Three Kings, Wag the Dog* and *The West Wing* (TV)." Miles Nadal JCC, Monday, March 5, 7 to 9 p.m. $12 at the door, students $6. 416-924-6211, ext. 606, film @mnjcc.org

• **Lenka Lichtenberg**, **Roula Said** and musical guests perform Bridges, a Concert of Jewish and Arabic Music in Dialogue. Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre, Monday, March 5, 7:30 p.m. $20; patron $50. Presented by the Al Green Theatre and the new City Shul. 416-924-6211, ext. 0, algreentheatre.ca

• **Cesan d'Ornellas Levine**, artist-in-residence at Petroff Gallery during March, paints in the gallery and webcasts from the front window on various dates. 1016 Eglinton Ave. W. 416-782-1696, petroffgallery.com

* * *

Passages: Irving Dobbs, actor, songwriter and insurance agent, died in Toronto on Feb. 14 at about 86 years of age.

Born in Toronto as the youngest of five children, Dobbs became smitten with acting as a child and never lost the bug. After serving in the Royal Canadian Air Force in World War II, he studied theatre at Columbia University in New York and saw as many Broadway shows as he could and took on some parts. Back in Toronto, he did some acting and directing but found he needed a steady job "to support my habit." He became an insurance broker as a "stop gap" measure but stayed at it for nearly 50 years.

Dobbs appeared in numerous productions of the Teatron Jewish Theatre Company, Encore Entertainment and other local companies, mostly amateur. Some of his songs were used in the 1976 film *Goldenrod*, and he received royalties whenever the movie aired on TV. Three years ago he released a CD, *This Is Love: Songs of Irving Dobbs and Irving Berlin*, featuring songs by both Irvings.

His last stage role was in the Teatron production *Deceived* last November. "Irving had a leading role in *Deceived* as Samuel Goldstein and, as usual, he shone in the part," said Teatron artistic director Ari Weisberg.

TEATRON Toronto Jewish Theatre
PRESENTS
Can I really date a guy who wears a YARMULKE?
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Human rights film festival focuses on Mideast

Sheldon Kirshner
Staff Reporter

The ninth annual Human Rights Watch Film Festival, sponsored by the Toronto International Film Festival, opened last week and runs until March 9 at the TIFF Bell Lightbox, 350 King St. W.

A sampler:

This is my Land ... Hebron, a film about a tinderbox in the West Bank, is scheduled to be screened on Monday, March 5 at 8 p.m.

A documentary on sex trafficking in the Muslim world and Israel, *The Price of Sex*, will be screened on Tuesday, March 6, at 8 p.m.

On a more general note, the three-decade civil war in Guatemala, the subject of *Granito: How to Nail a Dictator*, will be shown on Thursday, March 8, at 8 p.m.

Hebron, the only Palestinian town in the West Bank with a Jewish presence, is highly contested, a flashpoint in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Five to six hundred Jews, virtually all Orthodox, live here under the protection of the Israeli army and consider Hebron entirely theirs.

The 120,000 Palestinian inhabitants regard the Jewish settlers as interlopers and troublemakers.

The history of Jewish settlement in Hebron can be traced back to the biblical patriarch Abraham, but Arabs have invariably formed the majority of its population.

Sixty-seven Jews were murdered in Hebron in a pogrom in 1929, during the British Mandate, but their descendants returned after the Six Day War.

In 1994, a Jewish extremist living in the West Bank, Baruch Goldstein, killed 29 Arabs in the Tomb of the Patriarchs, touching off a chain reaction of Palestinian suicide bombings in Israel.

This is my Land, directed by Giulia Amati and Stephen Natanson, unfolds against this bitter backdrop.

Jewish residents contend that God promised Hebron to Jews. "Hebron is the heart of Israel, where it all began," says Sani Horowitz, likening its Palestinian inhabitants to a "swamp" and claiming they are merely "guests" here.

Miriam Grabovsky, a fellow settler, rejects the notion of a "Palestinian nation." David Wilder, a spokesperson for the settlers, warns that Palestinian terrorists are trying "to kill us."

Hamid Qawashmah, a Palestinian resident, fears that the Palestinians in Hebron's old quarter will be forced out, adding that 15,000 to 25,000 have already left. Still another Palestinian inhabitant laments that Arabs are denied freedom of movement.

Uri Avnery, a former Israeli parliamentarian and peace activist, claims Israel's most extreme settlers have congregated in Hebron. Gideon Levy, an Israeli journalist, says that Israel's occupation of the West Bank is at its most "brutal" here. Yehuda Shaul, an Israeli posted here as a soldier, says that Jews in Hebron receive preferential treatment.

This is my Land illustrates a truism: the struggle for the West Bank will be long and hard.

• • •

Since the fall of communism in eastern Europe, 1.5 million women have been trafficked into the global sex trade. Many have been forced into prostitution in brothels in the Middle East.

In *The Price of Sex*, Mimi Chakorova, a Bulgarian photojournalist, delves fearlessly and restlessly into this shameful phenomenon, which is driven by poverty, police corruption and the complicity of female recruiters. All too often, women are lured into sexual slavery on false pretenses.

Two of the prime destinations to which they are sent are Dubai and Turkey, where they struggle with a life of fear, shame and violence. Yet Israel also figures in the white slavery trade.

Interviewing women who have been duped and subjected to indignities, Charkova talks to a prostitute in Istanbul's red-light district who discloses she has serviced as many as 50 clients a day. The statistic boggles the imagination.

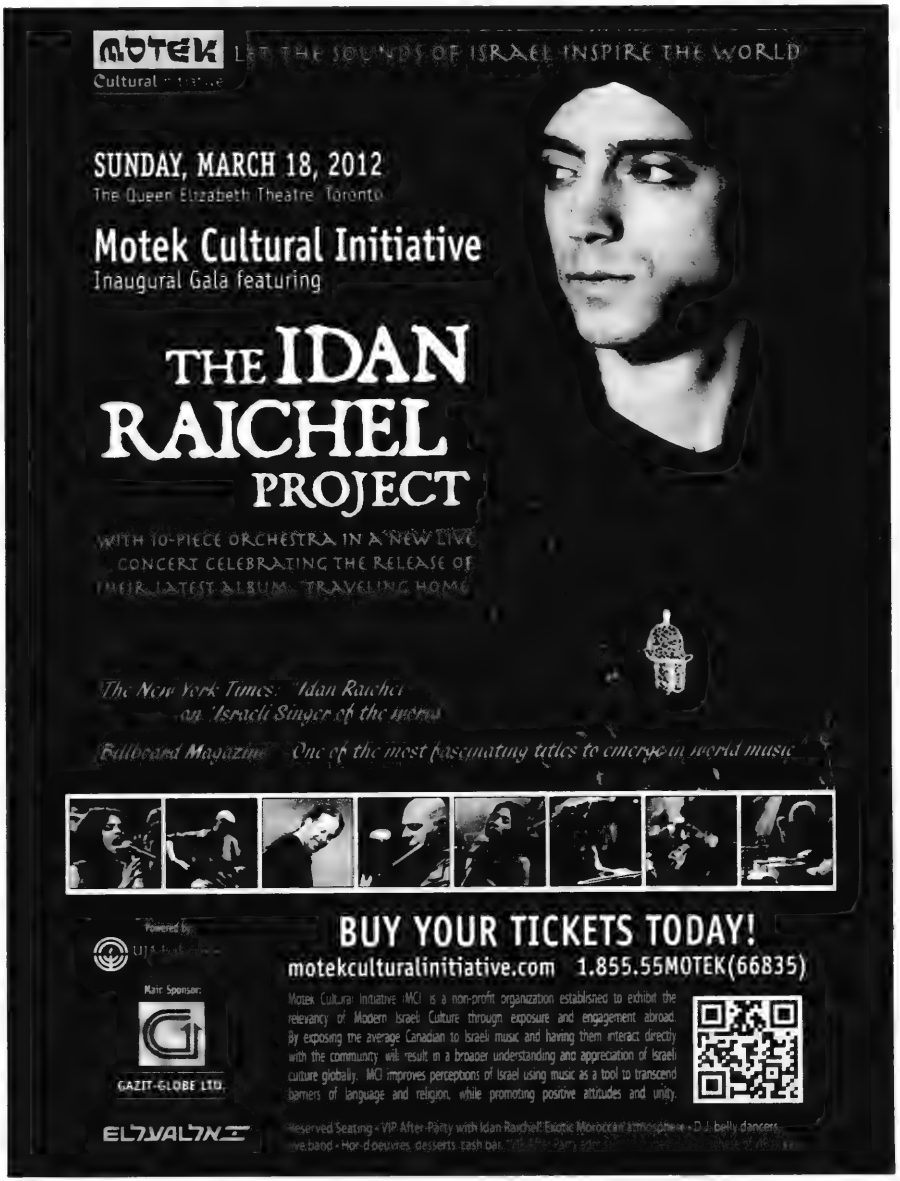
The Price of Sex underscores the fact that the liberation of eastern Europe from communism was an enabling force that has condemned countless women to a life of sexual servitude.

• • •

On Jan. 26, Efrain Rios-Montt, the former president of Guatemala, was indicted on charges of genocide and crimes against humanity for the role he played in the country's 36-year civil war.

He appears in Pamela Yates' *Granito: How to Nail a Dictator*, a film that documents the Guatemalan army's brutal campaign against Mayans.

Guatemala, an impoverished country torn by coups, launched the offensive to throttle an insurgency rooted in just demands for democratic and economic reforms. *Granito* is thus about collective memory and the pursuit of justice and human rights.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Antisemitism has a long history in Britain

Sheldon Kirshner
Staff Reporter

Antisemitism in the British isles has a long and inglorious history, preceding the expulsion of Jews from Britain in 1290.

Anthony Julius, a London-based lawyer, has immersed himself in this age-old topic and written a weighty tome on it. In *Trials of the Diaspora: A History of Antisemitism in England* (Oxford University Press), he explores this phenomenon by examining four varieties of Jew hatred.

The first variety, the antisemitism of defamation, expropriation, murder and expulsion, climaxed in the medieval era.

The second kind, literary antisemitism, reeks in the pages of literature down through the ages.

The modern antisemitism of insult and partial exclusion has been experienced by Jews since their readmission to Britain in the mid-17th century.

The latest configuration of antisemitsm treats Zionism and Israel as illegitimate.

Jews settled in Britain after the Norman conquest in 1066, but conditions for the Jewish community did not deteriorate until the mid-12th century.

Ernest Bevin

Oswald Mosley

Oliver Cromwell

As Julius writes: "In medieval England, Jews were defamed, their wealth was expropriated, they were killed and injured, they were subjected to discriminatory and humiliating regulation, and they were, finally expelled."

The expulsion of Jews from Britain was preceded by their removal from towns such as Bury St. Edmunds in 1190 and Newcastle and Warwick in 1234.

"England, last among the nations of western Europe to receive Jews, was the first to expel them," Julius observes. "The expulsion was welcomed as a precedent by later generations of antisemites in other countries."

Curiously enough, literary antisemitism emerged after Jews were expelled and no longer were permitted to live in Britain. By the time Jews returned 400 years later, British literature had stereotyped them.

Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* was rife with derogatory references to Jews. William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* perpetuated vile antisemitic myths. Thomas Nash's *The Unfortunate Traveller* underscored Jewish depravity. Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* drew attention to an unsavoury Jewish character, Fagin.

Anthony Trollope's novel *The Prime Minister* introduced the quintessential Jewish villain, Ferdinand Lopez, who "knows how to look and talk like a gentleman and claims to be one, but is soon revealed to be nothing but a Jew adventurer – a stranger … a schemer, a cajoling bully, a speculator, a swindler, a liar and a cheat."

Jews were readmitted to Britain by Oliver Cromwell, even though merchants and clerics voiced strong objections, fearing competition.

During the post-Cromwell period, Jews were subjected to ridicule in pamphlets, petitions, newspaper articles and satirical prints and cartoons.

But as Julius points out, philosemitism was also an element in public discourse about Jews.

The burning issue in the mid-19th century was whether a politician elected to the House of Commons could take his seat without swearing an oath on the true faith as a Christian.

The issue was finally resolved in 1858 when Lionel Rothschild, a newly elected member of parliament and a member of a famous banking dynasty, was not compelled to utter fidelity to Christianity upon taking his seat.

Rothschild's supporters hailed his admission to the House of Commons as a victory over religious persecution and bigotry. Detractors warned that the campaign for emancipation was a talmudic plot.

Benjamin Disraeli, a convert to Christianity and the first person of Jewish descent to become prime minister, faced taunts throughout his distinguished career. In attacking him, some antisemites referred to his "crypto-Judaism" and "Judaic feeling." One opponent wrote, "Mr. Disraeli is a Jew by birth and a Christian by accident."

The Aliens Act of 1905, supported by no less a person than Arthur Balfour, whose name is affixed to the 1917 Balfour Declaration, was designed to exclude "undesirable aliens" from Britain. Although the word "Jew" appeared nowhere in the legislation, Julius notes, it was widely understood that Jews would be disproportionately affected by the xenophobic measure.

The 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia had unintended consequences in Britain, he says. Antisemites perceived it as a Judaeo-Bolshevik conspiracy, and in Palestine, British officials tended to equate communism with Zionism.

As the eminent British historian A.J.P. Taylor has acknowledged, postwar antisemitism was endemic, excluding Jews from social clubs and corporate boards and limiting their access to private schools.

The antisemitism that pervaded the era from the 1920s to the '40s was "deep and broad," bearing the weight of the preceding half-century of antisemitic practice, observes Julius.

Singling out the most vociferous antisemites of that period, he mentions unreconstructed racists such as Oswald Mosley of the British Union of Fascists, the Conservative party parliamentarian Maule Ramsay and the agitator Arnold Leese. The latter, a veterinary surgeon who founded an outfit known as the Imperial Fascist League, promoted the concept of blood libel and even called for genocide.

The troubles in Palestine following World War II – the bombing of the King David Hotel and the hanging of two British soldiers, to name but two salient incidents – generated a wave of antisemitism in Britain.

Synagogues were damaged, Jewish-owned shops were smashed and Jewish cemeteries were desecrated. Britain's foreign secretary, Ernest Bevin, admitted that "anti-Jewish feeling" was "greater" than it had been in a century.

The commander of British military forces in Palestine, Gen. Evelyn Barker, was more explicit. In a reference to "these bloody Jews," he wrote, "Yes, I hate the lot – whether they be Zionists or not."

Julius also documents the activities of the notorious neo-Nazi John Tyndall, who described Jews as "cancerous microbes."

His chapter on antisemitism and anti-Zionism is instructive. Criticism of Israeli policy is perfectly acceptable and legitimate, he suggests. But when Israel's very existence is denied, a red line has been crossed.

In summation, Julius says that while British Jews are secure today, contemporary antisemitism should be regarded as "an elusive, low-key affair, perhaps best understood as an antisemitism of minor, uneven inhibition on Jewish ambition and self-esteem."

It is, he claims, "a story of snub and insult, sly whisper and innuendo, deceit and self-deception."

Not a pretty picture.

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Authors & Poets

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We invite readers to submit unpublished, original works of fiction or poetry that explore Jewish themes.

They should not exceed 2,000 words. Selected submissions will appear in the Passover Supplement of The CJN on April 5, 2012, in either our Montreal or our Toronto edition, or both. If you have a preference, please state it on your submission. Not all submissions can be published. We look for originality.

E-mail submissions to:
cjnliterarysupplement@gmail.com

Deadline for submissions is March 9, 2012.
We can only accept e-mail submissions.

Mark Breslin brings edge to Canada's comedy scene

Sheldon Kirshner
Staff Reporter

He single-handedly revolutionized the comedy scene in this country.

"We brought Jewish American comedy to Canada," said Mark Breslin, the founder and chief executive officer of Canada's largest comedy club chain, Yuk Yuk's, which marked its 35th anniversary last year.

Before Breslin shook up Canada with his brand of cutting humour, standup comedians tended to be relatively timid and rarely, if ever, did they stray beyond the accepted red lines.

"Comedy in Canada was polite and sedate," said Breslin, who opened the first Yuk Yuk's in the basement of a community centre in Toronto in June 1976. "It lacked an edge."

Influenced by such iconic figures as Lenny Bruce and Mort Sahl, Breslin encouraged his comedians to venture into uncharted territory, tell titillating jokes turning on personal confession, sex, drugs and the like and thereby shatter social conventions.

A standup comedian himself, he was guided by two objectives: to build a comedy club network and to remain uncensored

"We found the audience we wanted," said Breslin, who celebrates his 60th birthday in May. "Young, hip and somewhat anti-establishment, which is what our comedy is all about."

No topic was beyond the pale. "If it was a good joke, it stayed in," he said.

Having tapped into a niche market, Yuk Yuk's prospered. "We were packed from the very beginning, though we weren't always financially viable," he said in an interview in a midtown café.

After moving to its first permanent location on Bay Street in 1978, Yuk Yuk's expanded beyond Toronto, opening a branch in Ottawa. Buoyed by its success, Breslin opened eight more clubs in the next three years. "It was quite an expansion," he noted.

There are 17 Yuk Yuk's clubs in Canada today, stretching from St. John's to Vancouver. Though franchised, he owns the intellectual property rights to the name and format.

Mark Breslin

At one point, he expanded into the United States, setting up branches in upstate New York – Buffalo and Rochester – and in Maui, Hawaii (where he lived for eight months).

Breslin launched Yuk Yuk's by chance.

After graduating from York University with a BA degree in English literature, he was at a loss, not knowing what to do.

But he knew his degree would not take him far. "It prepared me to work for a taxi company," he quipped.

Certainly, he was not interested in joining his father, Ruben, an entrepreneur in the garment district who made shirts and then switched into the nursing home business.

Nor was he certain whether he should continue his studies at the postgraduate level. The uncertainty vanished after Harbourfront hired him as its director of theatre and music. Yet two years later, he was out of a job.

"I was fired," he said, explaining that his position was eliminated by cutbacks. "I fell into Yuk Yuk's after finding myself unemployed."

Breslin did not know much about show business, but he knew that his future was in comedy.

The comedians he had worked with and befriended at Harbourfront were chafing at the bit, eager to do something different. They wanted to try out daring, racy jokes that management had discouraged and that Second City, a comedy club that preceded Yuk Yuk's, was also wary of.

Breslin approached a friend who happened to be wealthy and asked him whether it would be a good idea to start an edgier version of Second City.

"You have a business here," the friend said after duly considering the concept. He arranged financing, and Yuk Yuk's was born.

With Breslin doing double duty as host and comedian, Yuk Yuk's was a popular attraction. But after the *Globe and Mail* published a story about it on its front page, Breslin never looked back. "I was turning away hundreds of people at the door," he recalled.

As he discovered to his chagrin, comedians could be unreasonably demanding and jarringly vain. As he put it, "The comedy industry is a viper's pit due to clashing egos."

Yuk Yuk's "graduates" are household names today: Jim Carrey, Howie Mandel, Rick Moranis, Russell Peters, Mike Buller, Jeremy Hotz and Harland Williams.

Sizing up his "graduates," he observed, "Carrey was young, but old school. Mandel would do anything for a laugh. Peters revitalized race in comedy. Hotz is the best standup comedian since Jack Benny. Williams exhibited pure, child-like wonder. Buller, in his improvised banter, was razor sharp."

Breslin's latest crop of comedians, including Jessica Holmes and Sam Kinison, are featured in a new boxed set of DVDs. *Road Warriors and Rarities* is written and narrated by Breslin and distributed by Harper Audio Canada.

When Breslin launched Yuk Yuk's, Jewish comedians were omnipresent in Canada. But with Jewish talent having largely migrated to the United States, Jews no longer dominate the Canadian club scene.

In his judgment, Woody Allen was probably the most important comedian in the second half of the 20th century, filling the shoes of Charlie Chaplin, who dominated the first half. "He brought a whole new level of intellectualism to the business that didn't exist before. And he made comedy extremely personal."

Breslin also admires Jack Benny's subtlety, Joan Rivers' fearlessness and vulnerability and Lenny Bruce's cleverness. But he was never an admirer of Myron Cohen's 1950s ethnic jokes, and he believes that Jackie Mason peaked in the 1990s.

To Breslin, great comedians share three qualities. They rock to their own rhythm. They have superior writing skills. They display an exaggerated personality flaw that becomes endearing.

Breslin is in charge of Humber College's comedy program, the only one of its kind in the world. He founded it, sits on its advisory board and is its producer in residence. "It's a very gratifying job," he said. But it bothers him that some of Humber's most talented graduates are either underemployed or unemployed.

Breslin, though, has no trouble keeping busy.

A television producer whose credits include *Late Night with Joan Rivers, Friday Night with Ralph Benmergui* and, most recently, *Kenny vs. Spenny*, he has also appeared on radio (*Live from Yuk Yuk's* and *Laugh Attack*).

Apart from having written several books – *Zen and Now* and *Control Freaked*, among others – he writes a monthly comedy column for the *Village Post* and reviews films for *Metro*.

But his most outstanding achievement may be his one-year-old son, Jackson, whom he fathered with his wife, Karina Lemke, a wedding planner and florist. "Jackson is named for Jackson Pollock, the abstract painter. I'm hoping he makes a revolutionary mess like his namesake."

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Gary Carter remembered

David Lazarus
Staff Reporter

Former Montreal Expos great Gary Carter's death from cancer Feb. 16 at only 57 was not unexpected, but the news still rattled Jewish fans, friends and those who were ardent followers of the "Kid" during his decade in Montreal.

Including this one.

At the time of his diagnosis last May, Johnny Elias, a friend for 35 years from the time Carter was a fixture at Elias' long defunct Grand Slam Baseball School in Cote St. Luc, expressed shock at the news.

Now, according to Cote St. Luc city councillor Mike Cohen, fellow councillor Allan Levine is considering tabling a proposal to have a field in CSL's Kirwin Park, where Grand Slam was located, renamed after Carter.

"I mean, 57 years old," Elias said last May at the time of Carter's diagnosis. "It's frightening."

Right. That's my age, too, and if there's one thing you get to know in life, it's that you never know.

Comment

Elias, who hosted Carter's 2003 Baseball Hall of Fame induction and received annual greetings from the former all-star catcher, told *The CJN* on Feb. 17, a day after Carter's death, that he had seen his old friend and chatted with him just one month earlier at a fundraiser for autistic children in West Palm Beach, Fla.

"I considered him, a good, good friend," said Elias, who also spent years pitching batting practice for the Expos.

"We spoke, but he did not look well or feel well at all," Elias said in a call from Hallandale, Fla.

Elias recalled how at Grand Slam, Carter took the trouble to go over to, and speak for a full five minutes with, a young boy who seemed unhappy.

"I just couldn't believe how he went over to someone he had never met before to do that," Elias recalled. "Gary would bring bats, balls, equipment to the school. He was there every summer for 11 years."

Carter also never let Elias forget that Elias left Shea Stadium in New York to return to Canada late in Game 6 of the 1986 World Series between the New York Mets and Boston Red Sox, when Carter played a decisive role in helping the New York Mets come back to win one of the greatest World Series games of all time. Elias said that Carter and Andre Dawson, the two Expos in the Hall of Fame, "were definitely the two greatest players the team ever had."

Gary Carter in the Baseball Hall of Fame

Like everyone else, I remember Carter vividly, because during his decade in Montreal (1974-84), plus one more season in 1992, when he was 38, Carter was ever the exuberant, gung-ho player, always grinning and friendly.

He had a bullet arm from the plate, he had power, he had swagger. And he had the numbers. But then-owner Charles Bronfman reportedly never liked the fact he allowed Carter to sign a multi-year contract paying him more than $1 million per year – chump change by today's standards.

Carter competed 1,000 per cent, even when his knees were so ground down from the catcher's crouch that they seemed to buckle beneath him.

Critics, however, thought he was a bit of a hot dog, and Elias said some teammates resented him for "never saying no to a media interview request." "But that was the real Gary Carter," Elias said.

And it's true: what you saw was what you got. Carter was always his authentic self, the real deal.

"He was Mr. Baseball," Mark Routtenberg, who was part of a local consortium of Expos owners during the 1990s, including during Carter's last year, told *The CJN* from Florida.

Routtenberg got to know Carter fairly well, and they played golf together occasionally, but they didn't really socialize. Routtenberg remembered him as a man who never refused a request from a charity, who went to hospitals or schools any time he was asked, to meet fans and speak about the game he loved.

"I was just a fan in those days, and French-Canadians loved him," Routtenberg said. "He learned [some] French. He was the star. He never wanted to leave Montreal and was just a great guy."

Routtenberg said he last chatted with Carter a few months before his diagnosis. For me, Carter's death also hit home for personal reasons. In 1981, when my older sister had a recurrence of cancer that would take her life a little more than a year later, it was Carter, upon request, who with his teammates autographed a baseball for her. She had a major crush on Carter, and I still have the baseball she cherished, with his signature standing out – just like he did.

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Braun wins drug test appeal

JTA

NEW YORK — Milwaukee Brewers outfielder Ryan Braun won his appeal of his earlier positive test for performance-enhancing drugs.

The decision, announced on Feb.23, means that Braun – the reigning National League most valuable player and the first Jew to earn that distinction in nearly five decades – will avoid a 50-game suspension.

Braun's suspension was overturned by an arbitrator. It's believed to be the first time a baseball player has successfully challenged a drug-related grievance.

No reasoning for the ruling was given, but the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* reported that the 2-1 ruling by the arbitration panel hearing Braun's case turned on a technicality related to the timeliness of his drug test being passed to a testing lab.

In December, it was reported that Braun, the son of an Israeli-born father and Catholic mother, had tested positive for elevated testosterone levels. Braun denied using performance-enhancing drugs.

"I am very pleased and relieved by today's decision," Braun said in a statement reported by news agencies. "It is the first step in restoring my good name and reputation. We were able to get through this because I am innocent and the truth is on our side."

Rob Manfred, Major League Baseball's vice-president for labor relations, said his organization "vehemently disagrees with the decision."

Correction

The curler in the photograph with the article "Manitoba curler qualifies for national championships" (Feb. 23) was misidentified. He is not Kyle Doering. *The CJN* regrets the error.

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Tikkun olam drives author's private detective Jonah Geller

Sheldon Kirshner
Staff Reporter

Jonah Geller, 34, is six feet tall, weighs 185 pounds and is very fit. Sporting a black belt in karate, he is a keen student of krav maga, the martial arts technique pioneered and developed in Israel.

Licensed as a private investigator in Toronto, this former Israeli army soldier owns the World Repairs Agency, named after the Jewish tradition of tikkun olam, or repairing the world one step at a time.

Geller, raised in Toronto's Bathurst Manor neighbourhood, is a figment of the imagination of Howard Shrier, a former newspaper reporter born in Montreal.

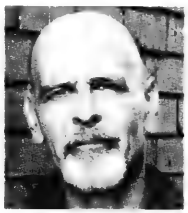
Last month, Shrier's third Jonah Geller crime novel, *Boston Cream* (Vintage Canada), was published, having been preceded by *Buffalo Jump* (2008) and *High Chicago* (2009). Shrier's first two mystery books won Arthur Ellis Awards for excellence in Canadian crime writing, making him the only Canadian author ever to win two such prizes in a row. He is currently working on his fourth Geller novel, *Miss Montreal*, which is due in the spring of 2013.

The Geller novels already in print are now in development as a television series for CTV. "I'm not writing the pilot," he said, noting that a fellow graduate of Montreal's Herzliah High School, Avrum Jacobson, got the assignment. "But I'm keeping a close eye on it and consulting as needed," he added. Shrier – whose stand-alone novel, *Lostport*, was published as an e-book last year – started the first Geller novel in the summer of 2003 while vacationing at his Georgian Bay cottage.

"I began the book partly because I had run out of things to read," he explained. "But mostly because I had been reading crime fiction for years and thought it was time I tried writing one in earnest."

A big fan of the genre since his early 20s, Shrier honed his taste for it on the classic private eye novels of Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler and especially Ross Macdonald, all of whom were strong influences. Subsequently, he delved into the novels of Robert Crais and Dennis Lehane. His favourite crime writer is Elmore Leonard, whose best book, he claims, is *Glitz*.

Before writing *Buffalo Jump*, Shrier got as far as turning out four chapters of a crime novel. "What helped this time was that the initial premise just wouldn't let go: what if a hit man were given a job he didn't want to do because it involved a child the same age as his son, and what if he needed a private investigator to find out who ordered the contract so he could convince them to leave out the kid?"


Howard Shrier

Obsessed with the plot, and confident of his ability to research and write the story, Shrier finished his first Geller novel four years later.

Jewish references are sprinkled throughout the Geller novels. "From the very beginning, Jonah speaks of his desire to commit acts of tikkun olam, he said. "Many of the people who hire him are Jewish, having heard of him through the community or his family." In *Boston Cream*, a rabbi and his daughter are among the lead characters, he pointed out.

Prior to embarking on a career as a crime writer, Shrier spent years as a specialist in corporate and government communications and in freelance journalism.

"I was a seasoned, disciplined writer, used to deadlines. The transition to novelist was not so difficult. The hardest transition was probably financial. My income in the first year dropped from $90,000 to $9,000."

Some publishers rejected *Buffalo Jump*, but Anne Collins, an editor at Random House, liked it and offered him a two-book deal. "I feel very fortunate to have been able to make the leap from corporate life to fiction writing," said Shrier, who teaches writing at the University of Toronto's School of Continuing Studies. "The job I had was interesting, secure, well-paying, but it wasn't satisfying on deeper levels. With my family's support, I took the plunge, and have been rewarded in work that demands the very best of me."

A Concordia University graduate in journalism and creative writing whose first paid position was as a CJAD Radio news writer in Montreal, Shrier worked as a crime reporter for the now-defunct *Montreal Star* from April 1979 until it folded less than six months later.

Asked how many more crime novels he intends to produce, he replied, "I'm not sure. It depends on whether Random House wants more and on other projects I have in mind. But I love Jonah and want to stay with him as long as possible."

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FCancer educates Generation Y

Cara Edell
Special to The CJN

Yael Cohen, 25, knew she was onto something when a T-shirt she made for her mother, who was battling breast cancer, elicited hugs from complete strangers.

"The T-shirt was meant to be something [my mother] wore in private as a source of strength, but being the dynamite she is, she wore it everywhere," Cohen said. "Peoples' reactions were unbelievable. She couldn't walk a block without high fives, hugs, stories and tears."

Cohen said she always jokes "that it takes a hell of a lot for a stranger to hug another stranger in our society, and I knew we had something powerful that really resonated when strangers hugged mom. And I wanted to do something good with it. The movement grew very organically into what it is today. What started as a T-shirt is now so much more."

The T-shirt that Cohen made for her mother after her first surgery read "Fuck Cancer." It created "an overwhelming response to anyone who saw it," which in turn sparked Cohen, founder of a Vancouver-based charity called FCancer, to share the message.

Cohen is on a mission to educate young people about the early warning signs of cancer and inspire them to spread the word.

Founded in 2009, FCancer is the first and only Canadian cancer charity focused primarily on early detection education, she said.

FCancer's mission is to actively engage Generation Y (17- to 35-year-olds) and equip them with the information they need to make a difference. Since 90 per cent of all cancers are curable if detected in stage one, Cohen said she believes FCancer will save lives.

"FCancer is creating a generation of early detection ambassadors who, by learning about what to do to stay healthy, what to watch out for, and what questions to ask, are taking control of their health and the health of their parents."

Cohen said she started FCancer because Generation Y is "the generation of instant gratification and quizzical suspicion. If we can't do or see it being done, you're hard pressed to make us believe. I realized that if I can make curing cancer active rather than passive, we just might stand a chance. To me, this is really positive news. It puts the power back in our hands. It gives us a call to action, which my generation thrives on."

To date, FCancer has raised nearly $1 million. "I think it's brought attention to itself. People gravitate to movements like ours that are authentic, passionate and transparent," said Cohen, who was the only Canadian speaker at the 2010 White House Next Generation Leadership Conference.

Most recently, FCancer won $25,000 in the Mozilla Firefox Challenge. With the support of One Tree Hill actor Sophia Bush, the charity was able to raise more than $117,000 for early cancer detection education, making the total winning amount $142,000.

The month-long holiday fundraising contest put several celebrity-backed charities in competition to raise awareness and funds for social and humanitarian causes. Aside from FCancer, the top contenders included Seth Rogen for Hilarity for Charity, Edward Norton for the Maasai Wilderness Conservation and Jonah Hill for Nothing But Nets.

The competition was tight, but FCancer narrowly beat Rogen, who finished second by a difference of less than $5,000.

"We are so thrilled to have won the Mozilla Firefox Challenge," said Cohen. "The really remarkable thing is that thousands of people contributed to our win, and those thousands of people helped fully fund FCancer for 2012. We now enter the new year free to dedicate every minute to creating and implementing the most revolutionary early detection campaigns we can imagine."

Bush is on FCancer's board of advisers. Her mother, like Cohen's, is a cancer survivor who attributes her recovery to early detection.

"Sophia and I were on the phone screaming with excitement in the middle of the night when they put the winner title up," Cohen said.

In targeting young people, FCancer takes a unique approach. "We talk to the youth. This is big. Too few talk to the youth about cancer because we're not in the highest risk demographic and we certainly aren't the large donors. This is a huge mistake. We teach them how to use their phones, program their PVR and how to balance their diets, so why don't we teach them something that can actually save their lives?"

Generation Y has "an unprecedented sense of responsibility to teach their parents," Cohen said. "My generation teaches their parents more than any generation ever has. Teaching is the best way to learn, so by teaching our parents, you bet we're learning, too, and by the time we're at the age in the highest risk demographic, we'll be looking for cancer instead of just finding it."

Cohen said FCancer goes online and uses "edgy, funny and provocative campaigns to break through to the media-saturated generation. This is another thing that sets us apart. Marketing is an invaluable tool to getting people to take action. Our campaigns aim to let people interact with cancer on a different level, through humour and raw emotion."

At FCancer, "we often talk about the fact that when you've lost your sense of humour, you've really lost it all. If someone is actually interested in and excited about what they're learning, they're going to remember it, and share it with their network. What better way to interact with Gen Y than by using humour and wit?"

Cohen said she's learned that the supporters with the most to laugh about are actually those who have gone through cancer themselves. "They're sick of the pity, the sad looks, or the expectation that they're meant to say certain things or act in a specific way. Instead of expecting them to be gracious and humble, Fuck Cancer opens up a realm which lets them get pissed off, or even find something absolutely hilarious about the situation."

Many of the earliest warning signs of cancer are seemingly benign and highly embarrassing, Cohen said. "Most people won't talk about uncomfortable early warning signs like nipple leakage, bloating, or painful ejaculation, but they will joke about them, which opens the door to education and conversation. To make a real change, we have to be interested and engaged."

Going forward, Cohen said she hopes FCancer can continue to grow and educate. "We are going to be the generation that puts an end to late-stage cancer diagnosis. In the same way there have been paradigm shifts in how people perceive drinking and driving, smoking and global warming, this movement will flip the switch on how we think of cancer."

Diane Cohen, left, poses with her daughter Yael Cohen, founder of FCancer.

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Bialik students race for zero waste

It seems I need to be constantly ready to have a meaningful discussion on sustainability practices within the Jewish community. You never know how and where the topic could come up.

I recently attended a bar mitzvah at Congregation Beth Torah in Toronto. I spoke with David Young, an acquaintance of mine going back many years and currently the cantor at the synagogue, about the recent renovations that the synagogue had undergone.

As we discussed some of the points around the renovation and the abundance of natural light, which was being used to illuminate the banquet hall where we were eating, I was reintroduced to his wife, Beverley, who is vice-principal of the senior division (grades 6-8) at Bialik Hebrew Day School.

Sustainable Jew

Fred Winegust

Beverley asked me about my interest in conservation and sustainable operations of synagogues. She then brought me up to date on some of the sustainability efforts she and her team have been spearheading at Bialik, currently a gold-level certified Ontario EcoSchool.

Similar to other Toronto Jewish day schools, Bialik recognized the need to improve the existing program by getting students more involved and moving toward a more visible and measurable effort.

Bialik saw the opportunity of using the leadership potential of their older students to raise the consciousness of the younger students in the school. They created a year-long friendly inter-school and inter-grade challenge called the Race for Zero Waste. In their capacity as student leaders, all senior division students have the opportunity, on a monthly rotation, to be involved in shaping the program, participate in its rollout, and to grow personally as they mentor their younger counterparts in junior kindergarten through Grade 5.

The Race for Zero Waste aims to reduce the measurable volume of waste leaving the school. Working with the school's waste-management company, the students determined the current volume of waste and used that as a benchmark to measure the improvements they were able to influence.

The key to the effort was to reduce the amount of waste produced at the school while making sure that the school was taking advantage of the recycling programs in which the waste management company participates.

To reduce the amount of waste, student leaders encourage waste-free lunches. This did not mean stuffing the waste into the student's lunch bag and taking it home for disposal, which would have meant shifting the waste problem from the school to the home.

Students and their parents are encouraged to put their lunches into reusable containers and to reduce the number of plastic water bottles leaving the school for recycling by using refillable water bottles.

These ideas and more are being shared with the Etzion Gaver School in Eilat. More about that in next month's column.

An update:

- Kavana Gardens was recently selected for funding by the Six Points Venture Philanthropy effort.
- ZooShare won Toronto's Climatespark competition in which Robbins Hebrew Academy and Leo Baeck Day School were top 10 finalists

Winegust@gmail.ca

TWO-TONE POTATO ROLL FOR PURIM

10 lg white potatoes, cubed; 2 lg onions, minced; 5 tbls oil; 7 sweet potatoes cubed, 3/4 tsp salt; 6 tbls margarine

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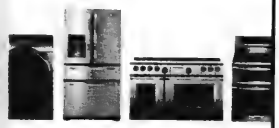

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The CJN's French-language reporter in Montreal, Elias Levy, talks with:

David Ouellette, associate director for Quebec public affairs at the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, and Alain Saulnier, Radio-Canada's executive director of news and current affairs, French services, who discuss Radio-Canada' coverage of the Middle East.

Exclusive to cjnews.com

The CJN's Hebrew-language columnist, Yosef Tastassa, writes about the winds of war, which may be blowing in the Middle East.

CJN web columnist Masada Siegel writes about facing your fears and learning to ski.

Also on the web

A new Passover Haggadah that emphasizes individual freedom and the role of human beings in bringing about an ideal world has been written by Rabbi Ronald Aigen in Montreal.

I love you

I was going to write about middle names. Then I met the kid who wasn't loved enough.

And I wanted to tell you, you can never love enough, and if you've been thinking you could be doing a better job loving your kids, loving yourself, loving your neighbours, then do so.

Urban Writer

Avrum Rosensweig

The kid told me his parents are fulsome and fussy, to everyone but him. He said that behind closed doors, they sour on him and act as if he was mistakenly present. A smile to strangers. A nasty face to kin. That's familial thievery. And they forget it's not their friends who will wheel them when they're getting on. They forget they must show love to get love.

The young boy's older brother punches him when he gets home, and his parents say little, because the older brother is the "special one."

The kid teared up. "I want to be loved," he tells me. "Why don't they like me?"

How does that work? He's from her womb. He's his seed. It seems, we must reject our own. I guess we are nature. Maybe we should start giving examples from people to prove things about animals.

Non-special kids know they are. And beatings hurt. "It's only bruises," he said.

There is a Somali proverb that states: the last camel in line walks as quickly as the first. Which means, what happens to the least of us, has an effect on all of us. How can the Toronto Jewish community help this family? How can everyone help?

We must all learn how to express our love in a way that it is clearer, in a way that will circulate. To achieve this, sensitivity and appreciation between denominations is paramount, as is a personal journey into our own behaviour.

Every child must know he or she is cared for and that someone recognizes the uniqueness of his/her soul. When did you last hold your child, look him or her in the eyes and say, "You are my gem, and I thank God every day you are mine." When was the last time you paraded your child's gift in his/her eyes, invested in it, and helped your child nurture it? When did you do the same for yourself? "What a gift I am to me."

We have more than 100 shuls in Toronto and many schools. We have programs, places to buy Judaica and men who write Torahs. All of those, all of them, exist to show love for our neighbours, kids and ourselves. All of them exist in the humanist, secular, Reform, Conservative, Orthodox and haredi communities. All of them are worthless if they do not encourage kindness, authenticity and genuine love, particularly for our children, particularly for ourselves. This applies to all religions, to all communities.

Figuring you're doing your best is like loving a child by mistake. It doesn't work that well. It's like the kid who grabbed my hand at the video store instead of his mom's. He knew I was the stranger. He felt it in his fingers, on his knuckles, in his palm. He pulled away.

Hold your child close. Listen to your child. Learn how to show him/her you. If you've never said, "I love you," say it. Esther loved the Jewish people. Mordechai loved Esther.

I was going to write about middle names, then I met this kid who wasn't loved enough.

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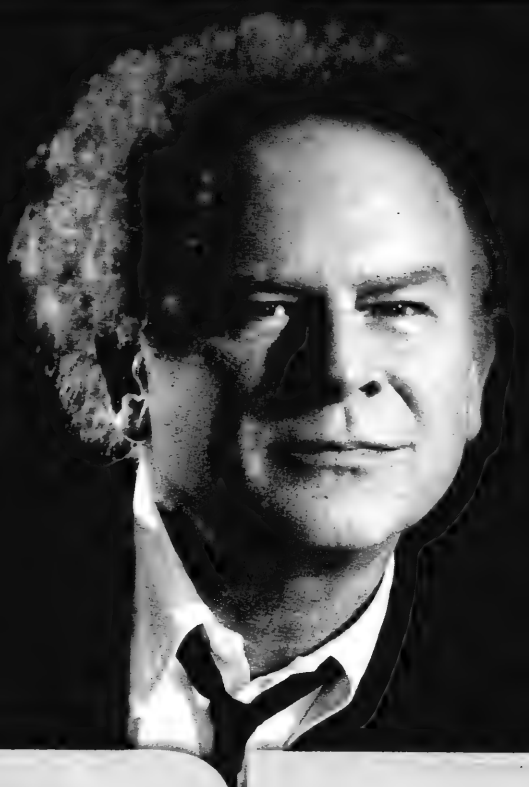

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Benjamin Netanyahu, left, and Stephen Harper walk down the Hall of Honour shortly after the Israeli prime minister arrived in Ottawa on March 2. [*Jason Ransom photo*]

Netanyahu, Harper bask in friendship

Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf
Staff Reporter

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu arrived in Canada last Friday for meetings with senior government officials and, as expected, Iran dominated the agenda.

At a March 2 press conference in Ottawa, Prime Minister Stephen Harper welcomed his Israeli counterpart back to Canada. Netanyahu was last in the country in May 2010, but had to cut his trip short when the Israeli navy caused an international incident after boarding the Gaza-bound ship Mavi Marmara and killing nine armed activists.

Harper expressed "pleasure" at Netanyahu's return, and the Israeli prime minister said he had "warm feelings" for Canada and its support of his country on the world stage.

The two then spoke briefly to reporters about topics they planned to discuss over the weekend, and took questions.

Both men said they looked forward to talking about strengthening and expanding trade and economic relations, as well as collaborative initiatives in the fields of science and technology.

But Netanyahu said Iran and its "relentless pursuit" of nuclear weapons were foremost on his mind.

While acknowledging that the best way to resolve the Iranian question would be through peaceful means, Netanyahu said Tehran has historically proven that it is willing to exploit diplomatic channels to deceive and delay until it achieved its goals. He said this time around, it could use the same strategy to "get to the nuclear finish line by running out the clock."

The international community shouldn't let this happen, he said, adding that "all options should be left on the table" to prevent Iran from advancing its nuclear program.

He called on the nations of the world to clearly demand that Iran dismantle its underground nuclear facility in Qom, stop uranium enrichment and "get rid" of all its fissile material.

Netanyahu said that as Israel's prime minister, it's his duty to convince the world of the Iranian threat.

Asked whether Canada would support a unilateral Israeli preemptive military strike against Iran, Harper said that while he believes Tehran would be a danger to the world if it acquired nuclear weapons, Canada "would like to see a peaceful resolution to the situation."

Regarding a hypothetical Israeli strike on Iran, Harper said that Canada would "of course recognize the right of Israel to defend itself as a sovereign Jewish state. But we support exploring every avenue to make sure a peaceful resolution is possible."

Continued on page 32

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Obama not ruling out military force against Iran – see page 41

CANADA

Ex-CICer Named

OTTAWA — A Liberal Party researcher who was behind an anonymous Twitter account that released details of Public Safety Minister Vic Toews' divorce was also a former head of the defunct Canada-Israel Committee's Pacific region office. In addition to having worked for CIC in Vancouver before it was absorbed in a Jewish communal reorganization by the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, Adam Carroll also worked for a number of Liberal MPs in Ottawa. He resigned his party job last week after being named as the source of the account.

WORLD

Shoah Mall Protest

PRAGUE — Opponents of a proposed shopping centre to be built on the site where Jews were deported to Nazi death camps want to ensure an appropriate monument is also erected. Protesters wearing yellow Stars of David and pushing empty shopping carts met Feb. 27 at the site in Prague where construction on the controversial shopping centre is set to begin. The protesters are wary of a pledge by the United Kingdom-based developer Lordship to build a monument to the Jewish transport victims who left from the site and also want to ensure that the monument will be dignified.

Jewish School Plays

HOUSTON — A Texas athletic league reversed course and rescheduled tournament games to enable an Orthodox Jewish day school, the Robert M. Beren Academy of Houston, to compete. The Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools, known as TAPPS, decided March 1 to reschedule a state boys' basketball tournament semifinal so that Beren Academy could play without violating Shabbat. The game had been scheduled for last Friday night, but instead was played in the afternoon. The decision came just hours after the announcement that the team captain, along with teammates and parents, had filed a lawsuit against TAPPS and the Mansfield Independent School District, whose facilities are hosting the semifinals and finals of the tournament. TAPPS had previously rejected two appeals from Beren to reschedule the game The final was originally set for 2 p.m. Saturday, which also conflicts with Shabbat. In a statement, TAPPS said that when the Beren Academy met with the TAPPS board in 2009 to discuss membership, it was told tournament games are played on Friday and Saturday, and that the school's athletic director said he "understood."

Daniel Pearl 'Baptized' in Mormon Ritual

Daniel Pearl

NEW YORK — Daniel Pearl was baptized in a Mormon proxy ritual in another case of a prominent deceased Jew discovered to have been baptized posthumously in recent weeks.

Pearl, a *Wall Street Journal* reporter kidnapped and executed by terrorists in Pakistan in February 2002, was baptized by proxy last June at a Mormon temple in Idaho, the *Boston Globe* reported. The rite was revealed by Helen Radkey, an ex-church member who now works to reveal such activity.

The discovery came shortly after it was found that the parents of Nazi hunter Simon Wiesenthal were posthumously baptized. Last month, Anne Frank was posthumously baptized, and the names of the father and grandfather of Shoah survivor and author Elie Wiesel were found to have been submitted for proxy baptism.

Pearl's parents, Judea and Ruth, said it was "disturbing" to learn of the proxy baptism. "To them we say we appreciate your good intentions, but rest assured that Danny's soul was redeemed through the life that he lived and the values that he upheld," the Pearls said. "He lived as a proud Jew, died as a proud Jew and is currently facing his creator as a Jew, blessed, accepted and redeemed. For the record, let it be clear: Danny did not choose to be baptized, nor did his family consent to this uncalled-for ritual."

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Cotler rejects 'Israeli apartheid' – in South Africa

Paul Lungen
Staff Reporter

As activists on campuses around the world demonize Israel as an "apartheid state," Liberal MP Irwin Cotler made the case for Israel as a bastion of human rights in the very place apartheid was practised – South Africa.

Meeting with senior cabinet ministers, judges, NGOs and members of civil society, the former justice minister rejected the allegation Israel practices racial exclusion that targets Palestinians. Such an accusation is not only false, it demeans and detracts from the real horrors of apartheid, he asserted.

> *A democratic state with equal rights*

Recently returned from his visit, Cotler told *The CJN* that his views were received respectfully and with interest – without the emotion one might expect in a country that suffered under apartheid.

The view of Israel as practising apartheid does have currency in South Africa, Cotler conceded. "It is present there, but people in South Africa don't go around preoccupied with it."

South African political leaders are focused on domestic issues, such as women's rights and reforming the country's institutions. And during a question-and-answer session at Wits University, attended by some 500 students, in which he spoke on the pursuit of justice, it wasn't until he was halfway through the session before a student politely raised the question whether Israel was an apartheid state.

"Not at all," Cotler recalled answering. "In fact, to say that Israel is an apartheid state is a slanderous remark."

Unlike apartheid South Africa, Israel is a democratic state with equal rights, a free press, an independent judiciary, and a vibrant civil society with active NGOs.

Continued on page 21

Former Canadian Justice Minister, Irwin Cotler, left, met with South African Justice and Constitutional Development Minister Jeff Radebe. *[Howard Liebman photo]*

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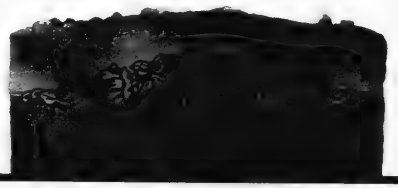

History's centre

From the editor's desk...

Last week in Doha, Qatari officials hosted a two-day gathering called the International Conference for the Defence of Jerusalem. Representatives from more than 70 countries and organizations reportedly attended. Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas delivered one of the keynote addresses.

Among the egregiously false statements Abbas shared with his eagerly believing audience was the claim that "the Israeli occupation authorities are using the ugliest and most dangerous means to implement plans to erase and remove the Arab-Islamic and the Christian character of east Jerusalem.

As reported by *Ha'aretz*, Abbas compared Israel's control of Jerusalem to the Roman and Crusader occupations of the city. He also cast doubt on the existence of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem and accused Israel of trying to harm the al-Aqsa Mosque, and he encouraged Arabs and Muslims to visit Jerusalem in order to strengthen their hold on the city and to "establish the Palestinian culture and heritage sites."

Truth does not sit comfortably on Abbas' tongue.

We have seen proof of his proclivity to dissemble time and time again. The most notable evidence, perhaps, was in an op-ed essay he wrote for the *New York Times* on May 16, 2011, in which he implied that Israel and not the Arabs had rejected the partition vote of November 1947. Renowned historian Shlomo Avineri described Abbas' essay as "shameful and mendacious."

The inability of the Palestinian leadership to accept Jewish sovereignty in Jerusalem is, understandably, part of the intractable political posturing over the future of the city. But the inability of the Palestinian leadership to accept any Jewish history in, or special connection to, Jerusalem is, lamentably and worrisomely, very problematic.

With Abbas' latest public prevarications still ringing in our ears, *The CJN* last week had the felicitous opportunity to ask a visiting Israeli historian and archeological authority to comment on the PA president's Doha accusations against the Jewish state.

He shook his head in disgust.

"We research our past there [in Jerusalem] and still we allow everyone else to look for their past as well," Shahar Shilo responded.

"The only reason others can visit their own holy sites is because they [the sites] are under the control of Israeli authorities. The only sites that are limited to the public are the ones held by the Waqf," Shilo emphasized. (The Waqf is the Muslim religious authority that controls the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.) "The Temple Mount is the most restricted area in Israel," Shilo added, pointing out that public, non-Muslim access to the Temple Mount is allowed only for certain hours and on certain days.

Shahar Shilo

Shilo is a member of the department of tourism and hotel management at Ben-Gurion University in the Negev. He is the manager of the very rigorous national educational program based in Jerusalem that accredits tour guides in Israel. He is also currently the marketing director for the heritage site of Ir David (the ancient City of David). Shilo has an MBA and a master's degree in history and is currently working on his PhD.

Shilo was in Toronto last week on a quick stop to speak, among other things, about the archeological, historical and heritage treasures that await a visitor to Israel in the Negev. He also told us of the recent archeological discoveries in the ancient City of David.

He spoke with great enthusiasm. He imparted information and knowledge to his audience like an electrical current sweeping a magnetic field. His listeners buzzed and hummed with question after question.

Cross-referencing sources from the Jewish and Christian bibles and from the writings of the historian Josephus, Shilo was especially rhapsodic about the new archeological findings in the ancient City of David, located just to the south of the walled Old City, underneath the Arab village of Silwan. He showed us slides of the spate of archeological discoveries there: ancient personal insignia seals, the ancient pool of Siloam, the Herodian road leading from the pool to the Temple Mount, the subterranean drainage channel adjacent to the path and personal items such as earrings, small statuaries and perhaps most exciting, a gold pomegranate-shaped bell worn by a Kohen to signal his presence in the Temple precinct.

In private conversation with *The CJN* after his formal presentation, Shiloh referred to Ir David as "the most important historical site in Israel, where the Jewish kingdom started."

He urged readers of *The CJN* to "come visit the country, the many sites to see where we started."

No amount of lying and prevarication by Abbas about Jerusalem's past can change what history, fact and science prove to be true.

Shahar Shilo attests to this important truth every day.

MBD

SeeJN

SYNAGOGUE EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS MEET

Executive directors from synagogues across Canada and United States met recently in Israel for the annual conference of the North American Association of Synagogue Executives (NAASE). The Canadian participants at the conference included: in the back row, from left, Deena Fishman and Mel Fishman, Shaar Shalom Congregation, Markham, Ont.; Penni Kolb, Congregation Shaar Hashomayim, Montreal; Pearl Grundland, Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue, Toronto; Barbara Berke, Beth Sholom Synagogue, Toronto; Ian Staniloff, Shaarey Zedek Synagogue, Winnipeg; Shannon Etkin, Congregation Beth Israel, Vancouver, and in the front row, from left, Miriam Telem, Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am Synagogue, Toronto, and Patti Etkin of Vancouver.

Negev Bookstore owners say goodbye after 51 years

Carolyn Blackman
Staff Reporter

As they served customers last week at Negev Bookstore, co-owner Arthur Kaplan and his wife, Mollie, talked about their plans to close the venerable Bathurst Street shop later this month.

Arthur Kaplan

Their family is probably looking forward to it.

They have four children, living in both Israel and New York, and "not enough" grandchildren, and they all want their parents and grandparents to spend more time with them, Mollie said.

"They're fighting over us," she laughed.

Arthur, 69, co-owns Negev with his brother, Mordechai, 66. They're closing the store and retiring. Arthur said they couldn't sell the business, but they sold the building that houses it.

Arthur has worked in the Bathurst Street business, which stocked books, Judaica and religious items, since 1961, when their father, David, opened the store.

A third brother, Israel (Izzy), who died two years ago, also worked at the store until he opened Israel's, the Judaica Store on Eglinton Avenue West, in 1982.

Without hesitation, Arthur credits the longevity of their business to God.

"We have to give Him credit for giving us a living, and for our children and grandchildren."

Mollie added that their customer service was also a huge factor. "We catered to everyone from Chassidim to non-Jews, and we went out of our way to make our customers happy."

She said that on one occasion, she and Arthur drove to Buffalo on the day of a customer's wedding to pick up pre-ordered benchers, which had not arrived to a Buffalo warehouse until that day.

"We were attending the wedding, so we put our clothes in the car, picked up the benchers, and then drove directly to the synagogue, where we changed into wedding [attire.]"

Cecile Kaplan, Mordechai's wife, said that her husband often delivered Jewish newspapers to his elderly customers if they couldn't get out of the house.

A lot of customers became like part of their family, Mollie said. "Generations of one family came into the store. They understood why we are closing, but they were upset when they heard the news.

"People came in to talk, to tell us their problems. We were also there to listen."

Arthur said the industry has changed since he and his father opened the store. "There are now iPads and e-readers, and people are buying books online. It's a different world now."

He feels "wonderful," though, about retiring, he said.

"When I get a call from my seven-year-old granddaughter asking me to come visit, my heart melts. Now we can go, and we can stay as long as we want."

Mollie said that the death of Izzy, who was the youngest brother, "really got us thinking about our priorities. You just never know what's going to come."

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Associated opening new Cedarvale preschool

Frances Kraft
Staff Reporter

Associated Hebrew Schools is planning to open a new location for preschoolers at Beth Sholom Synagogue next fall.

The Cedarvale Early Years Program will include the school's "Mini Mensch" (pre-nursery) program for children age 15 months to 3 years, and a nursery.

The Mini Mensch program, which currently operates only at the school's Kamin branch in Thornhill, is divided into two sections, one that children attend with a caregiver and one that they attend on their own.

Elana Shapiro Davidson

Almost 50 families attended an information session at the shul in January, where children took part in circle time led by a Mini Mensch teacher and were entertained by musician Mark Weinstock. Coincidentally, Associated operated an evening Hebrew school at Beth Sholom until about 40 years ago.

Rabbi Mark Smiley, Associated's director of education, told *The CJN* that the school, which has a total of 1,600 students at three branches, including a middle school, became aware in recent years that many alumni and supporters were living south of the school's southernmost branch on Neptune Drive – as far south as St. Clair Avenue.

"We started to see a critical mass [of parents] show interest about two to three years ago," he said. "At the same time, our Posluns branch [on Neptune] is close to being full.

"We are excited that Associated is continuing its tradition of putting its educational centres in areas that are accessible to its constituents – and who would have thought that families would be moving back into older Jewish neighbourhoods?"

Debbie Cohen Savage, a mother of two boys whose oldest son is in senior kindergarten at Posluns, lives near Bathurst Street and St. Clair. She says it's not uncommon for people to tell her that their grandparents lived on her street.

Because of the commute to Posluns, Cohen Savage said, "when we heard they were thinking about a preschool, we got very excited for our newborn."

The school is planning to provide a shuttle bus between the two locations for families who have children at both places. As well, an outdoor playground is being built.

Although there are other Jewish day schools in the area between Eglinton Avenue and St. Clair (Robbins Hebrew Academy, which is Conservative, and Leo Baeck Day School, which is Reform), the more traditional Associated is a closer match to Cohen Savage's and her husband's modern Orthodox values, she said.

Elana Shapiro Davidson, vice-principal of Bet Hayeled at Kamin, told *The CJN* there is excitement about the new program not only because Posluns has not had room to accommodate an early-years program, but because children entering nursery there are coming from a variety of programs.

"For kids to be with those friends and carry on together is something special. To have that continuity is really nice," she said.

Shapiro Davidson and Ora Shulman, current vice-principal at the Posluns branch, will be co-principals of Posluns next year, and Cedarvale will be part of their responsibilities.

Shapiro Davidson said that Mini Mensch represents children's "first entrance into school, and we really want them to feel they're in a Jewish setting... There's a big focus on language, [but in addition to academics] parents need to feel the place is safe and warm and loving and nurturing."

For more information about the new branch or to register, go to associatedcedarvale.com.

Yad Vashem seminar helped history teacher

Sheldon Kirshner
Staff Reporter

Warren Masters

A Toronto high school teacher is using information gleaned from a Yad Vashem studies program in Jerusalem to teach students about the Holocaust.

Warren Scott Masters, who teaches history and politics to grades 9 to 12 students at Crestwood Preparatory College and heads its social studies department, attended Yad Vashem's International School for Holocaust Studies in the summer of 2007.

Masters, 46, has used his expertise to develop two projects that heighten students' awareness and understanding of the Holocaust.

The Oral History Project and the Holocaust Symposium draw on the testimonies of local Holocaust survivors.

Masters, a two-time finalist for the Governor-General's Award for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History, also runs a program designed to turn students into socially conscious individuals. Many of the participants in the Youth Against Racial and Religious Discrimination program attend the Oral History Project and the Holocaust Symposium.

A McGill University graduate and a recent recipient of the Canadian Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence, Masters attended the four-week Yad Vashem seminar along with 40 other educators from around the world.

He was nominated for the program by Max Eisen, a survivor and community activist whom he befriended.

"We learned about every aspect of the Holocaust, from its origins through to the liberation of the concentration camps," Masters said. "We also spent a great deal of time on the pedagogical aspects of the Holocaust, looking at the many different ways to teach this difficult subject."

He added, "The content and philosophy were always challenging and surprising, while the human stories were memorable and emotional. We had the benefit of meeting some of the best minds in the field of Holocaust studies."

Although Masters was broadly familiar with the events of the Holocaust and had previously invited survivors to speak in his classes, the Yad Vashem seminar added to his knowledge considerably.

"Yad Vashem helped me to better understand and see the significance of having survivors present in class," he said. "So I redoubled my efforts and worked on developing the Oral History Project when I returned from Jerusalem."

Continued on page 7

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Holocaust symposium focuses on history

Continued from page 6

Using a small group approach, Masters puts four to eight students together with a survivor to facilitate conversations.

"The Yad Vashem seminar enables me to ensure that a survivor's testimony is appropriate for the students and helps me understand what questions are best to ask."

The Holocaust Symposium, which brings together six survivors and Grade 10 students, focuses on history but also on tolerance and diversity issues.

Judging by his observations, he feels students always appreciate the presence of a survivor in a classroom.

Masters said most students who take modern history courses are strongly interested in World War II and the Holocaust.

The Holocaust, he said, "is a topic many students want to understand better because it seems so incomprehensible in so many ways."

Since roughly half of Crestwood's student body is Jewish, many students have family connections to the Holocaust and a fair number have grandparents who are survivors.

In his Canadian history lessons, Masters never fails to mention that Canada admitted only about 5,000 European Jewish refugees from 1933 to 1945.

"We talk about that issue quite a bit. It's pretty shameful on all levels. It's a real eye opener for many students when we examine some of the diary entries of Canada's then-prime minister, Mackenzie King, or when we discuss the voyage of the St. Louis."

As well, Masters discusses the prevalence of prewar antisemitism in Canada.

"It's unfortunately not surprising, given the xenophobic nature of early 20th-century Canada. It is something we consider in the context of larger racist and anti-immigrant issues from this era."

Asked whether young Canadians are generally well informed about the Holocaust, he replied, "That really varies. Many students are really quite knowledgeable, but there are others who just aren't. In many of these cases, students have emigrated from countries where their previous education just didn't include the Holocaust. Still other students might not have a deep interest in history."

The Holocaust is a profound lesson in human behaviour, Masters said.

"It can teach us a lot about the terrible lows and the evil that people are capable of. It can also teach us about people's apathy. When combined, these factors allowed the Holocaust to happen.

"But the Holocaust teaches positive lessons, too. So we talk about the Righteous among the Nations. That's one of the reasons I invite survivors. There is always something remarkable in their recollections that creates a positive energy for the students."

For Masters, Holocaust denial is always jolting.

"Denying history of any kind really is troubling, but with the Holocaust, it is especially disturbing. I have gotten to know many survivors, many of whom lost everything and continue to carry guilt and pain all these years later. So you take it personally when you hear someone deny, minimize or distort the Holocaust out of hate or some sort of political agenda."

ROYAL SCENE: Sadie, as King Achashverosh, crowns Ava as Queen Esther. Sadie and Ava are junior kindergarten students at the Toronto Heschel School.

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An ancient, yet modern, menace

There is no way to avoid referring to the extra drama underlining the celebration of Purim this year for every Jew around the world. Some 2,500 years after the events of the Purim story unfolded in Persia (modern-day Iran), the same swaggering hatred of Jews that obsessed the Iranian leaders of those days and the same aspiration toward genocide that such hatred spawned then appear to reaching a crescendo of menace today.

Public pronouncements against that menace – the development of nuclear weapons capability by Iran – were unambiguously and carefully articulated last week in Ottawa and Washington, merely days ahead of the merriment and noisemaking, the sending of gifts to our friends and aid to the needy that will typify our celebration of Purim this week.

During a visit by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper reaffirmed his opposition to Iran developing nuclear weapons and urged that every avenue for a peaceful resolution of the crisis be explored while recognizing "the right of Israel to defend itself as a sovereign Jewish state."

In Washington, D.C., on Sunday, ahead of a visit by Netanyahu, U.S. President Barack Obama said much the same thing to the annual policy conference of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. "Iran's leaders should have no doubt about the resolve of the United States, just as they should not doubt Israel's sovereign right to make its own decisions about what is required to meet its security needs. I have said that when it comes to preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, I will take no options off the table, and I mean what I say."

The unambiguous language by Harper and Obama is significant, for Iran has often made clear that the first priority of its foreign policy is the removal of the Jewish state from the map of the world. Hence the constant, stomach-churning worry about Tehran's development of nuclear weapons.

The ever-heightening tension surrounding the crisis with Iran is the discomfiting, emotional and psychological backdrop to the celebration of Purim this year. And thus the extra drama.

And yet, as the cartoon on this page bids us, we will don a mask to make children laugh, to set aside our worries and to convey to them and to ourselves our confidence in the future despite those worries.

But once the masks are returned to their drawers or closets, we set ourselves to the task of ensuring our own rescue from the ancient, yet modern, menace. The Purim story tells us how.

We must act together. We must unite against the common danger. We must care for one another. We must do for one another. We must regard the safety and well-being of one as the safety and well-being of all. Happy Purim.

25 years ago in *The CJN*

British MP Grenville Janner said he would use his parliamentary privileges to identify Nazi war criminals living in his country against whom he believed sufficient evidence existed to warrant extradition. He was referring to a Simon Wiesenthal Center report listing 17 war crimes suspects. U.K. law did not provide for war crimes prosecutions, so suspects could only be extradited in response to foreign requests.

Dry Bones HAR HAR HAR
ON HALLOWEEN FOLKS DRESS UP IN COSTUMES TO SCARE EACH OTHER
BOO!
YOICKS!
BUT PURIM COSTUMES ARE DESIGNED TO MAKE US LAUGH. NOT TO SCARE US!
HAR HAR HAR
THIS IS BECAUSE WE HAVE THE WHOLE REST OF THE YEAR TO BE SCARED OUT OF OUR WITS
YOICKS!
... BY JUST WATCHING THE NEWS EACH EVENING!
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The remarkable Rabbi Plaut

Thank you for the wonderful tributes to the remarkable Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut in recent editions of *The CJN*.

One of my most precious possessions is a very meaningful book written by Rabbi Plaut, *The Price and Privilege of Growing Old*. This book was given 10 years ago to those who, like myself, moved into the new seniors building in Toronto constructed by Baycrest Residential Properties, the Reuben Cipin Healthy Living Community. I will be forever thankful and treasure the unique occasion of meeting Rabbi Plaut for the first time and introducing him as the first guest speaker of our ongoing monthly meetings.

The Price and Privilege of Growing Old invites its readers to draw conclusions about their own futures and find answers for all of us who face the question, "Where am I now in life and what lies ahead for me?" For all senior citizens, or for those planning to become one, this book is a must-read!

Monty Mazin
Toronto

• • •

Human rights museum a blessing

The Canadian Human Rights Museum now being built in Winnipeg is a blessing for all Manitoba citizens. Its structure is architecturally stunning and in my humble opinion could sit with pride anywhere in the world today. It radiates intelligence, physical magnificence, kindness and, most importantly, it is generating focus on the true meaning of human rights, and sending this message to the world.

A project of this magnitude will not escape criticism. Debating the issues surrounding this world wonder is healthy and necessary. The structure is spiritually uplifting, and it alone will draw many people with its solid educational, and enlightening, mandate.

The dream of the late Izzy Asper has, in part, become a reality as the result of the never-ending energy put forth by his daughter, Gail, who has travelled the world inspiring others to contribute. I thank all the private financial contributors worldwide as well as the federal government for having the foresight to see the museum's true potential.

Chaim (Hart) Peikoff
Winnipeg

• • •

Sometimes a cigar is just a cigar

Any way you slice it, the morning prayer's blessing for not having made me a woman is a sexist statement ("What men are saying," letters, Feb 16). Given other anti-women idioms by our sages, such as "Better to burn the words of the Torah than to teach them to a woman," "Women are too lazy and can't be trusted with some mitzvot," "Speaking to women will get you to hell," and the all-time low, "Man should not walk between two dogs, two pigs or two women," perhaps the letter writer – and other apologists – should consider that our sages were simply being honest about their "knowledge" and not so concerned about 21st-century political correctness. Sometimes a cigar is just a cigar, and chauvinists are just chauvinists.

Isaac Sachs
Montreal

• • •

LET THEM GO...

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz

Hana's Suitcase on Stage

I was interested to read the front-page story on *Hana's Suitcase*, by Paul Lungen, where he notes that in addition to Karen Levine's book, there was also a TV documentary by Joe Schlesinger on Hana's story, a film, a website, and a Japanese touring group of student actors called Small Wings who told Hana's story ("Poignant story touches the world: began 20 years ago with *CJN* interviews," Feb. 23).

I wanted to bring to your attention that Toronto author Emil Sher wrote a very moving play called *Hana's Suitcase on Stage* (published in February 2006), based on Karen Levine's original story. It has been performed all over North America. Hana's brother, George Brady, and his daughter, Lara, were present for the Montreal production, as was the playwright.

Tzipie Freedman
Regional Director
Act To End Violence Against Women
(formerly Jewish Women International of Canada)
Montreal

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cjninfo@gmail.com

Shalachmones

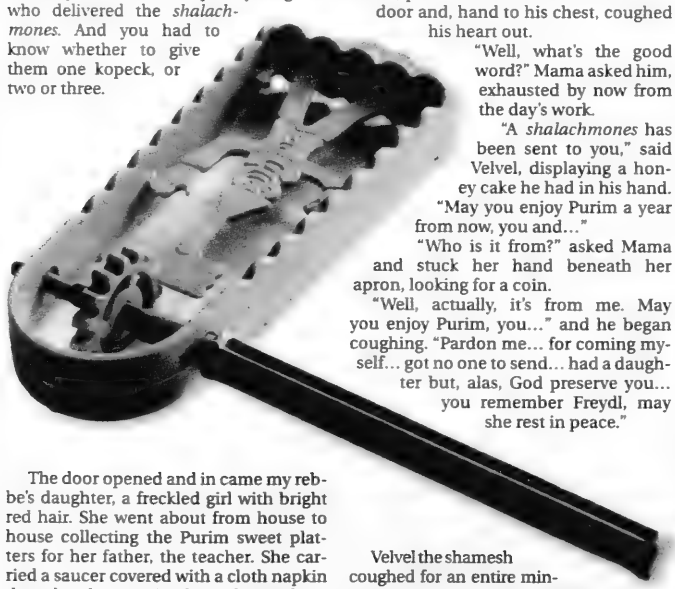
Sholom Aleichem

Translated from Yiddish and with an afterword by Curt Leviant

Wearing a silk kerchief and a plain apron – a combination of holiday and weekday attire – Mama stood by the table, practically at her wit's end. It was no trifle, you know, receiving almost a hundred *shalachmones*, the traditional Purim platter of sweets, and sending out a like number. Mama had to be careful not to omit anyone or make any mistakes, God forbid. She also had to remember what sort of platter to send to whom. For instance, if someone favoured you with a fruit-cut, two jam-filled pastries, a poppy-seed square, two tarts, a honey bun and two sugar cookies, it was customary to send in return two fruit-cuts, one jam-filled pastry, two poppy-seed squares, one tart, two honey buns, and three sugar cookies.

One had to have the brains of a prime minister not to create the sort of first-class muddle that once took place, alas, in our shtetl. What happened was that a woman named Rivke-Beyle mistakenly shipped back to one of the rich matrons the very same platter of Purim goodies that the rich matron had sent her. You should have seen the scandal this caused. The squabble that broke out between the husbands blossomed into a full-blown feud – smacks, denunciations and unending strife.

Besides worrying about what to send to whom, you also had to tip the youngsters who delivered the *shalachmones*. And you had to know whether to give them one kopeck, or two or three.



The door opened and in came my rebbe's daughter, a freckled girl with bright red hair. She went about from house to house collecting the Purim sweet platters for her father, the teacher. She carried a saucer covered with a cloth napkin that already contained one honey bun, dotted with a solitary raisin and next to it, a silver coin. Mama lifted the napkin and placed another coin alongside the first. She also slipped something into the girl's hand. The redhead blushed furiously and rattled off the traditional blessing: "May you enjoy Purim a year from now, you, your husband, and your children."

Following the teacher's daughter came a chubby lad with a swollen cheek bound with a blue kerchief and eyes of unequal size. In his hand he held a little brass tray on which lay a fruit-cut. This small cake was impressed with the shape of a tiny fish filled with honeyed dough crumbs. Next to it lay several silver coins and a few paper rubles. The chubby lad went right up to Mama and in one breath rattled off his greeting as though it had been memorized by rote: "Happy holiday. The rabbi sent you this *shalachmones*. May you enjoy Purim a year from now, you and your husband and your children."

The chubby lad palmed his tip and took off without a farewell, because by mistake he had dashed it off upon entering.

More people kept coming by. They brought various treats from the rabbinic judge, the cantor, the ritual slaughterers, the Torah scribe, the Talmud Torah teacher, the man who blew the shofar on Rosh Hashanah, the butcher who specialized in removing thigh veins, the reader of the Purim megillah, the Scroll of Esther, and the water carrier and the bathhouse attendant (the latter two also fancied themselves religious functionaries). After them came Velvel the shamesh himself, hoarse and ailing – he was asthmatic, poor man. He stood awhile at the door and, hand to his chest, coughed his heart out.

"Well, what's the good word?" Mama asked him, exhausted by now from the day's work.

"A *shalachmones* has been sent to you," said Velvel, displaying a honey cake he had in his hand. "May you enjoy Purim a year from now, you and..."

"Who is it from?" asked Mama and stuck her hand beneath her apron, looking for a coin.

"Well, actually, it's from me. May you enjoy Purim, you..." and he began coughing. "Pardon me... for coming myself... got no one to send... had a daughter but, alas, God preserve you... you remember Freydl, may she rest in peace."

Velvel the shamesh coughed for an entire minute and Mama quickly dug into her pocket and removed a few coins which she put into his hand. She also offered him some cake and a couple of fruit-cuts. Velvel stuffed the cake and the fruit-cuts into his breast pocket, thanked her and said: "May you enjoy Purim a year from now, you and your husband..." and once again began coughing.

I looked at Mama and noticed a tear standing in each of her beautiful eyes.

Velvel and his Purim treat cast a momentary gloom over the holiday mood. But it did not last long. Immediately after Velvel's departure other people arrived with more Purim sweet platters, and Mama kept on doling out the coins, here one, there two or three. Everyone received a piece of cake, a fruit-cut or a honey bun. For a poor man too should feel the joy of the holiday.

"May you enjoy Purim a year from now, you and your..."

"The same to you and many more to you and yours."

Afterword:

Sholom Aleichem (1859-1916), the great Yiddish humourist, always wrote stories pertaining to the holidays. The comedy and pathos of Purim in a shtetl are reflected in this touching little story. His narrative accurately reflects the tradition of sending platters or sweets to friends and relatives that is still practised today. An entire socio-political dynamic surrounded the sending of *shalachmones*. A woman always had to somehow balance the return platter so it should reflect the initial offering. Too little would be insulting. Too much would be self-aggrandizing. And one must never ever send back the same plate to the person who sent it.

The *shalachmones* were delivered by children who earned a few kopecks in tips for their service. In addition to cakes and pastries, coins were also sent to those people who needed extra income, like the narrator's teacher. The daughter of the teacher, or rebbe, is actually collecting and not giving *shalachmones*. She goes from house to house and gathers a few coins to supplement the meagre income of the rebbe, who taught little boys in his house.

The chubby boy is bringing sweets from the shtetl's rabbi – and that's why in addition to coins, there are also paper ruble notes on the plate, for the people's generosity was enhanced for the shtetl's leading religious figure. He too earned a meagre salary.

And Velvel, the shamesh, or sexton, who took take care of the synagogue, and went from door to door early on weekday mornings to wake the men up for services, also needs to supplement his small salary. Note that he apologizes for delivering the *shalachmones* himself. Usually, this was done by children. It was not dignified for an adult to go from house to house delivering the Purim sweet platters. But, as we learn, Velvel had lost his only child, a daughter, and so perforce he himself has to go from household to household to offer his Purim sweets and collect something for himself.

Curt Leviant is the author or translator of 25 books, including seven critically acclaimed novels, the most recent of which is the comic A Novel of Klass.

Delegitimization of Israel threatens peace hopes

Gil Troy

in Montreal

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas went to Doha, Qatar, and declared a Jerusalem jihad at the end of February. He was a tad more subtle than that, "moderate" that he is. All he did was accuse Israel of trying to replace the Al-Aqsa mosque with a Third Temple while "Judaizing" the city.

He, of course, would bear no responsibility if anyone turned violent based on those words at an international conference discussing the fate of the Holy City.

This is the modern Arab version of Jerusalem syndrome, that medical condition that makes some pilgrims to the Holy City just a little bit crazy. The need to turn demagogic when talking about the "city of peace," the need to exaggerate how bleak things are there, reflects a deeper pathology. The status quo should be the Palestinians' best friend. The more things are stable, the less violence there is, the better chance there is of a territorial compromise, as security concerns fade. But radical Palestinians, including, apparently the PA president, fear the status quo will freeze in the "occupation" forever. They believe that the only way to make progress is to fight, thereby playing into Israeli insecurities about Palestinian violence, of course.

For too long the threat of violence and the rejection of Israel's right to exist has terrorized the region. Since the Oslo accords of the early 1990s, the mainstream Israeli consensus has acknowledged the legitimate national rights of Palestinians, and accepted the notion of territorial compromise. But the optimism of the 1990s soured, as the terrorism of the early 2000s emerged, reflecting a conscious strategy on the part of former PA president Yasser Arafat and others.

When the Palestinians turned from the negotiating table to suicide bombings and sniping, many on the Israeli left and even more in the Israeli centre were terrorized and traumatized. They need reassurance now that new compromises will not lead to a new round of killing. They need to see a Palestinian commitment to building their own society that is greater than the long-held Palestinian desire to destroy all that their neighbours have built.

In this context, the Gaza Disengagement of 2005 hovers in the air like a bad smell. Israel withdrew, hoping for peace, and ended up with a rain of rockets. In the ultimate symbol of Palestinian dysfunction, well-meaning, mostly Jewish, philanthropists, raised $14 million to purchase the settlers' greenhouses. They then donated the greenhouses, only to see them thoroughly trashed within days of the transfer.

It is hard enough for both Palestinians and Israelis to manage their own emotions, their own extremists, their own narratives. The situation is worsened by a different version of Jerusalem syndrome, that is epidemic on too many campuses and in too many corners of the radical left. Too many radicals have declared their own Jerusalem jihad against Israel.

They sloganeer here and there, about Zionism being racism and Israel being an apartheid state. Filled with self-righteousness, drunk on their own rhetoric, reassured by their small circle of mutually reinforcing yes men and women, these laptop warriors have launched a full-scale war against the State of Israel, not realizing how much harm they do. The more they delegitimize Israel, the more difficult it becomes for Israelis to trust, to make peace.

The caustic attacks from abroad cannot damage the modern State of Israel as an economic powerhouse, a military power, a thriving society. But they can – and they do – threaten the fragile hopes for peace. Just as lawyers teach that you cannot suck and blow, in relationships between people and between country, you can not hug and go into a defensive crouch simultaneously. Israel cannot be expected to make the necessary, painful compromises for any kind of peace amid a relentless campaign questioning Israel's very right to exist.

This June will mark the 45th anniversary since the Six Day War. In many ways, the settlement strategy worked. In the Middle East, rather than negotiating about Israel's existence, most of the focus is on Israel's borders, specifically some of the West Bank bargaining chips won in 1967. How odd that many of those closest to the conflict are so far ahead of their supposed supporters further away. The war of delegitimization against Israel should end – not only for the sake of the Jews but also for the sake of the Palestinians.

Who will be the next Plaut?

Rabbi Elyse Goldstein

in Toronto

Like most of the rest of the Jewish world, I was deeply saddened to read of the passing of Rabbi Gunther Plaut. It hit me personally.

Having been the assistant rabbi at Holy Blossom Temple in Toronto from 1983 to 1986 I had the privilege of occasionally working with him, although he was no longer the senior rabbi, but had the title senior scholar. In those days, I was the only female rabbi in the whole country, and I think it piqued Rabbi Plaut's imagination to see if I would be different from the male rabbis at Holy Blossom. I remember him asking in my first week if I needed help on my introductory sermon. I think he was shocked and equally delighted when I told him thanks anyway, but I wanted to succeed or fail on my own two feet for that first sermon.

After that, we felt totally comfortable with each other.

I looked up to him, because while he truly loved Jews, he wanted them to be better Jews, and he was willing to accept the consequences of unpopular and high standards. He pushed, he cajoled and he demanded. He didn't mind not pleasing all the people all the time. He cared more about being true to Jewish values. He truly relished being a rabbi, but he had little patience for foolish, territorial, or ignorant rabbis. He held his fellow Reform rabbis to a very high bar and was often the voice of the "loyal opposition" to Reform policies he doubted would advance the cause of the entire Jewish people.

I looked up to him because he had no tolerance for racism, sexism or homophobia. In 1998, upon the publication of my first book on feminist analysis of Torah, he told me that had he known "then" what he knew "now" about feminist approaches to text, he would have been much more sensitive and attuned when writing his famous Torah commentary. He admitted that his great commentary, which everyone accepted as authoritative, was lacking in that perspective. He was then 85 years old, and even though he came from a totally different era, he was completely prepared to learn something new from and about women in the rabbinate.

I looked up to him, because as I was deciding whether or not to go to rabbinical school in the late 1970s, I looked around me and was often disappointed with the rabbis I saw.

I saw learned rabbis who didn't touch people's hearts, and sincere charismatic rabbis who didn't know text. I saw rabbis marching for civil rights who didn't live Torah and "hippie" rabbis who only cared about their own souls. I started to follow Rabbi Plaut's writings and teachings, and I saw in him what I most believed a Reform rabbi could and should be.

So when the opportunity to serve at Holy Blossom came, I jumped at the chance to be close to a real rabbi's rabbi, a scholar who cared about the world outside his books and an activist who could quote Maimonides by heart.

Because I looked up to him, I now find myself asking: who will be the next Rabbi Plaut? Who in the Reform movement has the greatness, the learning and scholarship, the burning passion for justice, the respect of almost every other rabbi of not only our own denomination but the others as well? Who can move mountains and government officials and simple Jews? Who will be the rabbi's rabbi, the one we can all look up to and hope to emulate and follow, and learn from? There are great names, to be sure, but many if not most of them are also older and will be gone in my lifetime.

Who of a younger generation in the Reform movement has that greatness? I don't mean popularity, or the most "likes" on Facebook, or the cleverest blog. Someone whose sermons not only make it onto the Huffington Post but someone whose deep Torah teachings changes lives. Not fame or well-reviewed books or *New York Times* opinion articles, but profundity, authority and clarity. Someone who's unafraid of who's to their left or who's to their right.

Who would you consider a giant who can stand in the shadow that Rabbi Plaut cast?

The Jewish world is poorer by far, and I for one am blessed to have known someone I could truly look up to.

Assad emulates his father in Syria's uprising

A chip off the old block.

Like his late father, Hafez, Bashar Assad relies on unrestrained brutal force to maintain his grip on power in Syria.

Thirty years ago, Hafez crushed a rebellion in Hama spearheaded by the Muslim Brotherhood. Shelling entire neighbourhoods indiscriminately, Syrian forces killed at least 10,000 residents in a scorched earth operation.

When the dust had cleared, Thomas Friedman, a *New York Times* foreign correspondent, was permitted to visit Hama. Surveying the bleak ruins, he wrote, "It was stunning. Whole swaths of buildings had been destroyed and then professionally steamrolled into parking lots the size of football fields."

Three decades on, Bashar is using coarse military means as well to squelch an insurrection. This revolt, stretching from Daraa in the south to Idlib in the north, erupted a year ago this month. Nationwide in scope, it has drawn in thousands of defectors from the army, the single most important institution in this ethnically fragmented country.

Last week, the focus of the uprising was on Homs, which has been bombarded every day for the past 30 days. "The scale of human tragedy in the city is immense," observed Marie Colvin, an American reporter who was killed by the shelling on Feb. 22. "The inhabitants are living in terror."

Navi Pillay, the United Nations high commissioner for human rights, has condemned the siege of Homs. Charging Assad's regime with having deployed tanks, rockets, artillery and mortars to pummel Homs, she accused the Syrian army of firing on densely populated neighbourhoods in "an indiscriminate attack on civilian areas."

On the day Colvin was cut down, a UN panel released a damning report concluding that Syria has committed crimes against humanity. Last week, Pillay said Syria should be referred to the International Criminal Court.

Assad, an ophthalmologist who succeeded his father following his sudden death in 2000, has been unrepentant and myopic, claiming the uprising is the work of "outsiders" and "terrorists" trying to destabilize Syria. Having pledged to use "an iron hand" to subdue his enemies, he has declared, "We will defeat the conspiracy without any doubt."

Assad's dogged determination to cling to power after the deaths of more than 7,000 Syrians is a function of the so-called Arab Spring, during which authoritarian rulers in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen like himself have been swept away. A member of the minority Alawite sect, he rightly fears that he, his family and supporters will be subjected to bloody retribution by the majority Sunnis should he give in to popular demands for real sweeping change.

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

Inspired by the rebellions convulsing the Arab world, the long-suffering Syrian people awoke from their lethargy in March 2011, demanding democracy and an end to the culture of cronyism, corruption and autocracy. By doing so, Syrians challenged the legitimacy of the Assad family dynasty and of the secular Baath party, which has ruled, and oppressed, Syria for almost 50 years.

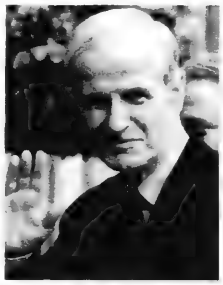
Assad launched his political career as a self-styled reformer, promising to open up Syrian society. But apart from bringing in economic reforms, which were largely of benefit to a tiny self-serving elite close to the regime, Assad's talk of democratizing Syria was merely rhetoric.

After the current uprising broke out, Assad passed a series of cosmetic decrees. He ended the 48-year state of emergency, issued an amnesty for political prisoners and gave Kurds citizenship. He also increased the salaries of civil servants, guaranteed university graduates jobs, raised food subsidies and cut the price of fuel.

On Feb. 26, in Assad's latest sop to the masses, he permitted Syrians to vote in a referendum for a new constitution. Under the new rules, multiple political parties could be established, the Baath party monopoly would end and the president would be limited to two seven-year terms.

The referendum, which was held as Syrian forces bombarded Homs and killed 50 additional civilians, was dismissed as a sham. The Syrian National Council, the umbrella organization of the opposition, declared that reforms were meaningless as long as Assad continued to resort to repression to quell the revolt. U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, noting that Assad would be able to serve for 14 more years, described the referendum as "phony."

Bashar Assad



Hafez Assad

Assad's crude repressive methods have pushed Syria to the brink of civil war and transformed a non-violent uprising into an increasingly violent and sectarian one. Liberal Syrians who had hoped that the regime was capable of reforming itself, if only for the sake of survival, have been bitterly disillusioned.

"Some of us [believed] that… President Assad might, under the right circumstances, deliver on his promise to reform the system from within," Hind Aboud Kabawat, an opposition figure living in Canada, has written.

These misplaced and dashed hopes have spawned a revolt that has become the bloodiest episode of the Arab Spring.

The Free Syrian Army, the armed wing of the rebellion, has taken a lead role in waging war on Assad's regime. Having recruited as many as 40,000 army defectors, it attacks military convoys and sites and assassinates high-ranking government officials and army officers. Of late, Sunni extremists linked to Al Qaeda's branch in Iraq have joined the fray, having reportedly been responsible for two recent bombings in Damascus and one bombing in Aleppo, cities that have generally stood aloof from the fighting.

Assad combats them from a position of considerable strength: the Sunni merchant class and Syria's security forces remain loyal and the Syrian opposition is divided along ethnic and ideological lines.

Assad can also count on a few allies.

Iran, Syria's longtime strategic partner, has provided financial and logistical support and a steady flow of weapons. Hezbollah, a Syrian client, has rallied behind him. Russia and China have vetoed two UN Security Council resolutions critical of Syria and continue to ship arms to Damascus.

Yet Assad faces pressure from all sides. The UN General Assembly has urged him to step down. The Arab League, the United States, Canada and the European Union have imposed sanctions. Arab countries from Egypt to Saudi Arabia have recalled their respective ambassadors. Turkey, once an ally and key trading partner, has turned against him. Hamas, critical of the harsh crackdown, has broken ranks with Assad.

Israel has shed no tears over Assad's predicament and waits for a new order in Damascus to downgrade Iran's status in Syria. Yet Israel fears that his demise may heighten tensions on its northern border, which has been relatively quiet since the 1974 disengagement agreement with Syria.

Major powers such as the United States and Britain have renounced an intention to intervene militarily in Syria, as they did in Libya last year. But with the revolt growing exponentially, they may yet send weapons and munitions to Syrian rebels.

On Purim, read, eat and make noise.

Purim is a time to recall the courage of Esther and Mordechai. To read the Megilla, to celebrate by feasting and drinking and, of course, to make lots of noise when we hear the name Haman the villain. Finally, there is misloach manot or tzedakah – the sharing of food or money with those who are poor.

The partners managing the Romspen Mortgage Investment Fund wish you and your family a very Happy Purim. Let us celebrate, but most of all, let us be grateful for our good fortune.

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Renowned singers perform at Sephardi music fest

Vicky Tobianah
Special to The CJN

The Sephardic Music Festival brought renowned singers from Israel, Montreal and Toronto to the Sephardic Kehila Centre last week.

A packed audience of more than 250 people enjoyed the diverse performances of Jewish singers from around the world at the Feb. 28 event.

"It was a great success," said Max Benaim, president of the Sephardic Kehila Centre, who organized the Toronto event. "The music brought back a lot of memories for the audience members."

Many of the Moroccan songs were ones that members of the community recalled hearing in their homes when they were growing up. "You could see the audience singing along," said Benaim.

Since he was 16, Benaim has been volunteering in the community, and now at the age of 60, he still plans community events. He recently brought Enrico Macias, the Algerian Jewish singer, to Toronto.

The audience was made up of both Sephardi and Ashkenazi Jews, with everything from haredi to less traditional Jews. "It was nice to see a diverse crowd, especially many young people," said Benaim.

David Wizman, a soloist from Israel, performed songs in Hebrew, Arabic and Spanish. Originally from Casablanca, Morocco, he has been studying Sephardi music since he was a child. After moving to France, he now lives in Israel, where he studies, teaches and performs across the country. He is knowledgeable in Bakashot and Andalusian music, rare in this generation. He started off by singing slow tunes and then quickened the pace with lots of drumbeats from the orchestra, which got the crowd clapping and whistling.

David Wizman, left, and Lior Elmaliach performing together

It was clear, by the thunderous applause, that the audience loved the performance by Lior Elmaliach, a soloist from Kiryat Shmonah, Israel. "Honestly, I was shocked to hear the power in his voice," said Benaim. "All the singers were fantastic, but Lior's vocal range is unbelievable."

Elmaliach grew up in Israel where he began learning liturgical poems. By age 13, he was already performing across the country, and now he travels to Russia, France, the United States and around the world to perform. He is known for his strong, ringing tenor voice.

During each song, Elmaliach lengthened the notes to demonstrate his wide vocal range, which received lots of encouragement and applause from the audience, who quickly began to clap along. The event also featured Cantor Rabbi David Kadoch, from Toronto, who at the age of 24 already has a large repertoire of Arabic, Hebrew and Spanish music.

The singers were accompanied by the Moroccan Andalusian Orchestra of Montreal, made up of four Jewish musicians and one Arab musician, specializing in Andalusian music from the Middle Ages. "At one point, the orchestra's violinist began playing the traditional Sephardic '*lelele*' sound and everyone turned around to see if it was someone from the audience, but it was really coming from the violin," said Benaim.

The event was a prelude to the Sephardi cultural week that will take place in June, highlighting Sephardi music, culture, food and ancient artifacts. Synagogues across the city are participating in this event.

Max Benaim, president of The Sephardic Kehila Centre

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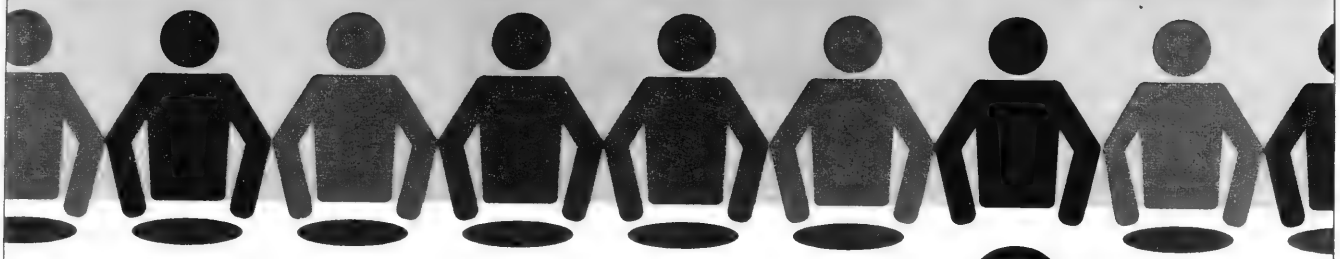
OF GREATER TORONTO



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BBYO teens gather for convention in Atlanta

Compiled by CJN Staff

Atlanta hosted more than 1,100 visitors from multiple countries Feb. 16 to 20 for the largest-ever international convention of BBYO, one of the world's major Jewish youth groups.

Teen delegations represented Jewish communities in Argentina, Bulgaria, Canada, Curacao, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Latvia, Macedonia, Serbia, South Africa, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States.

For 80 years, this convention has brought together leaders of BBYO's AZA and BBG, to plan for the coming year, determine strategies for strengthening BBYO as a youth-led movement and connect teens to the worldwide Jewish community.

At the convention, Benji Fages, 16, a Grade 11 student at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto, was elected to BBYO's 2012-2013 international board. As grand aleph shaliach (vice-president for Jewish heritage), Fages will serve as a resource, adviser and sounding board for his counterparts across the system, while focusing on enhancing the Judaic content in programs in every community.

"I want to stress the importance of having a united global Jewish community," Fages said. "The strength of the Jewish teen community is vast, and by focusing on what beliefs and interests we share, we can take strides towards becoming more socially responsible while building our Jewish identity and love of Israel. BBYO has helped nurture within me a responsibility to assist in creating a united, socially responsible and Judaically connected future."

Sixteen Toronto-area delegates were among 900 teens from 13 countries attending the 86th international convention of BBYO in Atlanta, Ga., last month.

In addition to the nearly 900 teens in attendance, 16 of them from the Toronto area, the convention also brought together BBYO professionals, members of the board of directors and volunteer advisers.

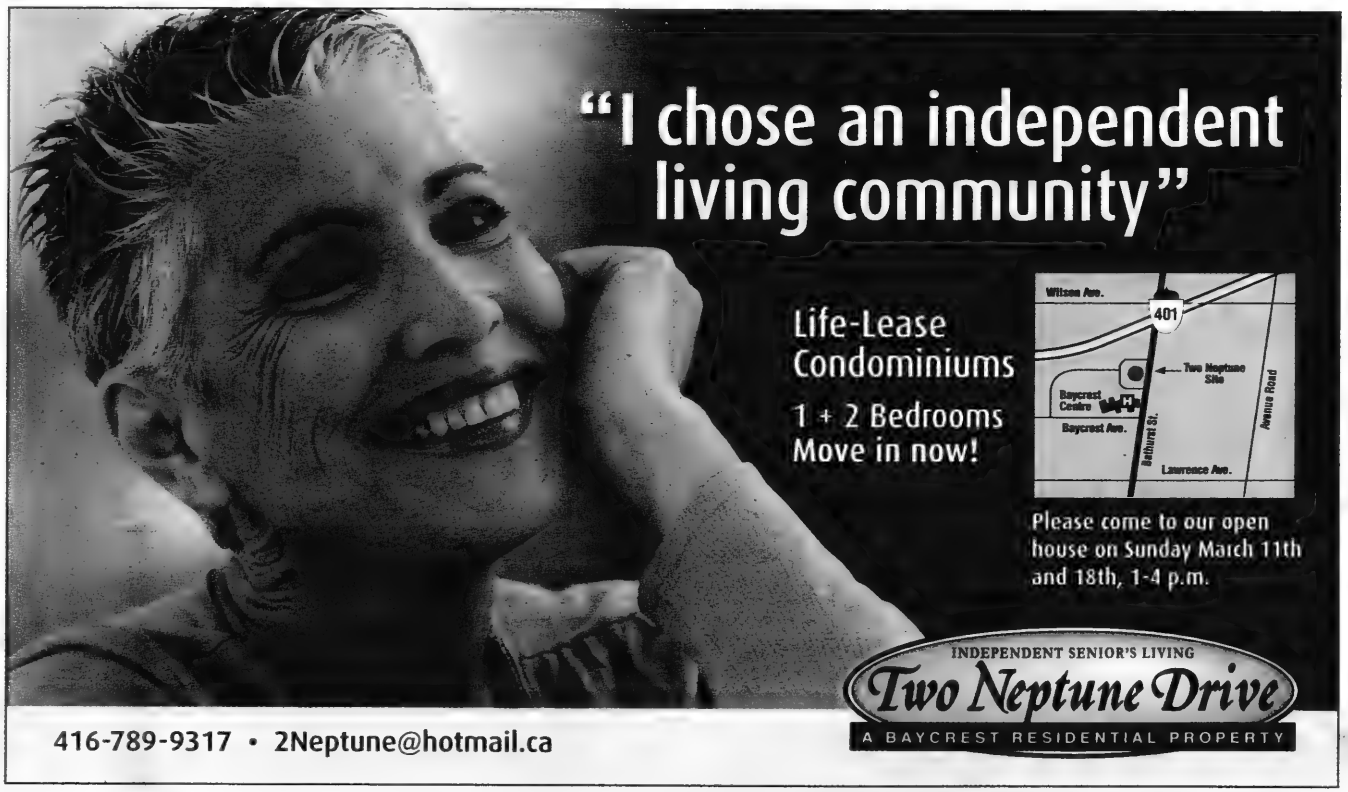
With the convention theme Our Tomorrow Starts Today, participants focused on what they can do, as representatives of a movement of more than 31,000 teens, to make an immediate difference in the world.

The weekend was headlined by a Day of Service and Advocacy, during which the teens dispersed throughout Atlanta to 18 service-learning sites. One track included the first all-teen audience premiere and a question-and-answer session with Lee Hirsch, director of *The Bully Project*, a new feature-length documentary that follows "a year in the life" of America's bullying crisis.

Another track, focusing on pro-Israel advocacy, was held at Emory University Hillel in partnership with leadership development staff from the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), with guest speakers including the Vanguard Group, an African-American young professionals and graduate student pro-Israel advocacy network from Atlanta, as well as members of AIPAC's board of directors and congressional staff.

Other service sites included media and advocacy training at CNN and Fox News; an urban expansion study, discussion and cleanup hike with the Atlanta Beltline Project; and the creation of a new panel for the AIDS Memorial Quilt Names Project.

For more information about BBYO in the Toronto area, contact Kevin Goodman, executive director, at 416-398-2004 or kgoodman@bbyo.ca.



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Human Empowerment: A Divine Vision

RABBI BARUCH SHULMAN
Afternoon Shiur, 4:15 pm
Dtzach Adash B'Achav: The Revelation in Egypt

RABBI MEIR GOLDWICHT
Afternoon Shiur, 4:15 pm
Tefillat Tachanun: Key To Success

PRESIDENT RICHARD M. JOEL
Community Seudah Shlishit following 5:15 pm Mincha
The Links That Bind Us:
A Community Conversation

CONG. BNAI TORAH
RABBI MEIR GOLDWICHT
Friday Night Dinner & Community Oneg
(Oneg at 8:45 pm)
The Power of the Eye: Understanding Good and Evil in our Daily Lives

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Afternoon Shiur, 5:00 pm
My Egg, My Husband, Her Womb, Whose Child? The Torah Ethics of Assisted Reproduction

Seudah Shlishit, following 5:50 pm Mincha
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Shabbat Drasha

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The Fall and Rise of Shevet Levi: Can Destiny Be Reimagined in Tanakh

RABBI DR. MICHAEL ROSENSWEIG
Shabbat Drasha
Finding Meaning in our pre-Pesach Obsessions: The Spiritual Connection Between Chametz and Matzah

PROFESSOR SMADAR ROSENSWEIG
Afternoon Shiur for Women
Why are Women so Central in the Redemption Narratives in Tanakh?
Home of Beri & Rebecca Nadler, 208 Coldstream Ave. 4:45 pm

RABBI DR. MICHAEL ROSENSWEIG
Afternoon Shiur, 4:45 pm
Why Should the Modern Orthodox Community Invest in Creating High-Caliber Talmidei Chachamim? Mitzvas Talmud Torah and Talmud Torah Lishma

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RABBI LAWRENCE HAJIOFF
Friday Night Dinner following Davening
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Afternoon Shiur, 4:00 pm
Are you a Perfect Ten:
Understanding the Aseret Hadibrot

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A Jew's Response to an Increasingly Hostile World

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Talmud Torah at the Centre of Family Life

SHOMREI SHABBOS CHEVRAH MISHNAYOS
RABBI HERSHEL SCHACHTER
Seudah Shlishit
Priorities in Tzedaka
Following 5:45 pm Mincha

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DR. RONA NOVICK
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RABBI HERSHEL SCHACHTER

WOMEN'S SHIUR:
Women in Pshat and Midrash: How Can Women in Tanakh be Inspirational to the Modern Woman
PROFESSOR SMADAR ROSENSWEIG

10:30AM – 11:15AM
Synagogue – Mikdash Me'at Creating Spiritual Spaces
RABBI KENNETH BRANDER

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Yeshiva University

Anti-Israel bias in media receding: journalist

Sheldon Kirshner
Staff Reporter

Anti-Israel bias in the media has dimmed in recent years, says a leading Canadian journalist.

"It is not as big a problem as it used to be," said Jonathan Kay, a managing editor of the Toronto-based *National Post*.

Kay made this comment at a panel discussion on media perceptions of the Middle East. Sponsored by the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Centre for Holocaust Studies, the event was held at the University of Toronto last week.

Three other journalists took part: Michael Coren, host of Sun TV's *The Arena*; Carole MacNeil, a CBC TV broadcaster, and Tarek Fatah, host of a CFRB radio show and author of *The Jew is Not my Enemy*.

The moderator, Avi Benlolo, is president and CEO of Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Centre for Holocaust Studies.

Kay listed four reasons why media bias against Israel has receded:

• The popularity of the Internet makes it infinitely more difficult for the press to get away with anti-Israel slanders.

• Vastly exaggerated reports concerning the Palestinian death toll in Israel's raid on a Palestinian refugee camp in Jenin in 2002 shamed many reporters who had accepted the figures and prompted them to question future Palestinian claims.

• A spate of suicide bombings in the first years of the second intifadah stained the Palestinian cause.

• Reporters and editors consider the Arab Spring – the popular rebellions that have broken out in the Arab world since 2011 – more interesting and compelling than the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Addressing a related topic, Kay said this year's Israeli Apartheid Week on North American university campuses will be the "lamest" ever, because the media is focused on current political upheavals in Arab countries.

Denouncing Israeli Apartheid Week as profoundly anti-intellectual, Coren said South African-style apartheid simply does not exist in Israel.

Tarek Fatah

"The notion that Israel is an apartheid state is laughable," he declared, adding the accusation is "simplistic and dumb."

But in the interest of preserving the sanctity of free speech, Israeli Apartheid Week should not be banned, he argued.

"Not everyone who hates Israel hates Jews, though there are crossovers," he said.

In a survey of Israel's past and present image, Coren said that while Israel was once widely admired in the West, it lost its lustre in the wake of the 1973 Yom Kippur War.

Today, pro-Israel sentiments have been largely overtaken by growing interest in and sympathy for "the Palestinian narrative." It is "fashionable" in media circles to be pro-Palestinian, he said.

But he wondered why left-wing activists who usually castigate Israel have not condemned Syria for killing thousands of its own citizens in its ferocious military response to the current nationwide rebellion.

MacNeil said that while some reporters are reluctant to cover the Middle East because they fear "blowback," she has not been intimidated or deterred by it.

In a passing observation on CBC's coverage of the region, MacNeil claimed there is no "systematic" anti-Israel bias at the CBC.

Israel, though, "punches way above its weight" in terms of the stories it generates.

In a blistering critique of the manner in which the media has covered the Arab Spring, Fatah said, "I'm appalled by the level of ignorance."

He claimed reporters on the scene don't really want to understand the complexities of the Arab uprisings.

As an ongoing story, Fatah said, Iran's quest for a nuclear arsenal has supplanted Israel's struggle with the Palestinians.

Fatah expressed puzzlement as to why Israel is singled out for condemnation by Israeli Apartheid Week while Arab countries that practise this form of institutional segregation on a regular basis are given a free pass.

But he said Israel's occupation of Arab territory captured in the Six Day War is a legitimate topic for debate.

Toward the close of the discussion, Fatah stormed out in a huff, hotly suggesting that Kay's comment on Arab "fixers" – local people who assist foreign journalists for a fee – was implicitly racist.

Fatah's abrupt walkout occurred shortly after Kay disclosed he had paid an Arab woman in Ramallah, who also owns a gift shop there, for her services in guiding him around and arranging interviews in that West Bank town.

In Kay's defence, MacNeil said "fixer" is a universally accepted term used by journalists who report from abroad.

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Bitter truths about Hamas

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

Last month, David Horovitz, former editor of the *Jerusalem Post* and the *Jerusalem Report*, launched an online newspaper called the Times of Israel.

Horovitz, the author of *Still Life with Bombers* and *A Little Too Close to God*, is highly respected for his deeply informed analyses, mixed with a temperate but never dull approach to journalism.

In an intensely competitive media age that too often panders to heated polemics and sensationalism at the expense of accuracy and fairness, Horovitz remains dedicated to the latter two quaint, but core, values.

In an essay posted on the Times website, Horovitz explains his vision for the project: "Fair-minded journalism, based in Israel, and read both here in Israel and among those who care for the Jewish nation around the world, has a vital, even noble role to play in enabling informed debate over the challenges and the choices that face the Jewish state. Informing that debate is one of the prime goals of the Times of Israel.

"In support of this goal, our reporters, including many of the most respected names in the field, will be writing rich and enthralling original content."

On the commentary side, Horovitz emphasizes diversity: "Access to a diverse range of argument is critical to the understanding of Israel's challenges and choices."

David Horovitz

Horovitz can already boast of having aboard one of the most prominent journalists in Israel: Ehud Ya'ari. Fluent in Arabic, Ya'ari is also the political commentator for Israel's Channel 2 news.

In his Feb. 27 Times piece ("The agony of Hamas"), Ya'ari delved into the internal disputes within the Islamic movement, fractures largely glossed over by many western journalists who cover it.

Hamas, Ya'ari noted, is "severely divided" – and not just between the exiled or "external" leadership, headed by Khaled Meshal, formerly based in Damascus, and the "internal," Gaza-based leadership under Ismail Haniyeh. Ya'ari reveals how Hamas is also divided within the ranks of both major factions.

Qatar, which recently brokered a "unity" government deal between Hamas under Meshal and Fatah under Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, is the only Arab country willing to host Hamas' political headquarters. "Egypt, Jordan and even Sudan said no to Meshal's request," Ya'ari wrote. The Gaza leadership rebelled against the deal, which in any event appears to be foundering.

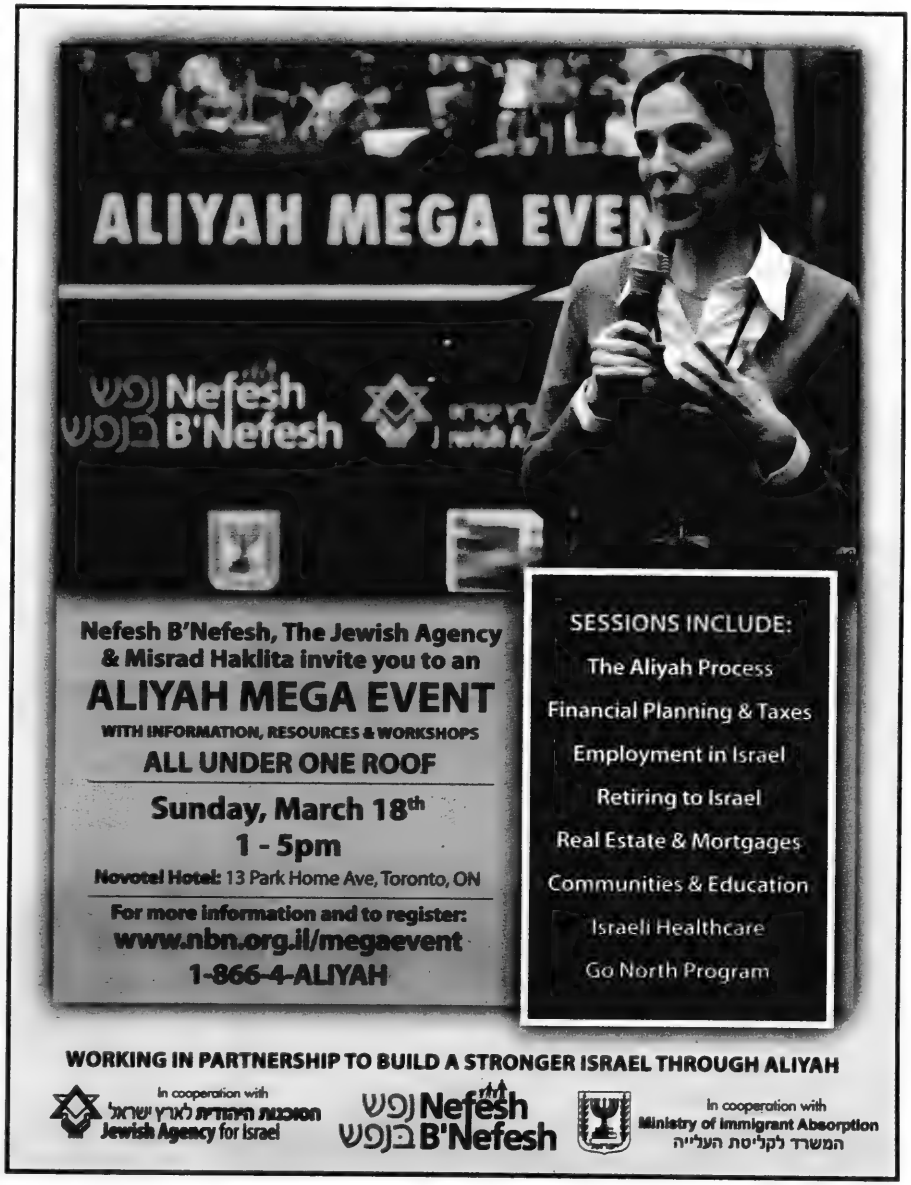
In the meantime, Haniyeh who not all that long ago was widely considered to be more "moderate" than Meshal, has engaged in an apparent role-reversal. About two weeks ago, he spent three days in Iran meeting with top leaders there. Haniyeh made a point of repeating Iran's description of Israel as a "cancer" that needs to be destroyed. (Playing to all parties, when Haniyeh subsequently visited Cairo, he spoke in support of the people of Syria, who are being butchered by President Bashar Assad – with the help of Iran.)

The sanguine view of Meshal as moderate was expressed by Michael Broning in an article ("Hamas Comes in From the Cold") posted Feb. 22 on Project Syndicate, an online hub of leading thinkers: "He may re-emerge as the head of a newly established Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, or as a leader of a new Islamist political party under the umbrella of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Such a merging of Hamas with the established Palestinian political organizations would signify Hamas' formal acceptance of a two-state solution, and would mark an important step in transforming the movement."

Ya'ari, on the other hand, observed that while Meshal is talking about "popular" versus "armed resistance" to Israel and even about the acceptance of a Palestinian state within 1967 boundaries, he has nonetheless "stressed that there would be no peace or recognition of the Zionist Entity and the goal will remain the destruction of Israel."

This latter point is essential, but it's typically omitted by journalists and analysts who naively assume that Meshal is prepared to "recognize" Israel. On this, there's no daylight between Haniyeh and Meshal, or any other leader within Hamas. It's time to confront this bitter reality.

Paul Michaels is director of research and media relations for the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs.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Jewish groups endorse moderate candidates

Sheri Shefa
Staff Reporter

The incoming student union executives at Carleton University and the University of Ottawa aren't the only ones celebrating their recent victories.

Hillel Ottawa, which openly endorsed candidates at the two schools who didn't have an anti-Israel agenda, is also looking forward to working with the new executives, who are both committed to dialogue and inclusivity.

Hillel Ottawa president Alexandra Izso said members of Hillel and the student-run Israel Awareness Committee (IAC) worked tirelessly last month to endorse "A Better Carleton" slate in the Carleton Student University Association (CUSA) elections, as well as two U of O students who ran for executive positions in the Student Federation at the University of Ottawa (SFUO).

"We helped with postering, we helped with getting people out to vote, sharing election information on Facebook, openly endorsing them by sending letters out to our membership list to get them to vote for the slate we were endorsing," said Izso, a political economy student at Carleton.

"The slate we elected isn't so much openly pro-Israel, which I appreciate, because what I didn't like about the other slate ['Fresh Carleton'] is that they openly chose a side, and I couldn't ask the same of the side I supported, because that would be hypocritical."

Last year, Carleton was embroiled in controversy when CUSA was scheduled to consider an anti-Israel motion put forward by the group Students Against Israeli Apartheid (SAIA) during a student council meeting.

In response, the IAC influenced a CUSA executive member to present a similar but more neutral motion that didn't single out Israel. When the neutral motion passed, cancelling out the motion that singled out Israel, the SAIA members who tabled the original motion became aggressive and confrontational.

Last month, when Izso learned that the "Fresh Carleton" slate – which was ultimately swept by "A Better Carleton" – included four members of SAIA, she was concerned that if they were elected, they'd use their positions to further their anti-Israel agendas.

Alexandra Izso

For example, Rabita Sharfuddin, who ran for vice-president of student issues for the Fresh Carleton slate, posted a campaign video in which she boasted about her role with SAIA and her plans "to fight for socially responsible investment policies" and to correct the fact that Carleton has "invested in war, military occupation and other violations of human rights."

Thanks in part to Hillel's campaigning efforts, more than 4,300 Carleton students – 500 more than last year – turned out to vote in this year's Feb. 15-16 election.

At U of O, about 15 per cent of the 34,000 undergraduates cast a ballot in the SFUO elections, held Feb. 14 to 16.

Iszo said she's encouraged that although the student union executives at both schools are not necessarily pro-Israel, they're not anti-Israel, either.

"We felt it's important to have a student union that is representative of all students, and if we have a student union that is openly taking sides and has marginalized some of their membership, then they are not accountable to all students who are paying members of this union," she said.

SFUO's incoming president Ethan Plato and vice-president, social, Jozef Spiteri were the two candidates endorsed by Hillel.

"They are pro-dialogue and are about bringing the campus together," Iszo said.

Incoming CUSA president Alexander Golovko, who won by just 79 votes, told Carleton's campus paper, the *Charlatan*, that he'll focus on "student issues, student unity… and the spirit of democracy.

"My personal diplomatic background, where I try to resolve conflict and unite people and try to understand everybody's approach… has always been to a certain extent criticized because I tend not to always take sides. I try to understand everybody. I try to get everybody together," he said.

Emile Scheffel, a former Carleton student and vice-president, external, for the Canadian Federation of Jewish Students, said he's confident Golovko will work to ensure Carleton students feel safe, valued, and included on campus.

Scheffel said he experienced a campus climate that was toxic, hostile and divided when he ran for CUSA's vice-presidency in 2010.

"I was targeted with a whisper campaign that I was Jewish and had radical pro-Israel views," said Scheffel, who is not Jewish, but served as a member of the IAC.

Nick Bergamini, also a non-Jewish, pro-Israel student, was a 2010 presidential candidate who was also targeted with posters accusing him of being an untrustworthy Zionist, he added.

"A Better Carleton slate represents a major victory for students who believe in an open, tolerant campus that rejects the toxic politics of the past."

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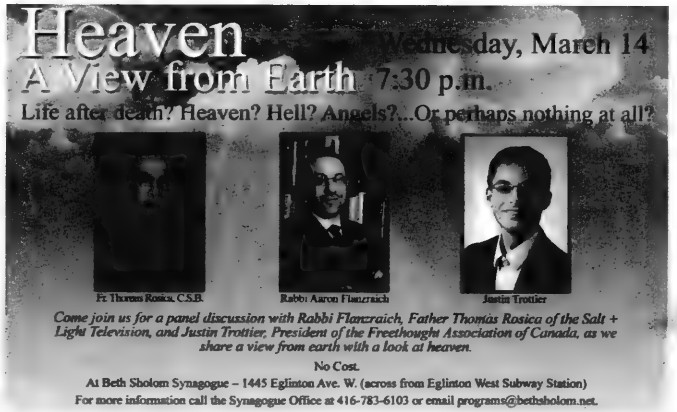
U.S. campuses deal with IAW

What is happening on university campuses across the United States in connection with Israeli Apartheid Week?
To find out, please go to http://www.cjnews.com/education/campus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IAW is becoming more and more marginal

Guest Voice

Howard English

This week, "Israeli Apartheid Week" (IAW) takes place on campuses in Canada and elsewhere. As happens every year, a small group of marginal activists hold events designed to slander Israel as a racist and fundamentally illegitimate state.

For students and faculty who support Israel – including both Jews and non-Jews – the vile distortions of IAW are offensive, frustrating and even angering. At a time when regimes across the Middle East persecute minorities and even slaughter civilian protestors, IAW singles out and attacks the sole democracy in the region. Perhaps worse, IAW advocates a rejectionist, aggressive approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

While Israeli leaders propose peace agreements, IAW activists call for a boycott of Israeli academics, athletes, and small businesses. While Israeli leaders call for coexistence and negotiations with Palestinian moderates, IAW activists embolden Palestinian extremists by redefining terrorism as "resistance." And while Israel's supporters push for a two-state solution to secure a future for both sides, many IAW activists call for a one-state "solution" – knowing full well this would mean the end of Israel. For IAW, it's not about peace. It's about the Jewish state's very existence.

In fact, the longtime academic mentor of IAW, extremist professor Norman Finkelstein, made this very point in a revealing interview at Imperial College London on Feb. 9. Clearly exasperated with the Boycott Israel campaign, Finkelstein blasted it as a "cult" that has achieved fewer victories than he can count on his 10 fingers. He charged that the movement "will never reach a broad public until and unless they're explicit on their goal. And their goal has to include recognition of Israel, or it's a non-starter. It won't reach the public. Because the moment you go out there, Israel will start to say: 'What about us? They won't recognize our rights.' And that is correct... There's a large segment of the movement that wants to eliminate Israel."

Finkelstein's analysis lies at the heart of why the IAW crowd has failed to resonate with a broad campus constituency. In refusing to endorse the two-state solution, the movement's rhetoric and goals are patently self-defeating. And its failure can be measured not in its fiery words, but in its lack of results.

University administrations have overwhelmingly condemned the boycott campaign and are strengthening ties with Israeli institutions. IAW events typically garner no more than a handful of already committed anti-Israel activists. And mainstream newspapers outside of our community give IAW very little coverage – and even that has declined dramatically. A recent study by the government of Israel found that coverage of IAW dropped last year by 40 per cent over the previous two years, noting that "in general media terms, IAW is a non-event."

Despite the well-founded anxiety IAW causes our community, Finkelstein's frustrations are very instructive. The boycott campaign, along with IAW, while perhaps providing a satisfying emotional outlet for anti-Israel activists, has miserably failed to resonate with average students and faculty.

Our community faces serious challenges on campus, not the least of which is the influence of those postmodern professors who promote a distorted perspective on the Middle East. The cumulative impact of such anti-Israel views, presented as respectable scholarship, is far more worrisome than the shrill and sparsely attended events of IAW. This issue, along with a number of other key long-term concerns, cannot be taken for granted.

Under the chairmanship of David Koschitzky, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs is working with local partners across the country to provide students with practical tools, expertise, and one-on-one issue consultation. We are supporting local Hillels, the Canadian Federation of Jewish Students, and other pro-Israel groups on campus to counter this challenge in a co-ordinated, sustained, and strategic manner. Empowering students is at the core of this approach, for it is students who are at the forefront of the battle of ideas.

There's no question that IAW makes for one nauseating week of slogans, slander and sloppy history. But we must not take our eye off the real ball – the deep-seated challenges students are facing, that require our community to be at the top of our game 52 weeks a year.

Howard English is Senior Vice President, Greater Toronto Area and University Affairs, at the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs.

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U of W program lessens IAW conflict

Myron Love
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — While Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) has been an annual source of campus acrimony in the past, a program put on by the University of Winnipeg shows it doesn't have to be that way.

For the second year in a row, the administration at Winnipeg's second-largest university has sought to defuse IAW with a program of its own held at the same time, but focused on the Middle East and the Arab world in general, rather than solely on Israel.

"Israeli Apartheid Week is organized by student groups independent of the university administration," said Jeremy Read, senior executive officer and adviser to university president Lloyd Axworthy.

"Student groups have certain access rights. But we feel that it is important to provide some context and a greater understanding of the complexities of the Middle East as a whole."

Thus, last year, the university organized a series of lectures on the Middle East, highlighted by a presentation by Arab-Jewish Dialogue, a group of Jewish leaders, businessmen and professionals originally from the Arab world.

Read said last year's event was very well received.

"This year, we broadened our program," he said. "We have a number of faculty members with expertise in areas related to the Middle East. Our president, Dr. Lloyd Axworthy [Canada's Liberal foreign minister in the mid-1990s] also is knowledgeable about the region."

The U of W program consisted of two weeks of lectures and dialogue, from Feb. 28 to March 9, on a range of issues with the aim of shedding light on the past and understanding the present "Arab Spring," as well as conflicts occurring across the region.

The first week featured lectures on the current situation in Syria and Egypt, in addition to an overview of "the Responsibility to Protect" and the doctrine's relevance to the Arab Spring, presented by Axworthy, and a tripartite dialogue with Jewish, Christian and Muslim representatives on the panel.

The highlight of the second week was a lecture by Yoram Peri, speaking on "Israel, Iran and the Arab Spring: a Coming Storm?" Peri is a former senior political adviser to the late Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin and a former editor-in-chief of the Israeli daily newspaper *Davar*. He's currently director of the University of Maryland's Joseph and Alma Gildenhorn Institute for Israel Studies .

The second week also featured sessions on Iranian persecution of the Baha'i and a historical look at the Middle East in the early 20th century.

"We at this university are not interested in mere slogans and provoking partisan conflict," Read said. "Rather, we want to get at what's really going on in the region. There are complex issues. What are the points of contention? How can we help encourage peaceful relations between peoples in the region? This is what a university should be doing."

Read said that since U of W introduced its program last year, other universities have contacted it for more information, with an eye to introducing a similar series on their own campuses.

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פֿון איציק מאַנגער דער מחבר פֿון די מגילה לידער וואָס מאַכן פֿורים אַ פֿרײַלעכע צײַט

לאָמיר-זשע זינגען פֿשוט אין פֿראָסט
פֿון אַלץ, וואָס איז היימיש, ליב און טײַער:
פֿון אַלטע בעטלער, וואָס שעלטן דעם פֿראָסט
און פֿון מאַמעס, וואָס בענטשן דאָס פֿײַער.

פֿון אָרעמע כלות, וואָס שטיין טיט ליכט
פֿאַר בלינדע שפּיגלען שפּעט בײַנאַכט,
און יעדע זיכט דאָס נאָענטע געזיכט,
וואָס האָט איר ליבע אויפֿגעלאָכט.

פֿון גורל-תּהפּעס, וואָס רעדן פֿאַרשטעלט
און נאָר די לעצטע גראָשנס אויס
בײַ ענגונות, וואָס שעלטן די וועלט,
און גיין דורך הינטער-טירן אַרויס.

פֿון דינסטן וואָס האָרעווען ביטער- שווער
און באַהאַלטן דעם בעסטן בײַסן
פֿאַר די זעלנער, וואָס קומען בײַנאַכט,
די באַלעבאָטים זאָלן נישט וויסן.

לאָמיר זינגן פֿשוט אין פֿראָסט
פֿון אַלץ, וואָס איז היימיש, ליב און טײַער:
פֿון אָרעמע מאַמעס, וואָס שעלטן דעם פֿראָסט
און פֿון בעטלערס וואָס בענטשן דאָס פֿײַער.

פֿון מיידלעך, וואָס וואַרפֿן זומער צײַט
ממזרים הינטער פֿרעמדע טירן
און ציטערן פֿאַר מונדירטע ליט,
וואָס קענען דערפֿאַר אין תּפיסה פֿירן.

פֿון קאַטערינקעס וואָס סקרײַבן שוחר
פֿרייטיק בײַנאַכט, אין אָרעמע הויפֿן,
פֿון גנבים, וואָס האָבן פֿאַרפֿאַסט,
און מחזן איבער די דעכער אַנטלויפֿן.

פֿון שמאַטע-קלויבער, וואָס גראָבלען אין מיסט,
אין מיינען: זי העלן אַן אוצר געפֿינען,
פֿון דיכטער וואָס האָבן נעגלירבט אומזיסט
די שטערן – אין זענען אַראָפּ פֿון זינען.

לאָמיר-זשע זינגען פֿשט אין פֿראָסט
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פֿון אַלטע ליט, וואָס שטעלן דעם פֿראָסט,
און פֿון קינדער, וואָס בענטשן דאָס פֿײַער.

חיים גראָדעס נעדאַנק וועגן אַיציק מאַנגער:
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South Africa backed anti-Iran resolution at UN

Continued from page 3

None of that was characteristic of apartheid South Africa. The slander, he continued, affects that anti-apartheid struggle and "is a form of apartheid denial."

Cotler made the case for Israel in meetings with senior cabinet ministers, when he urged them to reconsider their votes at UN forums where Israel is the subject of a delegitimization campaign. Supporters of equal treatment should be appalled at the singling out of Israel for differential treatment for its alleged human rights record, when gross human rights violators rights get "exculpatory" treatment, he said.

Cotler made the case for Israel in meetings with the ministers of justice and foreign affairs. He also urged them, as well as the parliament's justice and social affairs committee, to be in the forefront in confronting Iranian officials on the country's call to genocide. South African officials, he said, should not receive Iranian leaders when that country violates its citizens' human rights and advocates genocide of Jews.

Whether his arguments will be persuasive remains to be seen, he said, but he recalled another context in which a one-on-one visit made a difference.

In 1981, when he was Canadian legal counsel for then-imprisoned Nelson Mandela and Natan Sharansky, he was arrested during a visit to South Africa and taken to meet the country's then-foreign minister, Pik Botha.

When he entered the minister's office, he noticed a photo of Sharansky displayed prominently on the wall. Sharansky was a hero of the minister, it turned out. Botha saw him as a courageous opponent of Communism, and he wondered why Cotler was defending Mandela, whom Botha considered a Communist.

Cotler responded by saying both were fighting for freedom, and South Africa was the only post-Nazi country to institute a racist legal regime. Botha told Cotler he would come to see that South Africa was a democratic country, but when he visited the minister prior to departing, Cotler reminded Botha those rights did not apply to non-whites.

Later, Botha got into hot water in his own party when he said he could foresee the day the country would have a black government leader. He also became an advocate for Mandela's release.

Two-and-a-half years ago, Cotler recounted, he met with President Jacob Zuma and discussed the country's votes at the United Nations, in which South Africa opposed Canadian resolutions condemning Iran. At the most recent vote, South Africa supported the Canadian anti-Iran resolution, Cotler said.

"These discussions can have an impact, they can have a political dimension," he suggested.

During his visit, he was lobbied by senior government officials on Canada's visa policies that prevent travel here by current and former members of the African National Congress (ANC).

On his return to Canada, Cotler called on the Canadian government to revise its visa policy that prevents members of the ANC from visiting Canada.

"It is unacceptable for Canada to treat the heroes of the anti-apartheid movement – a historical struggle for a democratic, egalitarian and non-racial South Africa – as presumed terrorists," he stated.

While in South Africa, Cotler also participated in a reunion of defence counsels for Mandela. As well, he raised the issues of Iran, Syria, Congo and Sudan with South African leaders, and he delivered a lecture on Raoul Wallenberg on the centenary of Wallenberg's birth at an event sponsored by five governments.

He also met with representatives of the country's Jewish community. Although the number of Jews has dropped from 120,000 31 years ago to 70,000 today, emigration has stabilized, he said.

The community "is blessed with outstanding young leadership" and it is openly Zionist and Jewish, he said.

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בית צדק

Chutzpadik anger with God

Rabbi Irit Printz

A man went to a tailor and commissioned a suit to be made. A month went by, then two, but the suit wasn't ready. Finally, seven months after the original order, the suit was ready. The customer had to admit that it was perfectly made, but he couldn't resist a little dig at the tailor. "God made the entire world in seven days, and it took you seven months to make one suit?" he asked. "Ah," the tailor replied, "but look at the state of the world, and look at the perfection of the suit!"

Judaism has a long and venerable tradition of poking fun at God, especially around Purim. Our sages termed this kind of joking "Chutzpah l'shem Shamayim" – irreverence for the sake of Heaven.

Perhaps the most famous example of this tradition appears in the *Mechilta D'Rabbi Ishmael*: "[You ask] who is like You among the gods, God?' Rather, say 'Who is like You among the mutes [ilmim] of the world – that you can witness the tragedy of Your children yet remain silent!" These words were written in the aftermath of the Romans' destruction of the Temple and Israel, when it became clear the exile would last far longer than the Babylonian exile did. It's not so much a play on words as a bitter cry full of anguish.

Engaging in these acts of irreverence gives us a way to filter our disappointment with God and this world through the safer, and often gentler, prism of satire. We want to know how it's possible that the world God created is so imperfect, so full of injustice, so full of senseless tragedy. It's a way of laying the fault for national and personal tragedies at God's feet without leaving God behind.

Rabbinic Reflections

That people are outraged by flagrant injustices is an amazing thing, when you think about it. What rational reason is there to expect things to turn out fine, to assume justice will prevail, to believe innocents will be protected? It would be far more rational to anticipate a world in which might equals right, in which no one protects those who are in need of protection, in which innocents lose their innocence or perish.

It's only in a world where we're created in God's image that we can dare imagine another way. We can create perfect suits. We can create other perfect goods. We can work toward a perfectly just society. We can try to protect the weak and ensure evil is kept at bay. But we expect, and demand, God's participation. And we're bitterly disappointed when it seems that God does, indeed, remain silent in the face of unspeakable suffering.

Ultimately, though, as long as people are angry with God over the imperfect state of the world, they'll continue to work to improve it. They'll continue to strive toward a world in which one cannot tell the difference between Mordechai and Haman, because there will be no difference between them. I reflect on that and am comforted.

Rabbi Irit Printz is kehilla relationship manager, northeast district, and director of the Eastern Canadian Region United Synagogue Youth, for the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.

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The Exodus and earliest Israel

The Exodus is a pivotal point in our history as a people. Not only does it mark our deliverance from slavery but it also witnesses our coming together as a nation.

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As a story, the Exodus has captivated and enthralled for more than 3,000 years. Even Hollywood has portrayed the event a number of times. For those of us of a certain age, Moses will always be Charlton Heston and his chief adversary, the Egyptian pharaoh, Ramses II, will forever look like Yul Brynner.

Ever since the latter part of the 19th century, which saw the emergence of archeology as a discipline, some scholars have been debating the veracity of the Exodus while others have been searching for proof of its existence.

One of the keys to unlocking this mystery is finding evidence of the existence of an entity called Israel outside of the Bible. Ideally it should occur in Egypt. If this can be done, then it makes the plausibility of the Exodus more convincing.

This is exactly what happened in Egypt in 1896 when the noted English Egyptologist William Matthew Flinders Petrie found a stele (royal inscription) belonging to the pharaoh Merneptah, the son of Ramses II. Amazingly, in addition to mentioning the places Ashkelon and Yokneam, the stele also mentioned a people called Israel, thus giving us the earliest verifiable evidence of Israel outside of the Bible. It stated that Israel was destroyed, a propaganda claim that Egyptians have been making for 3,000 years.

Past Forward

Alex Gropper

The stele was significant, for it was an independent verification of Israel's existence. It was dated to the latter part of the 13th century BCE, which meant that the Exodus must have happened earlier. Most biblical scholars subsequently dated it to the middle of the 13th century BCE. However there were, and still are, skeptics who refuse to believe that there was an Exodus. Some scholars believe that the group known as Israel had been in Canaan all along.

Recently, it was announced that new evidence was found for the existence of Israel. Once again it came from ancient Egyptian sources. It was found on an inscribed statue base that had been in the Berlin Egyptian Museum for decades but had been overlooked until two scholars re-examined it and saw what they believed to be the name of Israel. Remarkably, it was 200 years older than the Merneptah Stele and has been dated to the 15th century BCE. If this is true, then it has all sorts of ramifications for the Exodus and the origins of Israel.

When I asked the eminent Egyptologist Donald Redford about the new find, he was skeptical. He mentioned that the pronunciation of Israel is different than that on the Merneptah Stele. Now only one thing is certain, and that is that the debate is far from over.

The privilege of preparing

Midrashic Moments

Rachael Turkienicz

It seems that once we get anywhere near Tu b'Shvat, we already sense Pesach slowly approaching. Certainly as Purim draws near, we feel the Pesach reality coming into focus. Most assuredly, when Purim has come and gone, we're dreading the fast-approaching Pesach preparations, and before we can blink, Pesach has arrived.

Preparations for Pesach can be quite onerous, leaving us anxiously awaiting seder night, if only to put an end to preparation. At that point, it is what it is. But in today's world of multi-focusing and multi-tasking, where we must enact laws to stop doing 15 things at once (such as texting while driving), we should regain our focus around Pesach.

Pesach is a time of rejoicing and a recurring experience of redemption. There aren't too many things in our lives to which we can attach such meaning. In terms of preparation, I advocate separating spring cleaning from Pesach preparation. Spring cleaning focuses on actual cleaning. It's concerned with rearranging rooms and wardrobes in an "out with the old and in with the new" approach. Pesach preparation has everything to do with understanding the things that weigh me down and how I can rid myself of them, while feeling more and more liberated as I go. I'm not concerned with cleaning, which addresses the past mess, as much as I'm concerned with preparing, which addresses what's coming in the future.

The Shabbat after Purim is called Shabbat Parah. Its Torah portion deals with the ritual of the red heifer, which is performed when someone has been classified as "*tameh met*," ritually impure due to contact with a dead body. It's the most drastic of all ritual impurities, and it prohibits that person from participating in the Pesach sacrifice or ritual. The only way to rid oneself of this ritual impurity is through the unusual red heifer ritual.

Interestingly, in the book of Numbers, when Moses reminds the Israelites that Pesach is approaching and that they need to begin their preparations, a group of men approaches him with an unusual question. They're ritually impure due to contact with a dead body and thus not able to participate in either the preparations or the actual Pesach sacrifice that the rest of the nation is involved with. They ask Moses why they should be deprived of this privilege.

Their very question speaks volumes to us. It wasn't any easier in the ancient world to prepare for Pesach than it is in the modern world. Remember that as Israelites in the wilderness, they didn't have non-Jews to sell their chametz to. They had to actually get rid of it. And yet the general view was that preparing for Pesach is a privilege and sitting together for a ritual of redemption is a privilege.

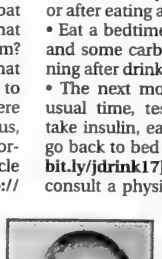
At times we can become overwhelmed with the amount of work involved in preparing for Pesach. We need to remind ourselves that the ancient Israelites considered it a privilege and argued to be included. The midrash teaches us that the one who loves commandments will never be satisfied with commandments. They are our vehicle of growth, and having them in our lives is indeed a privilege.

Rachael Turkienicz is director of Rachaelscentre.org.

Purim and drinking

Jewish & Digital

Mark Mietkiewicz



A person is obligated to drink on Purim until one no longer knows the difference between "cursed be Haman" and "blessed be Mordechai." – Talmud, Megillah 7b

"If all drinking does is make you sick or do stupid things, then it goes against everything that Purim is about. If you are planning to drive, or you know that drinking can otherwise get you in trouble, then alcohol might as well be pork juice." –Rabbi Tzvi Freeman **[http://bit.ly/jdrink11]**

How to reconcile those two statements! You've got to be pretty out of it to confuse your feelings about Haman and Mordechai! And that's a recurring problem during Purim when otherwise moderate drinkers use the holiday to drink to excess, sometimes with horrific consequences. In recent years, rabbis, community leaders and other Jewish organizations have been spreading the word about what the mitzvah really means and how to observe it safely.

Dr. Moshe Werzberger tells this chilling story, "As I was driving on Shabbos, rushing an intoxicated, unresponsive teenager who was vomiting blood to the ER, the absurdity of the situation was painfully evident to me. Here was a young student who together with some friends at an Oneg Shabbos had, without any second thought, drunk himself to the point of endangering his life. Yet, on Purim we allow our children unrestricted access to alcohol, endangering their lives." **[http://bit.ly/jdrink22]**

Alcohol is no stranger to Shabbat and all the Jewish festivals, but what is its special connection to Purim? Rabbi Howard Jachter explains "that the miracle of Purim came about to a great extent due to parties where alcohol played a central role. Thus, we consume alcohol on Purim in order to remember the great miracle brought about by alcohol." **[http://bit.ly/jdrink23]**

So how do you reconcile the Talmud's dictum about Haman and Mordechai? Many traditional and contemporary commentators suggest that you should drink [wine] until you become drowsy and are unable to distinguish between the Book of Esther's villain and hero. **[http://bit.ly/jdrink25]**

Purim can also present particularly large challenges to certain people. For recovering alcoholics, this holiday can be offer unwanted temptations as Shmuly Rothman describes in My Non-Alcoholic Purim **[http://bit.ly/jdrink21]**

The Jewish Diabetes Association's Purim page explains that certain diabetics should never drink. Others must take special precautions:

- Plan to have your drink with a meal or after eating a snack
- Eat a bedtime snack (solid protein and some carbohydrate) in the evening after drinking.
- The next morning, get up at the usual time, test your blood sugar, take insulin, eat breakfast, and then go back to bed if you feel ill. **[http://bit.ly/jdrink17]** If you are diabetic, consult a physician before consuming alcohol.

Hatzolah, the voluntary emergency medical service organization, has published a Purim Safety page that focuses on both alcohol and other holiday safety reminders, including the need to be careful as children may be darting from cars while helping to deliver mishloach manot. **[http://bit.ly/jdrink18]** They add, pointedly, "Don't get carried away this Purim!" **[http://bit.ly/jdrink19]**

In order to put the holiday into perspective, I'll return to Rabbi Freeman for the closing words: "Purim is not about drinking. Purim is about being drunk with sincere happiness."

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Memories of old Toronto

Ellen Weiser
Special to The CJN

If you're a baby boomer, or more accurately, a Toronto baby boomer, undoubtedly you have fond memories of a time and a place that live only in our dreams. Let me take you back to where I'm constantly accused of living – in the past.

Guest Voice

If nothing else, it was cheaper.

For myself in the 1950s and '60s, going out to eat was as rare for me as the proverbial blue moon, as seldom as a Leafs Stanley Cup victory. When it happened, it was a time to cherish. And if you lived in the north (that being Eglinton Avenue and above), you definitely had your share of gastronomic hangouts. Around the area where the Allen Road now meets Eglinton was a lovely little place called The Menorah, which met its demise when they started construction of the expressway. You could get a full-course meal for two bucks and change – soup, a main course and dessert. As for kishke, there was none finer – okay, maybe the kishke at the Noshery, further east on Eglinton.

If you continued your journey along Eglinton Avenue West, you'd eventually find Joe's and Moe's delicatessen. The "Moe" of that establishment was my uncle. No bias here, but he made the best corned beef sandwiches in the city at the inflated price of 40 cents per.

Within walking distance of J & M was Bagel King. My parents and the parents of my friends all had a yearning for the strawberry shortcake garnished with berries that looked as if they were on steroids. More often than not, you'd have to order one in advance. If you waited until the craving hit, you would very likely have been out of luck.

The Eglinton Avenue strip was my home away from home in the '50s and '60s. You had groceries, a bakery and a movie theatre all within about a block of one another. My father would do his weekly shopping at the Power store where not only did you get your groceries but also those infamous Gold Bond stamps. It was my job to paste the stamps into the book each week and dream about what I'd get when it was time to redeem them.

The Health Bread bakery was just a stone's throw from the Power store. For those of us who weren't in geographic proximity to the College Street store, this was the place to go for baked goodies. I remember always asking for a gingerbread man – not that I liked gingerbread – but my passion was for the sugar-coated face on the top. If this wasn't available, there were cookies, my favourite being a shortbread type with pink colouring. The chocolate roll was also in the top ten. I suppose it was in my best interest that my dentist was also located on Eglinton!

Jewish Toronto of old included Shopsy's and the Victory Theatre.

Once we'd had enough to eat, we would catch the latest flick at the Nortown theatre, 25 cents for kids, and if the munchies hit, you could get a box of popcorn with the clown's face for a dime. After the movie, there was the Town Restaurant where I first enjoyed that fine delicacy, french fries with gravy. Oh, for those days when we didn't even know (or care) what a calorie was!

Having completed our tour of the north end, let's make our way downtown where many of you spent your childhood. Along Spadina Avenue, we would come across the original United Bakery. Yes, it's still alive in Lawrence Plaza, the plaza that everyone said would fold after Yorkdale opened. However, the old UB got its atmosphere from "the boys" from the shmatte factories. When that was combined with cheese blintzes and a side of sour cream, it was something that was lost after the move.

We had our choice of delis on Spadina, Shopsy's or Switzer's. Shopsy's made a great hot dog, not to be outdone anywhere – that yummy poppy seed bun with all the compulsory toppings. For corned beef, pastrami and the rest of the deli meats, it was a toss-up as to which of the two restaurants made the better sandwich. I'll leave it to my readers to decide on the winner. Of course, before leaving either or both establishments, you had to pick up a Chicago 58 vursht, either for salami and eggs or to grill until it was burnt. Please note, doing it in the microwave doesn't count. Now that was haute cuisine!

If you had your fill of deli and were in the market for something less ethnic, you could try Basil's at Yonge Street and Gerrard Avenue. Known for its breaded veal cutlet, it was the place for Sunday dinner. Dessert was either Boston cream pie (my favourite) or rice pudding (for my parents) and you got change from a five-dollar bill.

I'm making myself sad as I write this, but on the other hand, I feel a sense of happiness in being able to share these memories with you and almost hearing the sighs of "Oh yeah," as we go from one lost-but-not-forgotten Toronto landmark to the next.

It was a great time, a simpler time, a very special time.

If you weren't brought up in the city during this era, this gives you an idea of what you missed. If there are any of you whose favourite place I didn't mention, I apologize. However, I now have the privilege of being able to say, "I'm 60," which now grants me automatic forgiveness for my memory's shortcomings.

To my fellow baby boomers and baby boomers at heart, I dedicate this article. I hope that at least a few of you can say, "Yes, I remember."

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Donation to Salvation Army leads to a chain of social change

Lawrence Merkur's gift in perpetuity will help generations of those in need

By Daniel Horowitz

When Toronto's Lawrence Merkur passed away in 2008 at the age of 54, the reclusive and compassionate man with a penchant for cats left an unknown fortune to Toronto's Salvation Army, creating an unusual "marriage" of sorts.

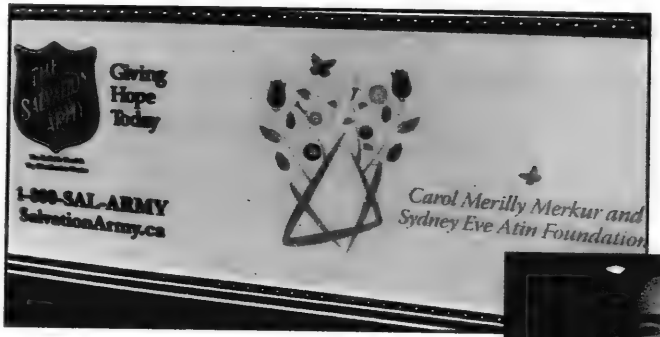
The day after his death, it was discovered that Merkur - an active and extremely successful trader in the silver market since 1990 - had amassed thousands of ounces of silver, worth between seven and eight million dollars.

And, as it turned out, his death had a silver lining for the Salvation Army and the tens of thousands of men, women and children among Toronto's hungry and homeless individuals.

Thanks to Lawrence's brother Ephry, Beth Tzedec's Rabbi Baruch Frydman Kohl and UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, our city's more than 21,000 vulnerable Jewish residents are also receiving the benefits.

"My brother, Laurie, as we called him, was greatly affected by the death of his sister, Carol Merilly Merkur, who died in 1958 at just six months old," said Ephry. "He was very sweet and caring, and the death of our sister, and later, the death of our father, really changed him. He became more introverted and lived a very, very frugal lifestyle. You would never know he had a nickel, let alone millions in silver."

In his will, Lawrence left the silver to the Salvation Army in trust, for perpetuity, meaning that it will continue to assist our city's most vulnerable for generations to come. And, typical of Lawrence, he didn't want to have his name attached to the gift – the largest single donation made to the Salvation Army in Canada. Instead, he wanted the donation to honour the memory of his late sister and a cousin who passed away at age 11, Sydney Eve Atin.



One of the trucks purchased by the Salvation Army with the gift left by Toronto's Lawrence Merkur z"l.

"The challenge was to figure out the best way that this donation could help Toronto's vulnerable citizens," says Ephry. "I suggested that perhaps we purchase a refrigerated truck to deliver fruit and other foods to those who needed it. That's what we did, and today we have three huge trucks that continue to distribute food to the homeless."

Another challenge confronting the Merkur family was how the Jewish community in need could also benefit from Lawrence's gift.

"I tried a number of Jewish organizations to help me, but with no luck," says Ephry. "Then, I went to my rabbi, Rabbi Frydman-Kohl who connected me with UJA in 2010. It was a perfect fit. UJA was so organized and equipped to make this happen, while The Salvation Army was so wonderful to work with and so open to our suggestions, they even purchased kosher food for the first time. It was around that time that the Pride of Israel food bank was running out of food and was on the verge of closing down. Just imagine the faces of those who, without warning, suddenly saw a huge refrigerated truck backing up at Beth Shalom, as pounds of kosher foods appeared out of nowhere. It was a pretty incredible and rewarding sight to see."

Lawrence Merkur, z"l, holding his nephew, Yoselle in 2003

In 2011 alone, more than 100,000 pounds of kosher food was delivered through the Salvation Army to low-income Jewish families.

"This was a very unlikely Shidduch," said Kim Smiley, Director, Capacity Building for Social Services, UJA. "It took over two years to materialize, but with Ephry's persistence, we have collectively created a game changer in the field of poverty alleviation. It was a chain of social change: Through Lawrence Merkur's generosity to The Salvation Army; through Ephry Merkur's connection to Rabbi Frydman Kohl; to the Rabbi's connection to UJA Federation; to UJA's partnership with local providers in the city which assist those struggling with poverty, including Pride of Israel's Kosher Food Bank and the Food Bank at Beth Shalom."

"Laurie has done so much more than help the needy - he has forged a relationship between interfaith organizations and community members who may have overlooked their common bonds in helping the poor," says Jordan Atin, Lawrence's first cousin, and the executor of his will. "To do so in the name of two girls, his sister, Carol Merilly and my sister, Sydney Eve Atin, both of who died at very young ages, is a remarkable tribute."

Jewish Free Loan Toronto – new name, same commitment to Jews in need

By Daniel Horowitz

Jews have always felt the responsibility to take care of one another.

Many who immigrated to the shores of Toronto in the early 1900's to escape persecution in Europe, arrived with little or no money and needed to seek out entrepreneurial opportunities which were financed by the first incarnations of communal loan societies. Often, it was one family offering small loans to other families to help them get started. Looking back, this was the birth of the micro-loan.

Fast forward over a hundred years and into a new millennium, and Jewish Free Loan Toronto, formerly known as Toronto Jewish Free Loan Cassa, continues the work of our ancestors, albeit with a new name and a new commitment to spreading the word about this vital organization that continues to improve the lives of countless Jews across the Greater Toronto Area.

Michael Freedman

One of the reasons for the name change is simply few understood what "Cassa" actually meant.

For the record, it's German for "cash box".

"We've changed our name, but, philosophically, nothing has changed about Jewish Free Loan Toronto," explains the organization's new executive director, Michael Freedman. "We are still here to help those members of the Jewish community who are in need by providing them with a hand-up, not a hand-out."

And, with the recent instability in the global economy, and with approximately 10 percent of the GTA's Jewish community living at – or below – the poverty line, the need to spread the word about Jewish Free Loan Toronto has never been greater.

The organization, a partner agency of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, is located in the Lipa Green Centre for Jewish Community Services on Sherman Campus. UJA Federation, along with United Way of Greater Toronto, provides funding towards the agency's operating costs.

It offers three types of loans: personal, education and small business start-up.

In 2011, Jewish Free Loan Toronto – then still known as Cassa - gave out loans ranging from $5,000 to $15,000 to 92% of applicants. Loans given to 153 individuals totaled $833,000 and currently the organization has $1.4 million worth of loans in circulation to 490 individuals. Loans are available to Jewish residents of the GTA who are Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada.

"We do a good job of getting our name and our services out to the community, but not a great job," says Freedman, a 53-year-old father of two and a native of New Brunswick. "Clearly we'd like to believe that every Jew across the GTA is doing well financially, but we know that there are many who need our services. There are too many others who don't know what we offer. I love the fact that, once a loan is paid back, that money is automatically placed back into the pool, and is ready to be loaned out again, to help others. To know that the work we do results in a perpetual circle of assistance, is truly rewarding. And, like with all non-profits, much of our success is due to the tireless efforts of our incredible volunteers."

Ironically, when Freedman heard the Jewish Free Loan Toronto was looking for a new executive director, it was the fact that he knew so little about the organization that sparked his interest in the job.

"I have been involved with a number of charitable organizations for years, both inside and outside of the Jewish community, and yet I was unaware of the full spectrum of what Free Loan does," he says. "That's why I took the job; the more I learned about what Jewish Free Loan Toronto offered, the more I knew that we had to spread the word about this incredible organization and increase the number of loans we provide."

"One of the most rewarding aspects of this job is when we see people who, at one time, came to us for a loan, come forward now to donate money to our organization," says Marlee Petroff, who has worked for Free Loan for 25 years. "It really says a lot about our Jewish community; that they are always wanting to give back, and they never forget who was there for them, when they needed help."

For more information, or to apply for a loan, visit jewishfreeloan.ca or call 416.635.1217.

Theatre company reaches out to Israeli community

Sheri Shefa
Staff Reporter

UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's Israeli-Canadian project director Galya Sarner believes there is nothing that brings people closer than arts and culture.

Sarner is a promoter of the four-year-old Mifgash Theatre, which is presenting a play by the late Israeli playwright Moshe Shamir called *He Walked Through the Fields*. She hopes this production will build on the efforts to connect Israeli immigrants to the Toronto Jewish community.

The Mifgash Theatre, Toronto's only Hebrew-language theatre company, was established in 2008 as part of a larger initiative to reach out to the growing Israeli-Canadian community, many of whom felt disconnected from the larger Jewish community.

Sarner, who referred to the community theatre project as "one of her babies," said that presenting Israeli culture to Torontonians is a dream come true.

"My philosophy is that there is nothing better than bringing people together through art and culture," she said, adding that she studied theatre when she was in university.

"There are a lot of talented people in our Israeli community and we have professional actors and actresses, as well as volunteers, and that is the beauty of it."

She added that while the play is presented in Hebrew, there are English subtitles for members of the community who don't speak the language.

Adding a personal touch to the upcoming production is the fact that the play is directed by Yael Feingold, daughter of the late Shamir, who, in addition to being a writer, was also a former Knesset member.

Galya Sarner

"I think it's going to be very special because it was and still is one of the most successful plays in Israel, but it actually reflects in many ways our own Israeli Jewish identity," Sarner said.

The play, which runs from May 20 to 24 at the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, is about a young sabra, a native Israeli, who falls in love with a Polish Holocaust survivor on the eve of the War of Independence. He becomes torn between staying with his family and fighting in the Palmach.

Ran Mesterman, who wears many hats for federation, serves as the chair of the Israeli Forum Committee and was federation's first Israeli member of the board of directors.

He said he's proud of what the Mifgash Theatre has achieved.

"I think the [Mifgash Theatre] has done tremendously good, and I was amazed to see the amount of people who are joining the program – not only the people who are coming to see the show, but the people who are volunteering to be a part of the show," Mesterman said, adding that all of the past shows had sold out.

"It's really amazing to see how much it is necessary."

He said that although many of the Israeli division of federation's initiatives have been successful, he feels there is potential to reach out to many more Israelis.

"We found two major arenas in the Israeli community [that have succeeded]. The first and most important one is education and the second is culture," he said.

Through initiatives such as Kachol Lavan, a supplementary school for children from junior kindergarten to Grade 8, as well as the Mifgash Theatre, which is part of the Hamifgash program at the Schwartz/Reisman Centre, many Israelis have become involved with the Jewish community, Mesterman said.

"The Israeli community is special in a way that they form many small groups, and they feel they don't need other parties... They don't necessarily understand that the federation is giving the actual infrastructure for it to be successful."

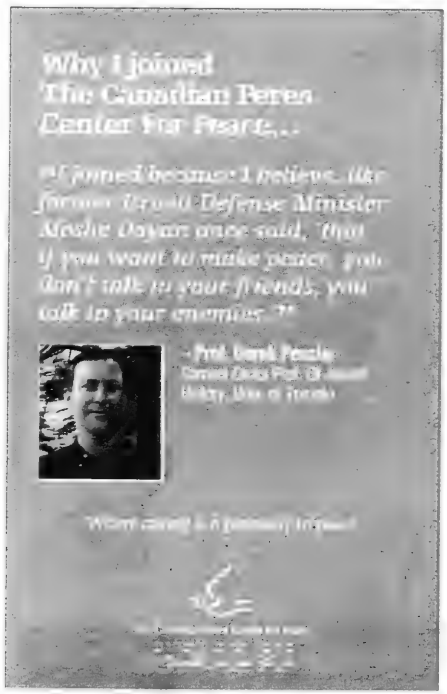
As for the future of federation's Israeli division, which represents 50,000 to 60,000 Israelis living in the Toronto area, Sarner said the community seems to be getting younger.

"I think more and more young adults are moving to Toronto – I would say young professionals around 27, 28. They're looking for a better future, they're looking for job opportunities, social opportunities, and we cannot ignore this fact."

Mesterman said now that the educational and cultural approaches have proven to be successful, he has ambitions to work on the business side and to engage Israelis who want to network.

"I'm trying to find people who want to take the initiative to reach out to Israeli people and to get the message out that... we want them to become part of the infrastructure that we've built over the past few years. It's taken us a lot of time and we've worked very hard for that," Mesterman added.

For more information about *He Walked Through the Fields*, call 416-635-2883, ext. 5316. Tickets are $25.



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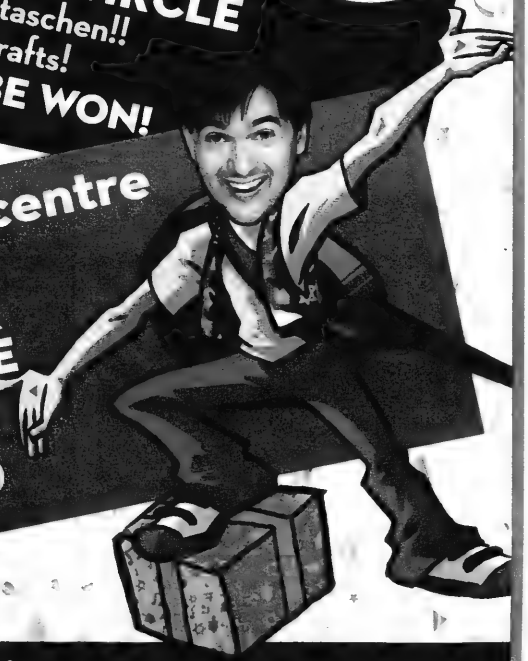

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Interested applicants please submit a resume and cover letter **no later than March 25th** to:

Darchei.noam@hotmail.com – please quote Director of Youth Education and Programming in the subject line. Only those applicants selected for an interview will be contacted.

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ZIMRIYAH 2012: Students from Associated Hebrew Schools, top and the Montessori Jewish Day School were among those who sang on Feb. 26 at the Zimriyah, the annual choral festival of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's Centre for Jewish Education. The event for Jewish day and supplementary school choirs, held this year at Adath Israel Congregation, was led by Cantor Eyal Bitton. Fourteen schools took part, with a total of more than 1,200 attendees at the morning and afternoon performances.

PURIM FUN: Leo Baeck Day School invited neighbouring families to celebrate Purim at its annual preschool pre-Purim party. Children enjoyed carnival games, face painting, a magic show from Doo Doo the clown, Purim treats and live music by Rabbi Noam Katz and Marky Weinstock. Pictured, from left, are Victoria Boulakia, Charles Boulakia, Hindy Boulakia, Shira Lev, Isabelle Boulakia, Bayla Lev and Sol Lev

KINGS OF THE CASTLE: Jack Matias, left, and Ryan Gordon from Temple Sinai Nursery School enjoyed dressing up as kings and playing in their castle. The children in their class helped to paint and decorate the castle as part of their celebration of Purim.

RAISING AWARENESS: Bnei Akiva Schools was among hundreds of high schools across North America to participate in Sharsheret's Pink Day on Feb. 29 to raise awareness about breast cancer and Sharsheret's vital programs and services. In total, over $220 was raised in support of this national not-for-profit organization, which supports young Jewish women and their families facing breast cancer. Pictured, from left, are Yechiel Rosensweig, David Suttner, assistant principal Nicky Kagan, Nadav Erlich, Baruch Margolis, Ofek Laikin, Aryeh Forman, Shimmy Jesin, Ariel Shields, Yaakov Green and headmaster Rabbi Scot Berman.

Mazel Tov
מזל טוב

WELCOME EVAN AVERY!

SCHONBERGER — Terry and Jordana (nee Fenster) are thrilled to announce the birth of their precious son Evan Avery on February 15, 2012 at 8:08 p.m. weighing 6 lbs. 13 oz. Overjoyed grandparents Robyn and Alan Fenster, Edward Schonberger and Paula Pastor. Great grandmother Rita Pastor. Proud aunts and uncles: Allyson (Joel), Andrew, Corey, Ashley, Brittany and Shelby. Lovingly welcomed by the Fensters, Tratts, Shorsers and Baraneks. Missed at this time are Edna Fenster, Al Pastor, Sylvia and Lawrence Ekstein. Special thanks to Dr. Pairaudeau and the amazing staff at NYGH!

Marci Cook & Phil Tishler announce the birth of Ruby Jessie, sister to Rylie. Grandparents are Leo Cook, Jeannie Cook, the late Jessie and Mendy Tishler.

Mazel tov Jude on your continued work and fundraising efforts for village schools in Nepal. Happy 10th anniversary trip. Be safe. Love, your sister

Andrea & Ian Cargman are thrilled to announce the birth of Noah Samuel, Nov. 29. Proud grandparents, Beverly & Murray Altberg, Marsha & Sydney Cargman.

Mireille & Lee Chernofsky, Sheila & Donald Prinsky and their entire family announce the engagement of Alanna & Michael. A fall 2012 wedding is planned.

Jason Wang, Keryn Stein and brother Corey announce the birth of Tyler Noah, Nov. 18. Proud grandparents, Abe & Frances Wang, Steve & Sharon Stein.

Email your digital photos to cblackman@thecjn.ca or go online to www.CJNews.com and click the "Family Moments"

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What's New

By LILA SARICK

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Deadline reminder: March 12 is the deadline for the issue of March 22. March 19 is the deadline for the issue of March 29. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; e-mail whatsnewcjn@gmail.com, or fax 416-391-0829.

Thursday, March 8

ANXIOUS PARENTS AND KIDS

Leanne Matlow and **Susie Levitsky** present a workshop for anxious parents of anxious kids, Earl Bales Community Centre, 8 p.m. E-mail slevitsky@rogers.com; matlow@sympatico.ca.

PEP GROUP

The Pep Group meets at Earl Bales Community Centre at 12:30 p.m. **Jordan Klapman** discusses "The Jewish-Black Music Connection from Louis Armstrong and Beyond" with live music.

Friday, March 9

ORAYNU ONEG SHABBAT

Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism holds an adult Oneg Shabbat. **Peter Ginsberg** discusses "The Alice in Wonderland Files-Part II: True Stories from the Middle East," 18 Wynford Dr., 7:30 p.m. RSVP 416-385-3910 or roby@oraynu.org.

Sunday, March 11

INNOVATION IN JEWISH LAW

Rabbi Michael Broyde discusses "Innovation in Jewish Law: When Can We, Should We, Must We?" Beth Avraham Yoseph Congregation, 7:30 p.m. 416-633-5770 or www.torahinmotion.org.

ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

Yehudit Shier Weisberg discusses "The Legal Forum for the Land of Israel," the Lodzer Synagogue, 7 p.m. 416-636-6665.

THE DISPUTATION

The movie *The Disputation* will be shown at Shaar Shalom Synagogue and followed with commentary by **Rabbi Martin Berman,** 7:30 p.m.

MEGILLAH MIA

A fundraiser performance of *Megillah Mia* benefiting the Masorti Bar/Bat Mitzvah Program for Special Needs Children in Israel will be held at Beth Tzedec Synagogue, 7 p.m. Tickets 416-667-1717 or info@masorti.ca.

Monday, March 12

EUROPEAN JEWISH LIFE

Janet Kerekes discusses "The Effects of the Holocaust and 50 Years of Communism on Central and Eastern European Jewish Institutions," Beth Emeth Synagogue, 8 p.m.

RASHI

Eric Lawee leads a 3-week discussion on "Rashi: The Biblical Commentary," Mondays, starting tonight, 8 p.m., Or Chaim Yeshiva. 416-877-2050 or www.mekorot.ca.

Tuesday, March 13

THEN SHE FOUND ME

Beth Tikvah Synagogue shows the film *Then She Found Me,* 2 p.m., as part of its Tuesdays with Larry movie series. $5 at the door.

WORLD WAR II HERO

Paul Stancer speaks about the life of Squadron Leader **Edward (Teddy) Weymen Bienkinsop**, a Canadian war hero, Temple Har Zion, 7:30 p.m. 905-889-2252.

Continued on page 31

A History of the Jews of the Iberian Peninsula

Four illustrated lectures by Rabbi Wayne Allen, Ph.D

Wednesday March 14
- Spain, and Portugal under the Romans and Visigoths

Wednesday March 21
- The Tarnished Golden Age

Thursday March 29
- Persecution, Expulsion and Resurgence

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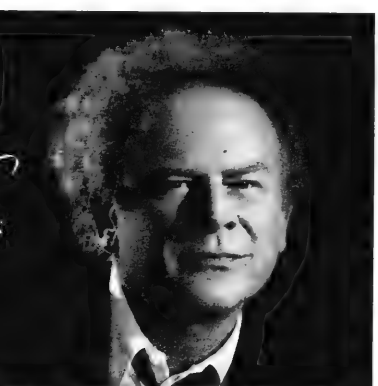

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Continued from page 30

ISRAEL PHILATELISTS
Society of Israel Philatelists meets at Antibes Community Centre, 7 p.m. A slide presentation of Zionism as portrayed by the stamps of Israel will be shown. E-mail p.elias@rogers.com or call 416-226-2050.

CRISIS INTERVENTION
Karen Letofsky discusses "Crisis Intervention by Prevention," Beth David Synagogue, 8 p.m.

Wednesday, March 14

BOOK REVIEW
The Prime Ministers by **Yehudah Avner** will be discussed at Kehillat Shaarei Torah, 7:30 p.m. 416-229-2600.

Thursday, March 15

PIZZA AND A MOVIE
The movie *Against The Tide* will be shown at Temple Har Zion, followed by discussion led by **Rabbi Cory Weiss**, 6:30 p.m. RSVP by March 13, 905-889-2252.

ISRAEL-U.S. RELATIONS
Nathan Guttman, Washington bureau chief for the *Jewish Daily Forward*, discusses "Israel-U.S. Relations: The View From Washington," Beth David Synagogue, 7:30 p.m.

THE FOUR QUESTIONS
JTS professor **Robbie Harris** and local rabbis lead sessions on "Can You Answer the Four Questions," Adath Israel Synagogue, 7:30 p.m. Register at 416-667-1717 or beroth@jtsa.edu.

Other News

GUEST CANTOR
David Edwards of Beth Emeth Synagogue is the guest cantor at Beth Tikvah Synagogue, March 16-17. Reserve for the Friday night dinner by March 12. Call 416-221-3433.

HELPING OTHER PARENTS
HOPE (Helping Other Parents Everywhere) is a support group for parents of acting-out youth. The group meets Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m. at Edithvale Community Centre, 131 Finch Ave. W. Call **Bernice**, 905-737-3403.

THE GIFT OF PRAYER
Melton Adult Mini School offers a 9-week class on Prayer: A Gift for Our Lives, taught by **Yehudit Shier Weisberg**. Starting April 18 at Beth Emeth Synagogue. Call 416-789-7400.

SCHWARTZ REISMAN CENTRE
The centre is open for daily tours. Register now for pre-school and daycare. Call 905-303-1821.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
Baycrest needs volunteers to help at the information desk, lead Russian discussion groups, help with movie nights, provide assistance at meal times. Call 416-785-2500, ext. 2572.

Jewish Club for the Vision Impaired needs volunteer drivers the first Monday of the month. **Sheila**, 905-731-9667.

Reena needs volunteers for its March break program, March 12-16, 927 Clark Ave. W., Thornhill. Female volunteers are also needed for the swim program, Tuesday evenings, Garnet Williams Community Centre. Call **Mille Chadwick**, 905-889-2690, ext. 2112, or mchadwick@reena.org.

PURIM FUN
Women's Megillah Reading at Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue, March 8, 9:30 a.m.

Chabad of Markham presents Purim in the Jungle with a buffet and live animal show, March 8, 5:30 p.m. Advance tickets required. 905-886-0420; www.chabadmarkham.org.

Friends of Yiddish holds an afternoon of Purim fun with the Yenevelt Klezmer Band, March 11, 2 p.m. at Beth Tikvah Synagogue. RSVP by March 8 to **Sandy**, 416-458-1440, 416-736-8073 or yiddish18@yahoo.ca.

Schwartz Reisman Centre holds a Purim celebration featuring **David Gershon** and **Bagel**, March 11, 1 p.m. 905-303-1821

Prosserman JCC holds a Purim celebration with Mystic Drumz, March 11, 1:30 p.m.

JF&CS GROUPS

All programs require pre-registration and are open to all members of the community. To register, call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or www.jfandcs.com. All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst. St., unless otherwise noted.

Mind, Body Connection for Women: An 8-session group for women who want to learn mindfulness and meditation. Topics include stress and anxiety reduction, enhancing your self-esteem. Starts March 27, 7 p.m.

When You're About to Separate, What to Tell the Kids: A workshop for parents in the early stages of separation, March 29, 6:30 p.m.

BEREAVED PARENTS
Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer** at JF & CS, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or bfeffer@jfandcs.com.

FOR SENIORS

Volunteers Needed. Join the BRAVO study linking brain health and volunteering. Participants must be over 55 and not working or volunteering for more than 3 hours a month. Study includes 1 year of volunteering at Baycrest. Visit www.baycrest.org/bravo; call 416-785-2500, ext. 3435.

Seniors Social Club at Earl Bales Community Centre. March 11, violinist **Michael Ziskind** performs, 7 p.m. Call **Sandy**, 416-736-8073; 416-458-1440.

Bridge club. The bridge club at Forest Hill library has reopened and is looking for new members. Call **Lea** (evenings), 416-487-7630.

Falls Prevention Program at Baycrest. An 8-week program provides education and exercise for older adults who have experienced 1 or more falls or who fear falling. Starts March 12. Call **Maureen Smith**, 416-785-2488.

Association of Jewish Seniors. Tammy, 416-635-2900, ext. 458. March 15, **Jamie Golombek** discusses "Tax and Retirement Tips for Seniors," Shaarei Shomayim, 9:30 a.m.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park. (60+). **Valerie**, 416-395-7881. Casino Rama, March 14. Dance with live music, March 25. Tuesdays, gentle exercise, 10 a.m., first class free; Wednesdays, duplicate bridge, 12:30 p.m.; Thursdays, line dancing, 10 a.m.; social bridge, 12:30 p.m. Non-members welcome.

National Council of Jewish Women, Aviva branch, is looking for women over 70 for their group. Call 416-633-5100.

LZA Seniors Cultural Club meets Tuesdays, 10 a.m., Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell. 416-630-9444.

New Horizons is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club that offers kosher food, card games, casino trips. 416-256-1892.

Adath Israel Congregation. Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub. Refreshments $2. Call **Pearl**, 416-635-6317, or **Sheila**, 416-665-3333.

Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue welcomes new players for mah-jong and Rummikub Monday and Wednesday afternoons. 416-633-3838.

Bernard Betel Centre 416-225-2112. March 8, **Janice Lisker** discusses "7 Principles to Successful Aging," 1:30 p.m.; March 12, **David Lipovitch** discusses "The Archeology of Bronze Age Canaan," 10 a.m.; March 14, Post-Purim Persian Party with Middle Eastern salads, belly dancing, music; March 15, **Judy Weiss** discusses "Family Expectations," 1:30 p.m.

Active Seniors, Miles Nadal JCC, 416-924-6211, ext.155. March 8, artist **Laya Crust** gives an illustrated talk describing her creation of a Purim Scroll of Esther, 1:30 p.m. March 22, **Jordan Klapman** presents "The Jewish-Black Music Connection: Louis Armstrong and Beyond, with live piano," 1:30 p.m. Beginner's computer course, 8-week session, starts April 17.

PROSSERMAN JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com.

The fitness centre is holding an open house, March 11, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Call ext. 4000 to register for babysitting.

A panel of authors discuss "The Secrets of Self-Publishing," March 12, 7:30 p.m. Call **Staci**, ext. 4472.

Enjoy an afternoon of illusion and socializing, March 14 Call ext. 4472.

Register for Shalom Sesame Pesach event, ages 1-5, April 4, 10 a.m. **Monique Shapiro**, ext. 4012.

Shalom Singers are looking for choir members, rehearsals Thursdays 10 a.m.

Tickets for spring/summer theatre trips are on sale now.

Tic Tac Two program will be extended into the summer. Call **Kailah Rubin**, ext. 4351.

MILES NADAL JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org.

The Diary of Anne Frank by Shakespeare in Action runs March 15-31, Al Green Theatre. Ext. 0.

Night Without a Moon: Jewish Women's Cabaret with **Marcia Beck, Tova Kardonne, Marni Levitt** and **Ilana Newman** 8 p.m., March 24. Ext. 154.

Janusz Makuch, director of the Krakow Jewish Culture Festival, discusses "Jewish Culture in Contemporary Poland," March 25, 2 p.m. Ext. 154.

The adult daytime choir meets Tuesdays 1 p.m. gillians@mnjcc.org.

Klezmer ensemble meets Tuesdays 7:30 p.m. music@mnjcc.org or ext. 0.

You Are an Animal, photography by **Azriel Cohen** on display at the gallery until April 1.

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 20

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BRIDAL REGISTRY

Netanyahu addresses community leaders

Continued from page 1

Netanyahu expressed relief at being able to spend time in a country so strongly allied with his own.

"When we speak about the difficulties and troubles in [the Middle East], it is particularly encouraging to come to Canada, and later on to the U.S., and know that I stand among friends who share the same values and goals. You are such a friend. I look forward to our conversations," he said.

Netanyahu said he has been speaking out on the dangers of Iranian plans to acquire nuclear weapons since his first tenure as the Israeli prime minister 15 years ago.

"As we see that the timeline is advancing and the distance to Iranian nuclear capability is decreasing, we understand that this could happen. The danger is not only to Israel," he said.

Netanyahu said the world has to look only at what Iran does without nuclear weapons to understand that with them it would become even more menacing.

"It gives Hezbollah in Lebanon tens of thousands of rockets. It's in Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, it's even in South America. It threatens to choke the world oil supply by closing the Strait of Hormuz," he said. "They send their own children into minefields. They hang gays, stone women. Imagine what a regime like this would do if they had atomic weapons? I think it would be a… great danger to all the nations of the world."

The two leaders continued to have private talks over the weekend.

On Sunday, Netanyahu gave a breakfast briefing to some 80 representatives of the Canadian Jewish community from organizations including the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) – which organized the event on behalf of the Israeli Embassy – B'nai Brith Canada, the Jewish National Fund and Israel Bonds. He then left for meetings with U.S. President Barack Obama in Washington to again discuss the Iranian threat.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper, right, and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, are presented with hockey jerseys. *[PMO photo by Jason Ransom]*

According to CIJA CEO Shimon Fogel, the breakfast gathering with Netanyahu, which was closed to media on Sunday, was "unusually informal" and conducted in a question-and-answer format.

"He spoke about Iran of course, emphasizing that the international community must not allow Iran to use talks to camouflage its ongoing drive to nuclear capacity. He also addressed issues of Israeli pluralism and democracy," Fogel told *The CJN*.

Netanyahu also spoke about relations between his nation and Turkey, as well as Israel as an emerging energy power and the false "notion of Israel's isolation within the international community," Fogel said.

According to Fogel, the Jewish community leaders were "very happy" to connect with Netanyahu. "Overall, it was a very successful encounter," he said, adding that Netanyahu extended an open and standing invitation to Harper to visit Israel, although there appear to be no immediate plans for such a trip.

Despite his staunch support of the Jewish state, Harper has yet to visit Israel.

Speaking before his meeting with Jewish leaders in Ottawa on Sunday, Netanyahu praised Obama's earlier speech at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) conference in Washington and said he greatly appreciated the U.S. president's statement on Israel's right to defend itself against any threat.

Netanyahu highlighted Obama's statements that Iran should not be permitted to develop nuclear weapons and that all options should remain on the table to prevent it from doing so. Netanyahu added that he expected to discuss these issues with Obama on Monday.

Immediately after his speech at the AIPAC conference, Obama met for 35 minutes with Israeli President Shimon Peres. The two discussed both Iran and the Palestinians. After the meeting, Peres spoke by phone with Netanyahu and updated him on the meeting with Obama.

"It was an excellent meeting with President Obama," Peres said. "He reinforced the things he said in his speech and went into more detail. I left with the feeling that he is determined to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons and he is very serious. Obama told me that Israel's security is an American national security interest… He is sharply clear and is not playing politics."

With files from Ha'aretz

OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Rapaport, Bella	Feb. 14/12	
Katz, David	Feb. 16/12	Private
Greenberg, Jean	Feb. 17/12	
Garshon, Alice Jean	Feb. 16/12	Private
Chaussky, Genya	Feb. 17/12	625 Finch Ave. W
Khanoukhova, Adassa	Feb. 18/12	5935 Bathurst St
Goldberg, Richard	Feb. 18/12	262 St. Clair Ave.W
Walton, Anne	Feb. 18/12	249 Betty Ann Dr
Maister, Melissa	Feb. 19/12	640 Roselawn Ave
Good,Samuel Benjamin	Feb. 20/12	2121 Bathurst St
Kay, Ettie	Feb. 19/12	541 Finch Ave. W
Rabinovitz, Abraham	Feb. 19/12	541 Woburn Ave
Liansky, Avraham	Feb. 19/12	4300 Bathurst St
Honig, Agnes	Feb. 20/12	3560 Bathurst St
Israel, Sheba	Feb. 21/12	49 Green Lane
Kanter, Khaya	Feb. 22/12	3560 Bathurst St
Ovadya, Elyahu	Feb. 23/12	
Leib, Maria	Feb. 22/12	
Wohl, Molly	Feb. 23/12	79 Invermay Ave
Shievitz, Molly	Feb. 24/12	217 Acton Ave

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Marjorie Katz	Feb 20/12	16 Duncannon Drive
Herbert Alpert	Feb 20/12	15 Ava Road
Hilda Arshinoff	Feb 20/12	1555 Finch Avenue East
Sybil Stulberg	Feb 21/12	546 Steeles Avenuu W.
Mimi Fliess	Feb 21/12	147 Campbell Avenue
Hilda Rose	Feb 22/12	2603 Bathurst St.
Stephen Flagg	Feb 21/12	492 Glengarry Avenue
Sylvia Holtzman	Feb 21/12	120 Promenade Circle
Dr. Joe Flicht	Feb 22/12	55 Skymark Drive
Bernice Levinson	Feb 23/12	89 Prue Avenue
Asher Joram	Feb 21/12	54 Ames Circle
Basia Chaiton	Feb 25/12	224 St. Clements Ave.
Belle Siskind	Feb 25/12	2121 Bathurst Street

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Choir director named a Top 25 nominee

Lauren Kramer
Pacific Correspondent

VANCOUVER — At 88, Elizabeth Wolak has done time in a Russian forced labour camp, acted as assistant conductor at the Krakow State Philharmonic, emigrated from her home in Poland to Australia and later to Canada and led countless students through piano lessons.

She has put her musical skills to work by

Elizabeth Wolak

creating and leading four Vancouver Jewish choirs since 1963, and today, she is shortlisted as a finalist for the 2012 Top 25 Canadian Immigrants for her work as cultural ambassador to the Jewish community.

"When I look back at my whole life, I can say I did a lot," Wolak says. "But I miss the choir work."

She went into forced retirement in 2008 after several members of her choir, the Shiron Singers, were unable to commute to the evening practice sessions. The Shiron Singers, the fourth choir Wolak has created and led since arriving in Vancouver, lasted 26 years.

Wolak's interest in Jewish music did not begin until after she left Poland as a young adult. She started her piano studies at the age of six and was a teen when the war began. When she was 16, she and her parents worked in a Russian forced labour camp, a time she describes as "terrible."

"All the young girls my age were given 'light' work," she says. "That meant cutting small trees, which were used to repair the road."

After the war, the family returned to Poland to find that their extended family, with the exception of one cousin, had been murdered in the Holocaust. Wolak enrolled in Krakow's Jagiellonian University and graduated with a master's degree in English and musicology. She also received a diploma in choral conducting and music pedagogy from the Krakow Conservatory of Music.

"Poland became much more antisemitic after the Nazi occupation than it had been before," she recalls. "It was really difficult, and at the advice of my father's friends, we changed our name from Waldman to Vishnovsky in order to sound more Polish."

Under her new last name, Wolak was appointed assistant conductor at the Krakow symphony and was able to hide the fact that she is Jewish.

By then, she had met her future husband, Edward Wolak, and the couple knew they would marry and live abroad.

"I couldn't stand the situation in Poland," she says.

Her fiancé had papers to Canada, but she did not. So, he and Wolak moved to Australia in 1960, where they married, and not long after, they immigrated to Canada.

With her, she brought an antique Bluthner piano that she cherishes to this day, a gift from her father when she graduated from university.

Wolak's interest in Jewish music was born in Australia, when she was approached by the North Shore Temple Emmanuel and invited to work as choir director. "It was a very good choir and I really enjoyed it," she reflects. "My husband had always been certain that once I left Poland, I'd be connected to religious music, and he was right, I got into it right away."

Not long after stepping off the boat in this country, she was approached by the Jewish Community Centre, asking her to start a Jewish Community Choir.

Passionate about Jewish music, Wolak formed a 35-person choir, and through it, made many of her closest friends in the city. In later years, she would form a choir for Vancouver's Temple Sholom, be asked to experiment with a choir at Congregation Shaarei Tzedek ("it failed because they would not allow a woman to conduct the choir," she says) and in 1981, form the Shiron Singers.

With the Shiron Singers, she led performances of Jewish music before mainstream audiences including thousands at Vancouver's 1986 Expo.

"We made people appreciate Jewish music," she says. "I was told several times over the years that although people did not understand the words of the Jewish music, which were sung mostly in Hebrew and some in Yiddish, the music itself spoke to them because it is so full of feeling. I think that was our biggest achievement."

Life in Vancouver was not easy for Wolak. Edward died suddenly in 1979, leaving her a widow with two sons to raise alone. She made ends meet by teaching piano, grateful that she had had the foresight to complete her studies in Poland so that she had a career to fall back on in later years.

The Top 25 Canadian Immigrants is a peoples' choice award that recognizes individuals who have come to Canada and made a positive difference living here. *Canadian Immigrants* is a magazine for new Canadians. Winners will be announced at the end of May 2012 and will be recognized with a commemorative plaque. RBC has pledged to donate $500 to a charity on behalf of each winner. To vote for Elizabeth Wolak, go to http://canadianimmigrant.ca

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New Montreal rabbi hopes to 'open doors'

Janice Arnold
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — As a former Rhodes Scholar who also has a PhD from Oxford, Rabbi Lisa Grushcow might naturally have chosen the life of an academic.

As a proud gay woman, that might have been the easier route.

"But as soon as I got a taste of the congregational rabbinate, I knew it was what I wanted," said the Canadian-born Rabbi Grushcow, who will become the senior rabbi of Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom July 1, succeeding Rabbi Leigh Lerner who is retiring.

She is not only the first female senior rabbi at the 130-year-old temple, but of any large congregation in Canada comprising more than 1,000 member families.

Rabbi Grushcow is also Canada's first openly gay congregational rabbi. She will be coming to Montreal with her spouse, Rabbi Andrea Myers, and their two young daughters.

Trailblazer, however, is not a label Rabbi Grushcow cares to trumpet.

"I hope I will not be regarded as a female rabbi or a gay rabbi," she said in an interview. "I am here to be a rabbi. I think people quickly respond to you for who you are when you are at home in your own skin.

"We may raise some eyebrows, but we were received with warmth," she added, referring to her visit last month to the temple to be formally introduced.

She could have stayed in New York, where since 2003 she has been an associate rabbi at Congregation Rodeph Sholom, a historic temple with about 1,700 members on Manhattan's Upper West Side.

She and her spouse are active in gay rights issues in New York, and lobbied New York State for the legalization of same-sex marriage, which was enacted last June.

Rabbi Myers, who was raised a Lutheran in Long Island, N.Y., is the author of the 2011 memoir *The Choosing: A Rabbi's Journey from Silent Nights to High Holy Days.*

Rabbi Lisa Grushcow, incoming senior rabbi of Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom is greeted by congregants.

But the opportunity to lead the temple, Montreal's sole Reform congregation, was one Rabbi Grushcow could not pass up. Born in Ottawa and raised in Toronto (she is "just under 40") – which will make her a rarity as a Canadian leading a major shul in her own country – Rabbi Grushcow earned her undergraduate degree at McGill University in the 1990s and became enchanted with Montreal and its strong Jewish community.

"You don't see this kind of Jewish life in many places. It may be a lot smaller than New York, but I do not feel that Montreal is lacking at all." The temple announced her appointment Dec. 1.

The couple's union was sanctified in New York in 2001, and, in 2003, soon after Ontario legalized same-sex marriage, they went to Kingston, where they were married by Rabbi Justin Lewis, then of the Reform Iyr Ha-Melech Congregation.

It was also the year Rabbi Grushcow was ordained at Hebrew Union College in New York.

Having a spouse who is also a rabbi (she was ordained at New York's Academy for Jewish Religion), Rabbi Grushcow feels is fortunate, because she intimately understands the job.

Rabbi Myers is not expected to play a specific role at the temple, although she likely will be looking for teaching opportunities.

Rabbi Grushcow, whose parents and other relatives live in Toronto, was raised in the Conservative movement and attended Beth Tikvah Synagogue. While at McGill, she went to the Reconstructionist Congregation Dorshei Emet. She moved to the Reform movement while in England.

Her impression of her new congregation, which has just over 1,000 member families, is that it is "dynamic and diverse." A goal is to make it even more inclusive. As its new president Stephen Yaffe noted, the congregation is still large, but it is aging.

Led by Rabbi Lerner for 23 years, the temple is liberal. Same-sex and interfaith marriages are performed there, if there is a commitment to create a Jewish home, (although its rabbis do not co-officiate with clergy of other faiths, a policy she will continue), and LGBT and mixed couples are welcome.

"As the only Reform congregation, the temple is in a unique position to open doors to those who do not have a place elsewhere in the community," Rabbi Grushcow said.

"The Bible speaks of Abraham and Sarah's tent being open on four sides. That's a fitting image of offering different ways in."

Rabbi Gruschow's colleague will be Rabbi Julia Appel, who joined the temple last summer as full-time outreach rabbi.

Rabbi Grushcow has a keen interest in interfaith relations (her academic research was in the beginnings of Christianity and rabbinic Judaism), and will be back March 28 to speak at a national Christian-Jewish consultation event at McGill.

She believes it's important for "progressive" religions to have a voice in Quebec where secularism is so highly valued and religion has become "a straw man."

She also looks forward to forging ties with her rabbinic colleagues of other denominations, as she has in New York.

Encouraging Jewish learning is another of her priorities, but Rabbi Grushcow says no one should be intimidated by her scholarly background. "There's an old saying: People need to know you care before they care about what you know.'"

She does hope to guide those who want to become more literate in a Judaism that's relevant to the modern world or who are attracted to an intellectual pursuit of the religion. "I'm a great believer in lifelong learning," she said.

"In my first year, I expect to watch and learn, to have conversations with congregants and leaders. I want to respect where they want to go," Rabbi Grushcow said.

"I come from a community where the building is always full of people of all ages and who have come by different ways. I hope to bring that kind of energy here."

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Canadian play about Mideast in Israeli festival

Myron Love
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Michael Nathanson and his play *Talk* are both about to make their debuts in Israel.

The play, about two longtime friends whose differences about the Middle East situation ruin their friendship, is the only foreign play to be staged at this year's Stage One English Theater Festival in Jerusalem from April from 8 to 10.

Michael Nathanson
[Myron Love photo]

All the other playwrights are Israeli, says Nathanson, who is the artistic director of the Winnipeg Jewish Theatre (WJT).

"I was stunned, but pleasantly so," says Nathanson, on being approached to have his play mounted in Israel. "They contacted me in mid-December. We had some back and forth, and I had to provide a film clip of two actors reading the parts in a scene."

Nathanson began writing *Talk* in 2001. It's based on a correspondence that he had with a longtime friend in the aftermath of the attack on the Twin Towers on Sept. 11, 2001.

"I was living in New York at that time and was supposed to be downtown that morning, but my plans fell through," he recalls. "A week or two later, I received an e-mail from a friend of about 16 years who was living in Europe.

He e-mailed me a copy of the infamous article in *The New Yorker* by Susan Sontag, blaming the attack on America's foreign policy. He also forwarded me an e-mail by a university professor who was strongly pro-Palestinian. The gist of it was that all of the problems in the Middle East are Israel's fault.

"I couldn't understand this. It was all nonsensical. It got me to thinking about my now former friend and wondering how well we really know anyone else," Nathanson says.

"The play does what I intended it to do. It's not a polemic. It is entertaining and engenders discussion. While politics provides the sizzle, it is more about the end of a friendship."

Talk premièred at the WJT in 2007. The play was published in 2009 and nominated for a Governor General's Award in 2010. Since then, *Talk* has been staged at Toronto's Harold Green Jewish Theatre (in March 2010) and at the National Arts Centre Festival in Ottawa (last April).

"We have also had readings in Los Angeles and New York over the past couple of years," the Winnipeg playwright says.

Nathanson is in his sixth year as WJT's artistic director. The WJT, which is celebrating its 25th anniversary next season, is doing very well. "Last year, our audience increased by 50 per cent over the year before," he says. "We are getting a more diverse and younger audience who get what we are doing and appreciate it.

"And a second play we did last year [*Lenin's Embalmers*] was also nominated for a Governor General's Award. For a theatre our size to have had two plays thus recognized in three years is unprecedented."

The WJT's next production will be *Angels in America*, opening in April. "Judging by the early response, this will be the best-attended play we have ever put on," Nathanson says.

He is currently working on a new play – and he is looking forward to two weeks in Israel. "After the performances, I am looking forward to taking some time to see Israel," he says.

There's a (kosher) app for that

Janice Arnold
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Not sure if that ketchup is kosher? Wondering where the nearest kosher hot dogs can be found?

Well, there's an app for that now.

The Montreal Vaad Ha'ir has just launched a mobile application for its MK kosher guide that can be downloaded free of charge to a portable electronic device. It's available through the Apple App Store and the Android Market.

The Vaad is working on getting it for BlackBerry, too.

This is a first in Canada, said Vaad executive director Rabbi Saul Emanuel, and an advancement on similar apps created by some kashrut supervisory organizations in the United States.

All of the 30,000 products from around the world bearing the MK hechsher are accessible by category (baked goods, for example), specific type of food, or brand.

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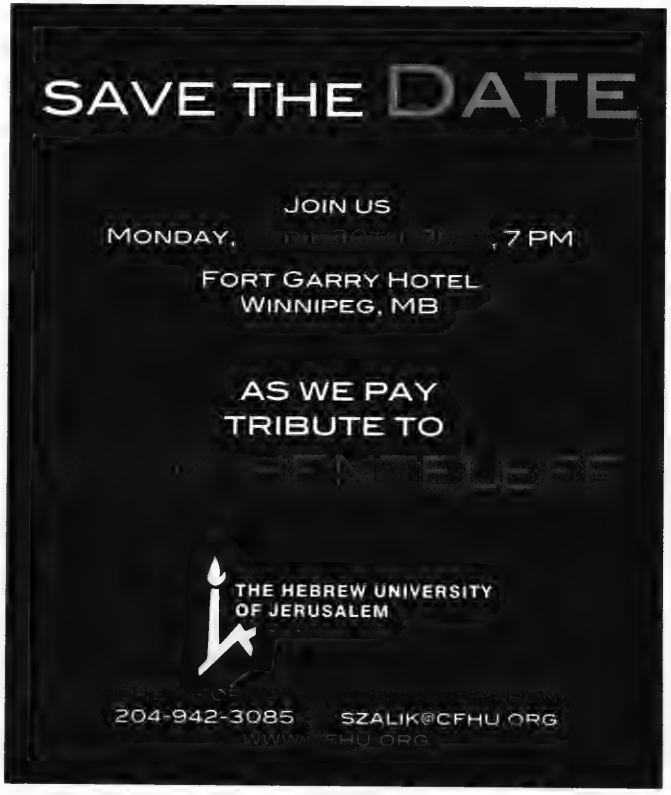

Tolerance and freedom: lessons for Israel

Guest Voice

Jacob Ziegel
[Paul Lawrence photo]

The Jewish and secular media in North America have been exposed for many months now to reports from Israel about women (including haredi women) being forced to sit at the back of public buses that were also occupied by haredi men; of haredi extremists humiliating a young Orthodox Jewish child in Beit Shemesh, on her way to school, because, in their closed minds, she was indecently dressed; of haredi rabbis threatening commercial advertisers in Jerusalem with boycotts of their products if they did not remove pictures of women in their advertisements; of other Jewish fanatics desecrating Muslim mosques in Jerusalem and elsewhere in Israel. Other haredi rabbis have urged their adherents not to rent or sell their properties to Muslims.

The list of intolerant behaviour by extremist religious groups in Israel continues to grow and, though these incidents may be far removed from the broad spectrum of Israeli norms and opinion, it conveys the impression of a society deeply divided about fundamental values.

Regrettably, the religious intolerance is not confined to Israel and examples of it can also readily be found in the Jewish community in Canada. A recent example illustrates the problem. It involves a new book by U.S.-based Rabbi Shmuley Boteach, *Kosher Jesus*, in which, its detractors claim, Jesus is described in sympathetic terms and as supportive of talmudic teachings and values. Nevertheless, the book was denounced by Toronto based Chabad Lubavitch Rabbi Immanuel Schochet as "heretical"; he also decreed that "it is forbidden for anyone to buy or read this book or to give its author a platform in any way, shape or form to discuss this topic."

I haven't read the book and am very unlikely to do so. I'm also willing to concede the Boteach book may be naive in its interpretation of the New Testament and the true character of Jesus' teaching. Nevertheless, Rabbi Schochet's condemnation of the book and the use of his authority to prevent other Chabadniks from reading it is totally incompatible with Canadian democratic values and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom. The rabbi's *cherem* also belies Canadian society's confidence that mature Canadian adults, whatever their religious and secular backgrounds, are quite capable of forming their own judgments. Sadly, Rabbi Schochet's condemnation also brings to mind the appalling conduct of the Amsterdam Jewish community in 1656 in publicly excommunicating Baruch Spinoza from their midst, and (apparently) subsequently forcing him to make a humiliating apology as a condition of his reacceptance as a member of the Jewish community. Spinoza, as *CJN* readers will know, is widely hailed as one of the founders of modern rationalist philosophy.

Religious intolerance is not confined to Israel and examples of it can also be found in the Jewish community in Canada

These continuing struggles, in and outside Israel, to establishing religious tolerance within the Jewish community should be contrasted with the recent seminal decision of the Supreme Court of Canada in an appeal brought by two Catholic parents against the decision of the lower courts in Quebec. Until 1995, the Quebec school system was divided along denominational lines, and Catholics and Protestants had their own school systems and operated their own schools. Supported by an amendment to the Canadian constitution, the Quebec government then decided to secularize the school system and the denominational school boards were eliminated.

At the same time, the Quebec educational authorities felt the need to replace the former religious instruction offered by the denominational schools with a mandatory humanistic program that would expose all the students in the secular school system to an appreciation of the importance of ethical values in Quebec society and the roles played by the diverse religious and racial communities in the Province.

Some Catholic parents objected to the new program and claimed that it violated their exclusive rights as parents to determine their children's religious culture and upbringing as protected by Section 2 of the Canadian Charter. Reading between the lines of their complaint, it is clear the parents were also concerned that the children's Catholic value system would be diluted by exposure to the multifaith program sponsored by the Quebec Department of Education.

All nine judges of the Supreme Court unanimously rejected the argument in a decision released on Feb. 16 (*S.L. & D.J. v. Communite Scolaires des Chenes*, 2012 Supreme Court of Canada decisions). The judges found that the parents had adduced no evidence that the new program interfered with their religious freedom or their parental right to continue to bring up their children in the Catholic faith. Importantly, the two written opinions of the judges stressed the "new reality" in Quebec and Canadian society, a society comprising many different cultural, religious and racial elements. Inferentially, at least, the judgments also commended the Quebec government for seeking to ensure that future generations of Quebec schoolchildren would be aware of this cultural and religious diversity and would learn to appreciate, respect and value these elements.

The Supreme Court's decision and Quebec's admirable educational initiative contain many lessons for Israel and, for that matter, Canada's Jewish community as well. At the present time, Israel's school system, though ostensibly under government control and largely financed from public funds, is still heavily organized along denominational and sectarian lines. We can be sure, too, that the more than 100,000 haredi schoolchildren learn nothing about other value systems in Israeli society, much less the importance of accepting them as an integral part of Israel's pluralistic society. The position may not be much better at the other religious schools.

Israel's problems, however, go much beyond its divisive school system. The problems generated by a deeply fractured electoral system and the capacity of minority parties to hold up other party leaders to ransom is still more serious. Still, a start has to be made somewhere, daunting though the challenge may be.

I believe a much higher level of democracy and cultural tolerance would be achieved in Israel if, at a minimum, the Israeli cabinet could be persuaded to adopt a mandatory educational program of religious and cultural tolerance for the next generation of Israeli schoolchildren at state-operated and state-supported schools, comparable to the program now in progress in Quebec.

Those who think this goal is too utopian should worry how Israel will survive as a democratic and liberal state if the strongest bond uniting its citizens are the threats from outside the country and not the values they share from within.

Jacob Ziegel is a professor of law at the University of Toronto.

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Cotler 'byelection' calls subject of probe

Janice Arnold
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Mount Royal MP Irwin Cotler welcomed a Canadian market research industry association's announcement that it will investigate complaints about misleading phone calls made to his constituents last November on behalf of the Conservative Party.

The Marketing Research and Intelligence Association (MRIA) said last week it was striking a three-person complaint resolution panel to investigate the six formal complaints of professional misconduct it received from members of the public and one member firm.

The complaints were made against an MRIA member Campaign Research Inc., which was hired by the Conservatives to poll Mount Royal voters.

The company's callers allegedly falsely informed Mount Royal residents that a byelection was imminent in their riding because, they said, Cotler was stepping down and asked if they would support a Conservative candidate.

The Conservative government acknowledged it was behind the polling, but defended it as legitimate voter identification research. The party did not agree that the conversations proceeded exactly as claimed and made no apology.

The Mississauga, Ont.-based MRIA describes itself as a not-for-profit voluntary association with more than 1,800 members working in the market information and survey industry.

Irwin Cotler

In December, House of Commons Speaker Andrew Scheer described the Mount Royal telephone campaign as "reprehensible," but for technical reasons said it was not within his jurisdiction rule that the veteran Liberal MP's privileges had been breached, as he claimed.

Cotler described the ruling as "a moral victory," although he disagreed with Scheer's conclusion that the evidence contradicted Cotler's contention that disseminating false information adversely affected his ability to carry out his parliamentary duties.

MRIA executive director Brendan Wycks told the media that, before moving to form the complaint resolution panel, the Ottawa-based Campaign Research was given 30 days to find a mutually acceptable resolution with the complainants, but that process was unsuccessful.

If it finds fault with the company, the MRIA panel can recommend censure, membership suspension, or expulsion.

Neither Wycks nor MRIA communications director Anne Marie Gabriel returned calls by *The CJN*'s deadline.

Marian Levy, a Mount Royal constituent who e-mailed the MRIA in December, said she had no doubt that the pollster who called her told her that a byelection was coming in Mount Royal, even after she argued with the caller that this could not be true.

After Scheer's Dec. 13 ruling, Interim Liberal Leader Bob Rae wrote to Marc Mayrand, the chief electoral officer of Canada, asking that he refer the matter to the commissioner of Elections Canada for formal investigation.

Rae noted that Section 92 of the Canada Elections Act states that "No person shall knowingly publish a false statement of the withdrawal of a candidate."

While the calls were not made during an election campaign, Rae wrote that he believes the situation is analogous because "Conservative operatives [were] conducting a campaign to deliberately misinform voters."

Rae also wrote that consideration should be given to amending the Elections Act to explicitly prohibit knowingly spreading misinformation that a candidate or officeholder has withdrawn, whether or not an election campaign is on.

Cotler said a response to Rae's request is still pending.

As for the current robocall controversy, Cotler said his office was told by some constituents that during the federal election campaign last spring, they received live phone calls purportedly being made on behalf of the Liberal Party and providing them with "misleading information" about their voting poll's location.

Not only were these bogus, but they were offensive to Jewish constituents because some received those calls on Shabbat or Passover, Cotler said. The caller's or callers' identification could not be traced, he said.

Cotler's campaign office in Cavendish Mall in Côte St. Luc was closed on those days, he noted.

His campaign officials filed a complaint with Elections Canada at that time.

Are you on the hook for retroactive child support?

Family Matters
by
John Syrtash
B.A. (Hon.), LL.B.
Counsel
Garfin Zeidenberg LLP
Family Lawyer & Mediator
for 31 years

Question: Several years ago, when I separated from my wife I earned $50,000 yearly. Over the past five years my income gradually increased each year. I now earn $110,000 yearly. My ex-wife and I have two children and I have been paying child support under the Child Support Guidelines based on my former income, without any increases. Our separation agreement did not impose any obligation on me to advise my wife of any of my income increases.

She recently sent me a letter requesting that I increase my child support and demanding that I disclose any increases in my income since we separated. I now have two new kids and any retroactive Order will affect their lifestyle. How does the Supreme Court of Canada decision in DBS v. SRG affect me? Are the headlines correct? Am I now on the hook retroactively for five years of increased child support in a lump sum?

Answer: No. Almost all of the media reports have exaggerated the impact of this decision. You are likely limited to paying retroactive child support for up to a maximum of three years before the date of "effective notice." Effective notice means the first time your ex broached the subject of an increase. In your case this was the date you received the letter from her. If you received the letter on, let's say, June 1, 2011, then you would be on the hook for retroactive child support for the period of June 1, 2008 to June 1, 2011. For others, effective notice may have been a telephone call.

Moreover, if you had attempted to intimidate her by threats or coercion or refusing to disclose your true income when asked, then support could be pushed back further. If you had a legal obligation to provide this information, say as written down in a separation agreement or Court order, then the start date for retroactivity could well be pushed back to more than three years before the effective date of notice since the payer — in this case you — should have provided such data but failed to do so.

For payers who fail to provide income info when they are legally obligated, or who lie about their income, or who threaten or intimidate the recipient, then it is not up to three years before the date of "effective notice" but rather up to three years before the date of "blameworthy conduct."

But the Court also said something helpful for payers with a second family. Yours may prevent a Court from hitting you with the whole retroactive amount if ordering it affects the welfare of your new children.

Mr. Syrtash is Counsel to Garfin Zeidenberg LLP, Suite 800, 5255 Yonge Street (at Norton) just north of Mel Lastman Square, Civic Centre Subway station, Toronto, ON M5G 1E6. John Syrtash can be reached at (416) 642-5410, Cell (416) 886-0359. Visit www.freemychild.com; www.spousalsupport.com; www.garfinzeidenberg.com.

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"Zero Tolerance" Feedback

My recent article "The Problem with Zero Tolerance in Domestic Abuse Cases" sparked a great deal of comment and interest from readers, mostly very positive. Readers should be aware that the occassional flagrant and unjust conduct by the authorities, usually against men, in such cases recently hit the headlines when the Waterloo Regional Police strip-searched and briefly threw in a jail cell a completely innocent father, Mr. Jessie Sansone.

Mr. Sansone did not own any firearms but he was deemed by the Police to be "guilty" of the fact that his four-year old daughter had drawn her Daddy shooting "monstors and bad guys" in her kindergarten class.

Without searching his house or conducting any investigation whatsoever, his children were immediately seized by Children's Aid while he was incarcerated and embarrassed by this degrading strip search. The Police Chief's apology does not suffice. Clearly the way in which Zero Tolerance is enforced as a policy needs to be re-examined, without endangering its benefits.

Strengthening Canada-Israel academic ties

Viva Sarah Press
CJN Israel Bureau

TEL AVIV — Two delegations of Canadian university presidents and professors were in Israel recently to learn about higher education here and to explore opportunities for academic co-operation.

The visits came despite the anti-Israel fervour now playing out on campuses around the world.

"Academic boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel never came up during the visits," Prof. Benjamin Ehrenberg, Bar-Ilan University (BIU) vice-president for research, said. "The Canadians only spoke about efforts to establish good relations with Israel."

Canada and Israel have strong bilateral relations and share political, economic, social and cultural ties. Israeli ambassador to Canada, Miriam Ziv, with the help of the Foreign Ministry, set in motion the two visits to build an academic relationship.

The Canadian guests visited BIU, IDC Herzliya, the Weizmann Institute of Science, Tel Aviv University and the Technion – Israel Institute of Technology.

One delegation consisted of journalists, journalism professors and spokespeople from Canadian universities. They visited four Israeli universities and colleges to learn about journalism programs and journalistic practice in Israel.

"I see great opportunities for the University of King's College to forge partnerships for student and possibly faculty exchanges," Kim Kierans, vice-president of the Halifax university, said. "There is no doubt that King's students would benefit enormously from a term of study in Israel and vice versa."

Also taking part in the mission were Marsha Barber, a professor of journalism at Ryerson University; Linda Kay, chair of the department of journalism at Concordia University; David Swick, an assistant professor of journalism at King's College; Brian Gabrial, a journalism professor at Concordia, and Prof. Kenneth Bell, of the University of Regina.

"It was tremendous to experience the country first-hand and learn more about the complexities of Israeli politics and culture. I was impressed with the quality of discourse in the English-language media when it comes to both diversity and depth," Kierans said.

Another delegation, comprising high-ranking university officials, included Prof. Irving Abella, J. Richard Schiff Chair of Canadian Jewish History at York University; Harold Edward Campbell, president and vice-chancellor, University of New Brunswick; Amit Chakma, president and vice-chancellor, University of Western Ontario; Vianne Timmons, president, University of Regina; Paul Henry Davidson, president of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC); Eleonora Christina Vanderberg, of AUCC, and Michael Goldbloom, principal and vice-chancellor, Bishop's University.

They met with lecturers and researchers in engineering, law, brain research, nanotechnology and communications.

"They were very impressed with Israeli science, not just at BIU. But you don't have to market Israeli science – Israeli science already has a good reputation," Ehrenberg said. "We know Canadian science is good, too. Israeli scientists would feel very comfortable with Canadian scientists, especially because they're known, like other Canadians, to be real friends of Israel."

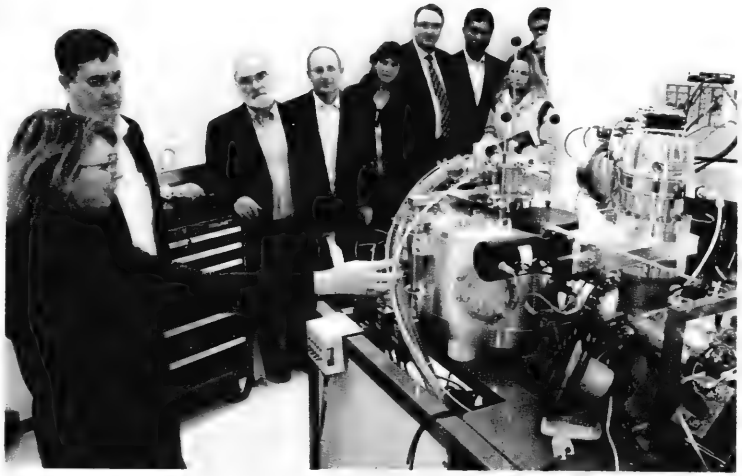
Ehrenberg said that Israel and the United States, as well as Israel and the European Union, already share "real collaboration in science." He added that for a true Canadian-Israeli academic project, governments need to show monetary support.

"You need to put in money in research," he said. "In order to have a good collaboration with Canada, we need the government to establish a fund that would finance such a foundation. We're not talking about millions. An average research grant doesn't need to be more than $50,000 a year."

Timmons said that "for the University of Regina, there is interest in the area of justice and police studies. There is much we can learn from the work undertaken by Israel academics. Israel is a leader in innovation, and Saskatchewan has identified innovation as a priority. We can learn from the investments made in this area. I was impressed with the work being undertaken in academia in Israel."

And though Timmons came to advance research collaboration with Israeli institutes, it is at her university that the students union recently passed a motion to support the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement.

"The University of Regina Students Union is an independent organization," she said. "The University of Regina will not be endorsing this motion. We are not in favour of an academic boycott."



Olga Girshevitz, head of the surface analysis unit at the Bar-Ilan Institute of Nanotechnology and Advanced Materials *[Yoni Reif photo]*

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deeply mourn the passing of a valued friend and supporter

Marjorie Bronfman ז"ל

Her involvement and dedication to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem will always be remembered

We extend our heartfelt condolences
to her children Joanie, Corinne, Judy and Jeffrey and the entire family

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Can't have Purim treats? Think again!

Barbara Silverstein
Special to The CJN

Desserts usually play a supporting role, capping the meal as dinner or lunch comes to an end.

But on Purim, desserts play a starring role, with the mishloach manot platter often the centrepiece.

People rarely need an excuse to eat sweets, and they welcome Purim because it offers them a licence to indulge.

The nice thing about the holiday is that there is usually a variety of treats in bite-size form. Dessert aficionados can try an assortment of goodies without going overboard.

Nevertheless, many weight-conscious people don't feel comfortable eating the desserts, because the offerings are too rich. But the platters can also provide lighter fare everybody can enjoy.

Others who might feel excluded are people with celiac disease who can't eat gluten, and those with wheat sensitivities. Hamantashen are off the menu for them, but there are a variety of desserts that they can consume.

The following treat recipes are suitable for both weight watchers and those with celiac disease. For the latter group, these food items should be served on a separate platter away from gluten goodies.

These recipes come from *Rose Reisman Brings Home Spa Desserts: Low Calories Recipes from Top Resorts Made Easy* (Andrew and McMeel, 1991). Many of the recipes were later republished in *Robert Rose's Favorite Light Desserts* (Robert Rose 1998).

VANILLA ALMOND SNAPS

1/2 cup blanched almonds, finely ground
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 cup sugar
2 egg whites
2 tbsp. sugar

Preheat oven to 275. Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper sprayed with non-stick vegetable oil.

Combine almonds, salt and 1/4 cup of sugar in a bowl. In a mixer, beat egg whites and 2 tbsp. sugar until stiff peaks form. Add egg mixture to the almonds and sugar and combine until all the ingredients are blended.

Drop by teaspoons onto the cookie sheet. Bake for approximately 25 minutes or until lightly brown. Sprinkle with sliced almonds before baking if desired. Makes 2 dozen cookies.

INDIVIDUAL MINIATURE CHEESECAKES

1/2 lb. ricotta or low-fat cream cheese
1/2 lb. cottage cheese
1/3 cup sugar
1 medium egg
1/2 tsp. corn starch
1/4 cup sour cream
1/4 tsp. vanilla extract

Preheat oven to 350. Line a muffin tin with paper cups for 10 servings.

In a blender, mix cheeses and sugar. Blend until smooth. Add egg and blend.

Add cornstarch, sour cream and vanilla.

Blend well.

Pour mixture into prepared muffin cups. Place muffin tins in a larger pan filled with water and bake for 30 to 35 minutes or until a tester comes out clean. Chill.

Decorate with fresh fruit or fruit puree or decorate with 2 tbsp. melted red currant jelly. Makes 10 servings

COCOA KISSES

3 egg whites (at room temperature)
1 cup sugar
1/8 tsp. salt
1 tsp. vanilla
3 tbsp. cocoa, sifted
1/2 cup pecans, chopped

Preheat oven to 250. Spray a baking sheet with nonstick vegetable spray.

In a mixer, beat egg whites until soft peaks form. Add sugar and salt gradually until they are incorporated and meringue is glossy and stiff. Add vanilla and blend. Fold in cocoa and pecans.

Drop by teaspoons onto the prepared baking sheet or fill a pastry bag with the batter and squeeze into kiss shapes onto the baking sheet. Bake until dry, approximately 1 hour. Makes about 40 1-in. cookies.

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Gefilte Fish & Horseradish, Chicken Soup & Matzo Balls, Roast Veal, Lockshen Pudding, Pan Roast Potatoes, Green Beans Almondine, Cole Slaw, Honey Cake, Passover Cookies, Seder Plate, Charoses
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MENU #5
Gefilte Fish & Horseradish, Chicken Soup & Matzo Balls, Roast Chicken, Roast Brisket of Beef, Chicken Fingers, Green Beans Almondine, Lockshen Pudding, Passover Cookies, Seder Plate, Charoses
$179.00 for 5 people

MENU #6
Chicken Soup & Matzo Balls, Sweet & Sour Meatballs, Poached Salmon, Pan Roast Potatoes, Green Beans Almondine, Lockshen Pudding, Passover Cookies, Seder Plate, Charoses
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FISH
Poached Salmon

SALADS
Cole Slaw, Pickled Beets, Tossed Salad, Cucumber Salad

VEGETABLE DISHES
Vegetarian Loaf, Matzo Lasagna, Stir Fry Vegetables, Grilled Vegetables, Apple Farfel Pudding, Farfel & Mushrooms, Potato Latkes, Green Beans Almondine, Broccoli & Mushrooms, Handmade Egg Noodles, Seder Plates, Charoses

DESSERTS
Apple Flan, Chocolate Cake, Chocolate Brownies, Chocolate Lemon Roll, Fruit Compote, Fresh Fruit Salad, Honey Cake, Macaroons, Mandlebroit, Mocca Cake, Passover Cookies

Local doctor recognized for work on diabetes

Carolyn Blackman
Staff Reporter

Dr. Bernard Zinman, 68, director of the Leadership Sinai Centre for Diabetes and senior investigator at the hospital's Samuel Lunenfeld Research Institute, says he is "humbled" by his recent appointment to the Order of Canada.

Dr. Bernard Zinman

At Mount Sinai Hospital since 1990 and a professor of medicine at University of Toronto, Zinman, a native of Montreal, was recognized for his achievements in diabetes patient care and research.

He was principal investigator in the Diabetes Control and Complications Trial, which showed that keeping blood glucose levels as close to normal as possible slows the onset and progression of eye, kidney and nerve damage caused by diabetes.

The aim of his research is to develop new therapies that treat diabetes, and to improve care and quality of life for people with diabetes.

Zinman, who is married, and has three children and four grandchildren, said he has won awards before, "but this is not just a medical award. This recognizes my contribution to the country and to my lifetime achievements. I'm fortunate to have worked in a great institution with great collaborators."

It is gratifying, he said, to see diabetes so highly recognized. "Globally, it is an epidemic. By 2030, about 500 million people worldwide will be affected by [the disease.] It is increasing in both developing and developed countries.

"Diabetes is the disease of the 21st century, and it will surpass the health and economic implications of AIDS."

For the first time, he said, the United Nations has recognized the impact diabetes has on people's lives and on the economy. "The cost of managing [the disease] is huge. It is the lead cause of blindness and kidney failure, and it is taking its toll globally."

Zinman said diabetes is affected by both genetics and environment. "We can't change our genes, but we can change our environment. Reasonably modest changes in diet and lifestyle, though, can help [turn things around.] By reducing body weight by seven per cent, diabetes can be reduced by 58 per cent, but changes are hard to implement."

Type 2 diabetes used to be a disease of the elderly, he said, but people are getting it younger and younger. "The duration of diabetes is a big factor in developing complications. Someone who gets it in their 30s or 40s is at a significant risk."

Type 1 diabetes, he said, which used to be called juvenile diabetes, "is a different type of diabetes. It is due to an autoimmune destruction of the beta cells that make insulin. It occurs in young, healthy children who need insulin to survive. To them, insulin is a lifesaver."

He said certain societal changes can help curb Type 2 diabetes. "We need communities that are designed to facilitate walking. We also need to make the caloric content of fast foods more readily available, and cut out supersized portions. If we curb the obesity epidemic, we can curb diabetes."

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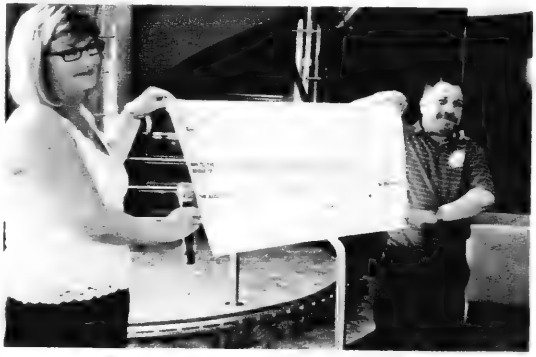

CRUISE FOR CANCER

Concluding a very successful 2012 Cruise for the Cure, Expedia CruiseShipCenters franchise partner Barry Foot presented a cheque for $22,820 to Marsha Davidson, executive director of the Breast Cancer Society of Canada, on behalf of Expedia CruiseShipCenters' franchise partners, cruise consultants and customers. Held aboard Royal Caribbean International's Allure of the Seas last month, $64 from each stateroom booked on the weeklong Caribbean cruise was donated to the Breast Cancer Society.

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APR 4	***INSIDE THE MISSIONARY MIND*** *Shedding Light on Areas of Psychology & Theology*	8:15 PM
APR 11	***THE DAVINCI CODE*** *A Jewish Perspective*	8:20 PM
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Pelvic-floor exercises

Do you know where your pelvic floor is? Did you know men have a pelvic floor, too?

The pelvic-floor muscles help support the bladder, intestines and uterus and stabilize the lower pelvis. The pelvic floor looks like a hammock of muscles that hold the pelvic organs in place. Weak pelvic-floor muscles can cause pelvic organ prolapse, pain in the groin or lower back and incontinence in both women and men.

Fitness Corner

Felyce Zomparelli

Kegels or pelvic-floor exercises can help change all that. Kegel exercises, or pelvic-floor muscle-strengthening exercises, were developed by gynecologist Dr. Arnold Kegel (1894-1981).

A strong pelvic floor is important for good health both in men and women especially as we age. Kegel exercises help increase core strength while improving bladder and bowel function. Strong pelvic-floor muscles help support the lower organs, reducing the risk of prolapsed organs. Kegel exercises help develop a stronger back support, which improves posture and reduces lower-back pain.

Performing Kegels is easy and can be done anywhere. For women, just try to contract the muscles you would use to stop urination. You will feel your pelvic muscles squeeze your urethra and anus. If you feel your stomach or butt muscles contract, then you are using the wrong muscles. Try again, once you have found your pelvic-floor muscles, squeeze and hold them for three seconds, then release. Do that 20 times in a row about three times a day.

For men, the easiest way to find these muscles is during urination. Just stop the flow of urine halfway through, and don't squeeze your butt, stomach or legs to do so. Once you can slow down or stop your urination, then you have found your pelvic-floor muscles. Contract these muscles for five seconds, then release slowly, repeat this 10 times three times a day. The more you do this exercise, the stronger your pelvic floor will be.

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All options on the table for Iran: Obama

JTA

WASHINGTON — It's still possible to resolve Iran's suspected bid for a nuclear weapon through diplomacy, but a military option is also still on the table and containment is not an option, President Barack Obama said last weekend.

"I firmly believe that an opportunity remains for diplomacy, backed by pressure, to succeed," Obama told the annual American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) policy conference on Sunday in Washington.

"The United States and Israel both assess that Iran does not yet have a nuclear weapon, and we are exceedingly vigilant in monitoring their program," he said. "Now the international community has a responsibility to use the time and space that exists."

These comments did not earn applause – there have been reports that Israel and AIPAC are pressing Obama to make the military option more explicit.

Ratcheting up the military threat later in the speech, Obama earned a standing ovation after saying that his policy is to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.

President Barak Obama and President Shimon Peres in Washington *[Flash90 photo]*

Most of the applause that Obama sought–and received – throughout his address came from statements related to support for Israel. But the one that was most meaningful, and that earned the approval of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, had to do with Israel helping itself.

"Iran's leaders should have no doubt about the resolve of the United States, just as they should not doubt Israel's sovereign right to make its own decisions about what is required to meet its security needs," the U.S. leader said.

"I have said that when it comes to preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, I will take no options off the table, and I mean what I say. That includes all elements of American power: a political effort aimed at isolating Iran, a diplomatic effort to sustain our coalition and ensure that the Iranian program is monitored, an economic effort to impose crippling sanctions, and, yes, a military effort to be prepared for any contingency.

"Iran's leaders should know that I do not have a policy of containment; I have a policy to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon."

Netanyahu, responding to the speech, said in a statement from Canada: "I appreciate that Obama reiterated his position not to allow Iran to develop nuclear weapons and that all options are on the table on this issue. I also appreciated the fact that he made it clear that when it comes to Iran acquiring nuclear weapons, containment is not an option. Perhaps most of all, I appreciate the statement that Israel must be able to defend herself against any threat."

Netanyahu and Obama were scheduled to meet Monday in Washington, and Netanyahu was to address the AIPAC conference later that day.

In praising Obama's commitment to Israel's security, American Jewish Committee executive director David Harris said in a statement that the president's address gives "strong hope that President Obama and Prime Minister Netanyahu will see eye to eye, built on a foundation of mutual trust, on the best path to preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons capability."

J.I. Segal Awards 2012
Call for Submissions
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I.	Dr. Hirsh and Dora Rosenfeld Award for Yiddish[1] and Hebrew Literature[2]	$1,000 $500
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VII.	Translation Award for a Book on a Jewish Theme[4] (Sponsored by Marlene and Joel King in memory of Gisia Kisilevsky)	$500
VIII.	Michael Moskovitz Award for a Film on a Jewish Theme[5]	$500
IX.	Yaacov Zipper Award in Education[6]	$500

1. The author of the Yiddish work may reside anywhere in the world.
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3. Author must be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident. Books must have been published for the first time between January 1, 2010 and December 31, 2011.
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Submissions for all nine categories must be received by April 30, 2012.

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Putin is good for Israel, Russian analyst says

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MOSCOW — Vladimir Putin is good for Israel, a top political analyst said Sunday evening, as Russians elected the prime minister to his third non-consecutive presidential term at the Kremlin.

"It has always been important for him to maintain good ties with Israel and Russia's Jewish community," Stanislav Belkovsky, founder and director of Russia's National Strategy Institute, told *Ha'aretz*.

Belkovsky explained that a healthy relationship between Russia and Israel would also be important for any other Russian president. "Even if another leader were to replace Putin, he would be loyal to Israel, because these days Muslim immigration is a bigger problem for Russia than antisemitism, and that is the dynamic that will develop. Islamophobia will intensify, antisemitism will erode."

The political analyst also explained that Russian arms sales to Syria – a point of tension between Israeli and Russian officials – were not directed against Israel.

"Simply, the quality of Russian weapons has deteriorated to a point where that is the level of customer that remains. It is a matter of choosing the only possible customer, and without customers for Russia's military products, he [Putin] will be forced to retrench hundreds of thousands of people working in the industry, which would stir commotion."

When asked about Putin's relationship with the West, Belkovsky explained that "the West was always willing to come to terms with Putin, because his stable reign served the interests of western corporations, and a power struggle with citizens of the state will destroy their status."

Complaining of widespread fraud in Sunday's election, in which Putin received more than 63 per cent of the nationwide vote, Putin's opponents said they didn't recognize the results and would rally near the Kremlin Monday evening.

But the former KGB spy, who after four years as prime minister will be returning to the post he held from 2000 until 2008, said with tears rolling down his cheeks that he had won a "clean" victory.

"I promised you we would win. We have won. Glory to Russia," Putin, dressed in a parka and flanked by outgoing Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, told tens of thousands of flag-waving supporters on Sunday night under the Kremlin's red walls.

Belkovsky explained why Putin appointed Medvedev as prime minister. "Medvedev proved his full loyalty... But how long Medvedev's cabinet will hold is unclear, because its professional potential is not high, and the scope of problem demands of the staff a high level of proficiency," Belkovsky said.

Following the official announcement of his win, election monitors said voting was skewed in Putin's favor. "There was no real competition, and abuse of government resources ensured that the ultimate winner of the election was never in doubt," Tonino Picula, one of the vote monitors from the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe, said in a statement.

Monitors also called for alleged electoral violations in Sunday's election to be thoroughly investigated.

Vladimir Putin, right, met with Benjamin Netanyahu in 2010. *[CJN file photo]*

Humanitarian aid offered to Syrians by Israel

Barak Ravid and Ophir Bar-Zohar
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — Israel's Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman has directed Eviatar Manor, head of the ministry's international organizations branch, to offer the International Red Cross humanitarian aid to Syria, a spokesman for Lieberman said on Sunday.

The Red Cross replied that it is still evaluating the humanitarian situation in Syria and what supplies are needed, and will respond in detail.

"The Jewish state cannot sit idly by while horrific acts are taking place in a neighbouring country and people are losing all that is dear to them," Lieberman said. He added that even if Israel can't intervene in the internal affairs of a country with which it has no diplomatic ties, it is its "moral duty to at least offer humanitarian aid and call on the world to put a stop to the massacre."

On Saturday, Lieberman told Bulgarian President Rosen Plevneliev that Israel would extend humanitarian aid to Syrians during the conflict there as soon as it is asked to do so. Lieberman, who was in Bulgaria on an official visit, also told the Bulgarian president: "We must not abide the bloodshed that is going on there and the daily killing of innocent people."

Avigdor Lieberman

Last month, Lieberman proposed in various government forums that Israel condemn Syrian President Bashar Assad's killing of civilians and call on Assad to resign. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defence Minister Ehud Barak rejected Lieberman's proposal.

Netanyahu reportedly believes that a public statement by Israel on the issue could play into Assad's hands, allowing the Syrian president to say that Israel was behind the insurrection against him.

On a tour of the north last month, Lieberman said: "The fact that Arab MKs [members of Knesset] have not condemned what is happening in Syria is real treason, both against the Arab nation and Syria's citizens, as well as against the State of Israel. These are the same MKs that go wild over the destruction of every illegal structure, but are silent when thousands of innocent civilians are killed."

JNF
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Israel Briefs

Ethiopian aliyah to rise

Israel will increase the number of immigrants from Ethiopia for the next several months after bringing in far fewer than Ethiopian advocacy groups had expected. Some 1,000 Falash Mora, Ethiopians whose ancestors converted from Judaism to Christianity, will be brought to Israel over the next four months, about 250 per month. The Israeli government in October 2010 reportedly had agreed to bring in 200 Falash Mora each month for a year, and then the remaining of those eligible until the last 4,500 approved for immigration were in Israel by March 2014. About 110 have been arriving each month. The government has said it cut the number it was bringing due to dwindling available space in absorption centres. The Ethiopians are waiting in a refugee camp in Gondar province before coming to Israel.

Envoy presents credentials

Israel's new ambassador to Egypt presented his credentials at a ceremony in Cairo. Yaacov Amitai is the first Israeli envoy named to Egypt since the ousting of president Hosni Mubarak one year ago. The Israeli national anthem was played at the Feb. 27 ceremony, as is customary, as were the national anthems of the 13 other ambassadors that presented their credentials to Field Marshal Mohammad Hussein Tantawi, chairman of the Supreme Council of the Egyptian Armed Forces, according to Israel's Foreign Ministry. Israel's Foreign Ministry said the presentation of credentials was held in "a cordial atmosphere." During speeches at the ceremony, both Amitai and Tantawi emphasized the importance of the peace agreement and co-operation between their countries.

With files from JTA

Iranian elections weaken Ahmadinejad

Avi Issacharoff
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — Preliminary results from Iran's parliamentary elections indicate that President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's has, as expected, lost a significant amount of support. Many of his allies were replaced by other conservatives who belong to rival camps.

On Saturday, the Iranian media praised the high voter turnout, despite calls by the reformist camps to boycott the elections. During the run-up to the elections, the regime tried to emphasize the importance of voting in light of the "critical" days Iran is facing. Even the wife of one of the slain nuclear scientists was called to the propaganda campaign. And Ayatollah Makarem Shirazi, one of the most prominent clerics in Iran, published a fatwa saying that those who do not vote are committing a sin.

There were almost no candidates from the reformist camp, as two of its leaders, Mir Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi, have been under house arrest for more than a year. Former president Mohammad Khatami took part in the elections, disappointing many in the opposition, as did the rival of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, former president Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.

Yet the results don't come as a surprise – Khamenei has been planning to target Ahmadinejad politically. Khamenei has taken issue with the president, who he sees as overly independent. One of the incidents that exacerbated the tensions was Ahmadinejad's effort to fire the intelligence minister, who Khamenei wished to keep at his post.

Despite various reports in the West, the political battle in the parliamentary elections was not between Ahmadinejad's camp and Khamenei's camp – also because the former's allies had almost no chance in the ballot.

Rather, two rival camps had set their sights on politically "eliminating" Ahmadinejad, and both are avid supporters of Khamenei: one is the United Front of Conservatives, which includes some well-known politicians such as Ayatollah Mohammad Reza Mahdavi Kani. The second camp, the Stability of Islamic Revolution Front, contains some of the most extreme, almost messianic politicians.

The two camps are united on Iran's nuclear program, as well as opposing Ahmadinejad and backing Khamenei.

Hungarian writer seeks asylum in Canada

JTA

BUDAPEST — Award-winning Hungarian-Jewish writer Akos Kertesz has confirmed that he has applied for political asylum in Canada.

Harassment and threats following the author's controversial statements about Hungary's role in the Holocaust have led him to seek asylum in Canada, the Hungarian News Agency reported.

Kertesz's said in a statement released to the media that "a political campaign was mounted against him, not only by the Budapest city hall but also from within the government and parliament."

The origin of the controversy was an article Kertesz wrote in the American Hungarian-language newspaper *Amerikai Nepszava*, in which he said that Hungarians alone can now be blamed for the Holocaust because they, unlike the Germans, have failed to admit to and to repent for their crimes. He also referred to Hungarians as "genetically subservient" due to the fact that they "do not feel the slightest remorse for the gravest of historical crimes, they shift their responsibility to others and always put the blame on others."

Kertesz later cut the phrase "genetically subservient" from the article but it did not prevent the Budapest City Council from stripping the writer of his honorary citizenship. The writer's statement also said the current right-wing government has "launched a witch hunt and fuelled the extremists" and that the 80-year-old Kertesz has been "subject to constant harassment and threats. He was attacked in the street and he thought his life was in jeopardy."

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Boaz Arad
JTA

SENDAI, Japan — Tears run down the face of Kohata Yuriko as she recalls the events of March 11 last year, when a massive 9.0-magnitude earthquake struck off the coast of eastern Japan in the early afternoon.

Shopping for groceries in the small fishing town of Iwanuma, she heard the tsunami sirens.

Realizing she had little time, Yuriko collected her son and 93-year-old father and fled. As her foot hit the gas pedal, she could hear the horrible noise of the wave as it came crashing through the neighbourhood.

Later that day, Yuriko learned that a grandmother and her grandson, a good friend of her son's, perished in the neighbouring house as the tsunami smashed into it. Upon hearing the news, her son started to cry.

"Thank you, mom," he said again and again. "Thank you for coming back for me."

Through an interpreter, Yuriko says she still cries all the time when she's alone.

"I'm so stressed and nervous that I can hardly breathe," she says.

But with the assistance of volunteers and post-trauma experts from the Israeli non-governmental organization IsraAID, she is beginning to learn to cope with the tragedy.

Yuriko is sitting on the floor of a caravan converted into a community centre in one of the temporary housing sites built to accommodate the tens of thousands of tsunami survivors who lost their homes to the wave. Helped by the aid workers, she dances, bangs on drums, laughs and smiles – and then, asked to choose from a pile of special cards used as psychotherapeutic tools, she begins to cry.

It is the first time since the disaster that she has cried in front of someone, and Yuriko is apologetic. She has been unemployed for nearly a year, shares a cramped temporary housing unit with her father, husband and son, and constantly feels like she is about to faint from anxiety.

"It's OK to cry," says Judy Spanglet, an Orthodox Israeli social worker and family therapist who has worked with trauma victims all over the world. "It's perfectly normal. Let it out. You have been so busy worrying for and taking care of other people that you have forgotten to think of yourself."

Yuriko lets out a big smile. Suddenly, she seems relieved.

"Thank you for listening," she says, sighing. "Until now I didn't really have anyone I could speak to."

The Japanese government has worked to clean up the material damage from the tsunami and find housing for those it left homeless. The government has been less determined in providing survivors with needed psychological support. A number of volunteer groups, most of them Japanese, have worked to fill that hole, running community-based support programs focused mainly on fun activities for children and the elderly. A few, however, have dug in deeper.

IsraAID, a humanitarian organization funded by a number of North American Jewish federations, is one of them. Arriving in Japan shortly after the disaster, IsraAID's small team of volunteers has supplied medical relief items, provided training to handle post-traumatic stress disorder and organized art, music, movement and drama therapy sessions for residents of the many small towns devastated by the tsunami.

The sessions, which use a mostly non-verbal approach to help people express their feelings, have been so successful that IsraAID is now planning to operate a training centre for at least another year and a half. The NGO was honoured for its work recently by the Japanese Chamber of Commerce in New York.

"Israel, sadly, is pretty much a trauma lab," says Meirav Tal-Margalit, an IsraAID volunteer and therapist who has worked with domestic-abuse victims and residents of the rocket-stricken Israeli town of Sderot.

"We have extensive experience in this field, and the tools we use here have been proven effective worldwide," he adds. "We make cultural adaptations, of course, but in the end we are all human, and we share the same fears and the same dreams."

It is a tight operation, run by two people: project manager Yotam Polizer, a 28-year-old social worker who spent the last few years volunteering in Nepal, and project coordinator Celia Dunkelman, an energetic Indonesian-Jewish musician who grew up in Japan and functions as both translator and co-ordinator. Polizer shuttles almost weekly between workshops in affected towns and meetings with ministry of health officials in Tokyo.

"The main idea behind our activities is to supply the Japanese with the therapeutic tools and the know-how to help them deal with the trauma themselves," Polizer says. "We locate local community leaders and professionals from the health and education sectors, and work directly with them. They then use what they learn and pass it on to many more people than we can reach on our own."

One of these local leaders is Chiho Shimura, an independent event organizer from Tokyo who was so shaken by the disaster that she left her business to volunteer with survivors in her native Ishinomaki, a port city of 164,000. Ishinomaki was so badly devastated by the tsunami that nearly a fifth of its population now lives in temporary housing.

At the Israel Defence Forces field hospital near Minamisanriku, Japan, the medical delegation checks 11-month-old Sana'a, who has an eye infection. ***[Israel Sun photo]***

Some survivors, tired of waiting for the temporary shelters to be constructed, returned prematurely to their partially destroyed houses, living in some cases with no heat or running water. Shimura has been running a support centre for them, supplying warm clothes, mobile heaters and food.

"I had a storm raging inside me for a very long time," she says. "And then, in the first IsraAID workshop I participated in, it finally came out. I cried like I have never cried before, and it was so relieving. We've had Japanese social workers come here and talk to people, but they were not able to do what the Israelis have done. They immediately saw into our hearts. They definitely saw into mine."

IsraAID, Shimura adds, is different than the other aid groups that have come to Ishinomaki, delivered their donations, made a speech, took some pictures and left.

"They don't just keep coming back," she says. "They come whenever we need them, even on the weekends. They have become a part of this place."

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Israel appoints first Ethiopian-born envoy

JTA

JERUSALEM — Israel has appointed its first Ethiopia-born ambassador.

The appointment of Belaynesh Zevadia as Israel's envoy to Ethiopia was announced Feb. 28.

Zevadia also was the first Ethiopian Foreign Ministry cadet. She made aliyah at the age of 17 and studied at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, earned a bachelor's degree in international relations and African studies and a master's degree in African studies. She has worked as a diplomat in Chicago and Houston.

"This is proof that in Israel, opportunity is available to everyone – native Israelis and new immigrants alike," Zevadia said.

Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman said in a statement that Zevadia's appointment "conveys an important message to Israeli society, which is currently dealing with the issue of racism toward Ethiopians in Israel." He added, "I am certain that she will represent the state with honour and be a source of pride to all Ethiopian Israelis."

Belaynesh Zevadia

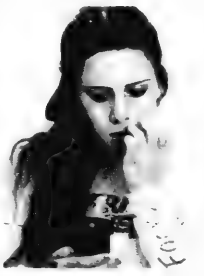
Israeli cellphones to carry warning label

Ronny Linder-Ganz
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — A bill requiring all cellphones sold in Israel to bear a health-hazard warning label passed its first of three readings into law last week.

The bill, sponsored by Knesset members Dov Khenin of the Hadash party and Yulia Shamalov Berkovich of the Kadima party, won blanket approval in parliament. It also requires all advertisements of mobile phones to bear the warning.

Although the jury is out on the science, some suspect that heavy cellphone use may cause cancers, particularly in children. Youngsters can be more vulnerable to carcinogens because of their faster rate of cellular division.



Oh, oh. That cellphone may be a hazard to your health. *[FLASH90 photo]*

The labels will read, "Warning – the Health Ministry cautions that heavy use and carrying the device next to the body may increase the risk of cancer, especially among children."

Nor is that all: similarly to cigarettes, all cellphone advertising targeting minors would be banned under the law, and breaking the law would be a criminal offence.

"The bill that passed today is a breakthrough in expanding public awareness of the possible risks in using cellular phones," Khenin said after the vote. Given the "worrying results" of a number of Israeli and international studies, it is incumbent on the government to bring the possible risks to the public's awareness. People need to be more careful in their use of cellphones and especially, they must protect children, he said.

The Forum of Cellular Companies responded that they adhere to all the safety directives handed down by the Health Ministry and the Environmental Protection Ministry. "Beyond that, we believe that new initiatives and recommendations in the areas of public health and safety should be handed down by the professionals in these areas, based on the scientific know-how in Israel and the world," the Forum stated.

Unemployment hits 32-year low

Moti Bassok and Ruth Schuster
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

TEL AVIV — Unemployment in Israel fell to a 32-year low in 2011 despite the economic troubles shaking the world, which have hit Israeli exports and slowed economic growth.

Last year unemployment averaged 5.6 per cent of the adult workforce, compared with 6.6 per cent the year before, according to the latest figures from the Central Bureau of Statistics.

The last time unemployment sank that low was in 1978. The figure then was 4.3 per cent of the adult workforce.

The statistics bureau said the actual number of people meeting the criteria to be officially considered "unemployed" – which include actively seeking work – fell to 180,000 on average in 2011. That's a drop of 14 per cent from the year before.

The rate of unemployment among men plunged from 6.8 per cent to 5.6 per cent. Among women, the rate fell by 6.5 per cent to 20.2 per cent.

The state of the economy, as far as the jobless are concerned, improved dramatically last year. The bureau's figures show that 5.6 per cent of the country's unemployed had spent more than a year looking for work, down from 22.4 per cent in 2010.

GE invests in biomedical innovator

Yoram Gabison
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

TEL AVIV — Check-Cap, developer of an imaging capsule for the early detection of colon cancer, has acquired a powerful strategic partner: the General Electric group recently bought five per cent of the company's shares, Biomedix Incubator announced.

Biomedix has an indirect 6.3 per cent stake in the biomed startup through Spearhead Investments.

It is believed GE's investment was executed at a company value of 170 million shekels ($44 million, all figures Cdn), the value at which Check-Cap raised 35 million shekels ($9 million) from private investors last March.

Guy Neev, CEO of Check-Cap, said the company plans to raise $20 million to $25 million in a private share offering to institutional investors, investment funds and U.S. strategic investors. The proceeds from the offering, to be led by Citigroup, are expected to finance all the company's needs until clinical trials are completed and applications for the capsule's approval in Europe and the United States are submitted, he said. Check-Cap's imaging pill is designed to provide three-dimensional images of the colon. After the capsule is swallowed, it passes naturally through the digestive system and is excreted. The capsule includes an X-ray source within a radiation shield that enables the escape of electromagnetically charged particles through perforations in the optic device that directs and filters the rays.

The rotation of the perforations around the capsule's axis generates a series of angled scans to produce a virtual reconstruction of a section of the colon. This is used to discover and evaluate polyps, fleshy growths in the lining of the intestine. Polyps are normally dormant, but have a 10 per cent chance of becoming cancerous if they exceed 10 millimetres.

Check-Cap claims the advantage of its capsule over existing procedures, such colonoscopy, virtual colonoscopy, and the video camera pill developed by Given Imaging, is that it doesn't require prior cleansing of the digestive system or a hospital visit. It thereby allows patients to continue their daily routines without interruption.

Neev estimated that, 36 million people in higher risk age groups in Europe, Japan and the United States should undergo colon examinations each year. Only 50 per cent of Americans and 25 per cent of West Europeans do, because of the uncomfortable preparation process needed before a colonoscopy, which Check-Cap's capsule should alleviate.

Over the past year, Neev said, Check-Cap has focused on reducing the capsule's size in preparation for clinical trials. The first trials will include 50 to 60 people and are expected to start in Israel and Europe within three or four months.

Oded Meirav, manager of the GE Global Research technology centre in Israel, said the company decided to invest in Check-Cap due to its impressive progress in minimizing the size of its nuclear camera. He said Check-Cap's technology is similar to technology used by other nuclear medical systems, including GE Healthcare's systems, for examining bone density.

In addition to its financial investment, GE will provide Check-Cap with miniature imaging detectors for use in its capsules.

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Finding the things in life worth fighting for

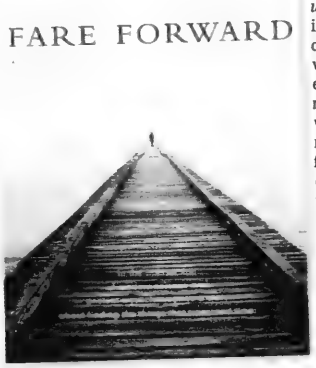
Mordechai Ben-Dat
Editor

Except in the fabled classics of western literature, where plot often spans continents and generations, themes canvas ultimate issues of the human condition, and dialogue echoes the grand ideas of philosophy, modern fiction writers tend to be more circumscribed in the sweep of their narratives.

Perhaps due to the "competing" immediateness of television, movies and computers, so much of our popular fiction tells tales of conspiracies to harm the world and heroism that saves it. The stories may succeed as entertainment but do not reach higher or leave their mark in our memory banks as literature.

Wendy Dubow Polins, a debut novelist from Boston, has just carved a mark considerably above the usual reach of the modern fiction writer. Her recently published novel, *Fare Forward* (Hamilton Hall Press), aspires high and reaches high.

It tells a story of a young woman, Gabriella, who must unravel secrets of family, of life, of human history, of heaven and stars before she is finally free to walk the path of her own destiny. Her story, like the stories of all of us, begins before her birth with her parents and grandparents, all of whom play critically decisive roles in helping determine Gabriella's ultimate destination.



At its core, *Fare Forward* is essentially an exploration into the existence and nature of the human soul. But the readers are not plunged into the murky, neo-theological, self-help swimming pool – shallow or deep end – of New Age doctrine. Rather, Polins imaginatively, painstakingly and effectively weaves together disciplines of science, theology, history and esthetics into a thoughtful discussion-excursion into the mysteries of human life in general and the purposes of each of our lives specifically.

In an introductory note, Polins tells the reader, "In this novel, I have been inspired by the many and sometimes inconsistent theoretical ideas that are offered in physics, literature and ancient mystical texts."

Her inspiration brings the reader to a thought-provoking literary destination where we travel in the company of historic figures such as Albert Einstein; the Jews who lived and died at Masada, and a cast of compelling characters such as the vivacious and artistic Gabriella; her parents, who live in the mystics' Galilean city of Safed; her grandmother, Sophie, whose extrasensory powers channel both past and future; her grandfather, who has a Nobel Prize in chemistry, and a mysterious time traveller.

At its narrowest level, *Fare Forward* tells a story of international intrigue that threatens certain individuals and perhaps even the western way of life. But at its most expansive, it is a story of love in its most profound manifestations, as well as a reflection on the place of finite, single human life in the infinite flow of time and space. In the pages of *Fare Forward*, Polins reflects on the power of esthetics, whether of poetry, music, art, architecture, and even of the esthetics of science.

Not surprisingly therefore, she pays great attention herself to the esthetics of her writing and not simply to the force of the narrative. Thus we read elegantly evocative passages such as the following reflection by Gabriella as she lies in bed preparing for sleep: "I notice the white light the moon makes on the ocean, like a path to infinity."

As the action reaches its full denouement near the end of the story, we are given to understand with full clarity one of the key messages of the story. "It's for love. That's what we're here for. All of us. And love is bigger and more powerful than anything – any scientific theory, any one individual's will and sometimes even the rules of the universe. Love is more powerful than time itself."

Polins writes with a reverence for place and for people and a sense of a humility that are both rare and refreshing in young writers. She stops at various stations in narrative to deliver lines of homage and gratitude about her surroundings. For example, in describing the faculty of architecture building in Colombia, where Gabriella is studying, Polins writes: "Sunlight pours through the large pyramidal skylight that anchors the central atrium. The walls are hung with contemporary art and photographs of projects from alumni who have gone on to distinguished careers. It is an honour to have the chance to present in this space, as openness on all sides lends a sense of drama and importance to the occasion."

The very title itself, an extract from a poem by T. S. Eliot, is a clue to the reader that we will be traveling in a literary carriage into an intelligently written, challenging, provocative, unconventional dreamscape of human passion and existential mystery.

Polins was born and was raised in Montreal. Her roots are there, she told *The CJN* in a telephone conversation last week. She visits there still.

Much like the parental and grandparental characters of her novel, her parents provided strong examples of personal action and commitment. Her physician father, along with two other Canadian doctors, volunteered in 1973 to help treat Israeli army casualties during the Yom Kippur War. Her mother was instrumental in helping establish the renowned, activist Group of 35 on behalf of Soviet Jewry in the 1970s and '80s.

Wendy Dubow Polins

It was through her mother's work, on a clear day in 1974, that Polins met Israeli prime minister Golda Meir. "She looked like a grandmother, but she was a warrior. I will never forget what she told me," Polins said. "Your life should be about ideas and about changing things." These words and the theme they inspired find their way into *Fare Forward*.

After living for a while in Israel, Polins studied architecture in New York. She lives in the Boston area where she writes and teaches art history at Salem State University.

In words and ideas that echoed the large expansive style of her book, Polins told *The CJN* her motivation in writing *Fare Forward*. It "describes a journey. We are all voyagers. We are all on a journey. My quest [in the book] is to understand the point of life."

There were a number of factors, Polins explained, that came together at the same time that led her to put aside her work as an architect and pick up an author's pen.

As she accompanied her daughter to survey potential college campuses, Polins was reminded of that stage in our young lives "when we feel everything and anything was possible, when we find ourselves on the threshold of the new dawn."

She then decided "it was time to take a chance." The economy had slowed down in any event, and she saw a new opportunity to try to write the story that would combine her interests, curiosities and investigations, through Jewish study, into matters of the soul, and the distillate of a lecture she had heard at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology about Einstein, in which the lecturer claimed that Einstein had believed in the one-ness, the inter-connectedness of all life in the universe.

"What if," Polins speculated out loud, "Einstein had discovered something, had known something [about the unity of all physics and spirit] and held it back?"

And therein was planted in Polins' soaring imagination the seed of a story that has since germinated, to our reading pleasure, into *Fare Forward*.

As our conversation drew to a close, Polins again mentioned her meeting with Meir. "Golda told me I should find the things in life worth fighting for. And so, I've tried."

Fare Forward is the literary expression of that search and of the precious things that she found along the way that she suggests are worth fighting for.

Read it to see if you agree.

'KOSHER' LABEL IN ADVERTISING

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency Guide to Food Labelling and Advertising reads as follows:

"In the labelling, packaging and advertising of a food, the Food and Drug Regulations prohibits the use of the word kosher or any letter of the Hebrew alphabet, or any other word, expression, depiction, sign, symbol, mark, device or other representation that indicates or that is likely to create an impression that the food is kosher, if the food does not meet the requirements of the Kashruth applicable to it.

The terms "kosher style" and "kind of kosher" are not allowed, unless they meet the requirements of the Kashruth. "Jewish-style food" or "Jewish cuisine" are not objected to, although the foods may not necessarily meet the requirements of the Kashruth.

Rationale: "Kosher style" is considered to create the impression that the food is kosher, and therefore the food must meet the requirements of the Kashruth. "Jewish style" food may not necessarily create this impression."

The CJN makes no representation as to the kashruth of food products in advertisements.

EYE ON ARTS

By BILL GLADSTONE

U ofT SCHOLARS ORGANIZE CONFERENCE ON JEWISH LIFE AND DEATH IN SOVIET UNION DURING WWII

During World War II, Soviet Jews constituted one of the largest Jewish populations in the world, numbering more than three million Jews in 1939. Tragically, almost two million were killed during the war, but for political reasons it was extremely difficult to conduct any research on this history until relatively recent times.

University of Toronto scholars **Anna Shternshis** and **Doris Bergen** have organized a conference featuring a film screening, photo exhibit, and some 18 visiting scholars from seven countries. Visit cjs.utorontoca/jewishlifeanddeath for details.

The film is director **Mikhail Kalik**'s *Goodbye, Boys!*, a 1964 Russian production with English subtitles. **Olga Gershenson**, a scholar of Soviet-Jewish films, will introduce the film, which was censored by the Soviets until the early 1990s. Innis Town Hall, 2 Sussex Ave. Saturday, March 24, 7 p.m. Free admission. 416-978-1624.

Irving Layton *(Concordia University photo)*

After the conference, the photo exhibit, *Lives of the Great Patriotic War: The Untold Stories of Soviet Jewish Soldiers in the Red Army During WWII*, will be on view at Congregation Darchei Noam, March 27 to April 24.

* * *

Purim Program: Active Seniors presents artist-scribe **Laya Crust**, who will give an illustrated presentation on how she created a Purim Megillah or Scroll of Esther. Miles Nadal JCC, 750 Spadina at Bloor. Thursday, March 8, 1:30 p.m.

* * *

Friends of Yiddish: A Purim Freylekhs hosted by the Friends of Yiddish features the **Yenevelt Klezmer Band**. Members $5, guests $15. Beth Tikvah Synagogue, 3080 Bayview Ave. Sunday, March 11, 2 p.m. RSVP by March 8 to Sandy, 416-458-1440, yiddish18@yahoo.ca

* * *

Layton Celebration in Ottawa: The Vered Jewish Canadian Studies Program and the English department of the University of Ottawa are holding a centenary celebration of the birth of Canadian poet **Irving Layton** (1912-2006). The event features readings by Ottawa poets and brief reminiscences from friends and associates.

Participants include MP **Irwin Cotler**, who studied with Layton. The host is **Prof. Seymour Mayne**. Admission free. University of Ottawa, Room 129, Simard Hall, 60 University St. Sunday, March 11, 2:30 p.m. 613-562-5800, ext. 1148; mayne@uottawa.ca

* * *

On Stage

• *Zero Hour*, **Jim Brochu**'s one-man show about the inimitable **Zero Mostel**, continues its Toronto run until March 11, with a two-for-one ticket promotion now in effect. Bathurst Street Theatre, 736 Bathurst St. south of Bloor. 1-855-985-2787.

• *Dani Girl*, in which a nine-year-old protagonist goes on a magic quest to reclaim her health after contracting a life-threatening disease; with **Gabi Epstein**, **Amanda LeBlanc**, **Jonathan Logan** and **Jeff Madden**. Theatre Passe Muraille Backspace, 16 Ryerson Ave., until March 11. $33. www.tift.ca

• Shakespeare in Action, the Miles Nadal JCC and Al Green Theatre present *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, Al Green Theatre, March 15 to 31. 416-924-6211, ext. 0. www.algreentheatre.ca

* * *

Music Notes

• Klezmer band **Klezkonnection**, as well as **Shul of Rock** and the multi-talented **Gord Lindsay** and **Yehezkel Lipinsky**, are headliners of this year's Cavalcade of Stars. Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue, Sisterhood Hall. Sunday, March 18, 6:30 p.m. $25 per person, $39 per couple.

• Night without a Moon: Jewish Women's Cabaret, a night of song and storytelling, is hosted by **Annie Gilbert** and features the music of **Marcia Beck**, **Tova Kardonne**, **Marni Levitt** and **Ilana Newman**. $10 in advance, $15 at the door. Miles Nadal JCC, Saturday, March 24, 8 to 11:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 154; sharonis@mnjcc.org

• The **Koffler Chamber Orchestra** and soprano **Melanie Conly** perform works of Canadian composers.The program theme comes from the current Koffler show, *Museum of the Represented City*, by **Flavio Trevisan**. $15 in advance, $25 at the door; $10/$20 for Koffler Envision members and students. Gladstone Hotel, 1214 Queen St. W. Sunday, March 18, 3 p.m.

* * *

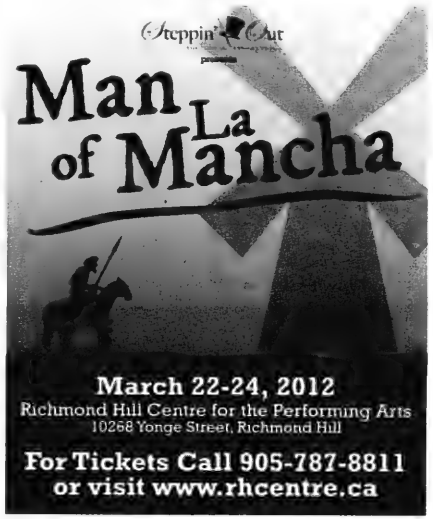
Governor General's Arts Awards

Jana Sterbak, the Montreal sculptor and performance artist best known for her controversial "meat dress," won a 2012 Governor General's Award in visual and media arts. Sterbak's sculptures created from raw flank steak caused a stir when they were exhibited at the National Gallery of Canada in 1991. Sculptor **Royden Rabinowitch** of Waterloo, Ont., also won a Governor General's Award in visual and media arts.

* * *

At the Galleries

• *Shipping and Receiving*, by **Yael Brotman**, showcases her reconstruction from memory of houses that she inhabited in two countries. *Weather Wise*, works by **Tara Cooper**, is also on view. Loop Gallery, 1273 Dundas St. W. Until March 25. 416-516-2581, www.loopgallery.ca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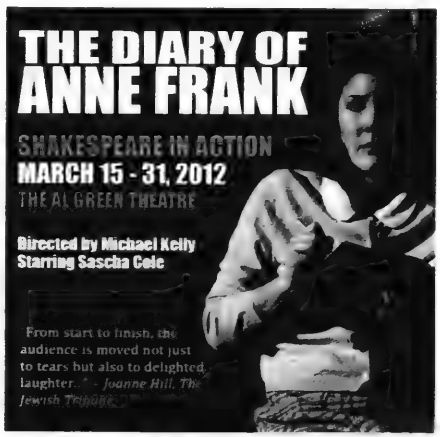
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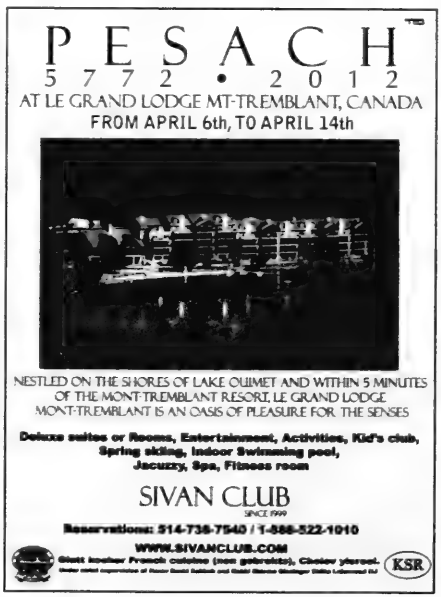
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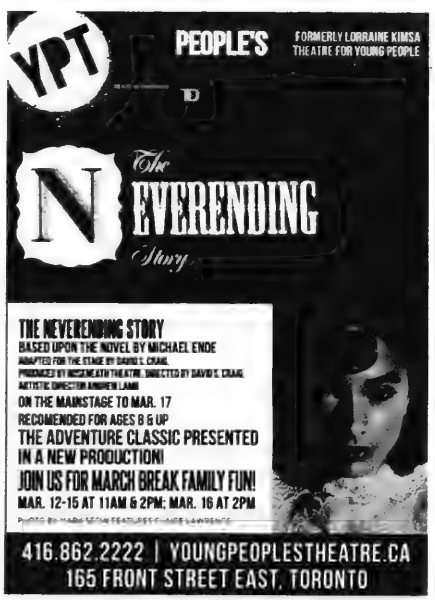
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Christians in Egypt, Iraq feel vulnerable, filmmaker says

Sheldon Kirshner
Staff Reporter

Christians in Egypt and Iraq are an endangered minority and are emigrating in droves, says Canadian journalist and broadcaster Martin Himel.

Himel, a freelance filmmaker and CTV's former correspondent in Israel, reached this sombre conclusion after paying visits to these countries recently.

His documentary, *Persecuted Christians*, will be broadcast by Vision TV in its world première on March 14 at 10 p.m.

In an interview, Himel said, "Most Iraqi Christians will tell you there is no future for Christians in Iraq."

Since the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, half of its Christians have fled. Some have gone to Iraq's northern Kurdish region, others have settled in neighbouring lands, while still others have left the Mideast.

In Egypt, where the Coptic Christian minority comprises 10 per cent of its population, Christians have emigrated en masse.

Christians in Egypt and Iraq have been subjected to bombings, murder and rape, said Himel, who is based in Israel.

He travelled to Cairo and Baghdad with Majed El Shafie, a Cairo-born Muslim who converted to Christianity and now lives in Canada. A human rights activist, he was tortured before leaving Egypt.

According to Himel, Copts in Egypt are gradually being driven out of high government and military positions and consider themselves second-class citizens. "We don't feel we have rights," says one Christian. "We feel persecution."

Egyptian Copts regard the rise of Islamic political parties since Hosni Mubarak's ouster last year as a threat to their existence. But a Muslim Brotherhood spokesman told Himel they have nothing to fear. Copts who intend to remain in post-Mubarak Egypt want the government to enact a bill of rights to guarantee their equality.

As Himel discovered, Christians in Iraq feel threatened and intimidated. On a visit to Our Lady of Deliverance Church in Baghdad, he glances at blood-spattered and pockmarked walls. In one of the bloodiest incidents since the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime, the church was attacked by terrorists.

Himel, who described Iraq as a "very dangerous" destination where visitors require armed protection, accompanied El Shafie to meetings with two of Iraq's leading politicians.

Deputy Prime Minister Hussein al-Shahristani claims the church rejected an offer for protection. Vice-President Tariq el Hashimi maintains his Christian "brothers" are equal under the law.

Himel suggests that the treatment of Christians will be an acid test of Iraq's compatibility with democracy.

Filmmaker Martin Himel in Baghdad

For now, however, Iraqi Christians face "extinction" due to the ethnic chaos ravaging the country. With the United States out of the picture since the withdrawal of its troops and Iraqi Sunnis and Shiites struggling for power, Christians are caught in the middle and are vulnerable, Himel says.

By his estimate, 50 per cent of Iraq's 900,000 to one million Christians have already left, bound for various destinations, including Canada. In a brief appearance, Canadian Immigration Minister Jason Kenney says Canada has accepted more Iraqi refugees per capita than any other country.

Himel, who spent a week in Iraq, said that Iraq's Chaldean Catholics reminded him of Jews. "They pray in an Aramaic dialect that would be recognizable to any student of the Talmud. It's the same language Jews spoke at the time of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem."

In Egypt, Christians are under siege, too.

"Under Mubarak, Christians had a benevolent second-class status. They could thrive in business and commerce, but the gateway to political power was closed. If they did not make political waves, life was good. If they questioned too much, prison and torture was a possibility."

Today, Egyptian Christians face a very uncertain future in what may become a theocratic state, he observed.

"The Muslim Brotherhood is trying to promote tolerance for Christians, but Salafists [radical Islamists] are far less tolerant. Christians fear more firebombings, attacks against their churches and rapes."

Syria is the next big question mark insofar as far as Christians are concerned. As Himel put it, "There are a couple of million Christians in Syria, and most have been loyal to President Bashar Assad's regime. But with Assad's imminent demise, Christians feel quite vulnerable."

New book examines dissociative identity disorder

Ron Csillag
Special to The CJN

Toronto writer Lilian Nattel's third novel, *Web of Angels*, signals a departure for the author of two previous works, both gems of historical fiction.

In *The River Midnight* (1999), a best-seller that earned worldwide raves, Nattel constructed the fictional Polish shtetl of Blaszka, complete with Chagall-like renderings of sages, peddlers, poets and the strong women who held it all together. *The Singing Fire* (2004), similarly richly detailed, is set in the Jewish ghetto of late Victorian London and relates the story of two very different Jewish immigrant women from Poland.

This time out, Nattel tries something quite different. For one, *Web of Angels* (Knopf Canada) is contemporary, set in an Annex-like Toronto neighbourhood (where Nattel still lives), and portrays a typically Canadian, multicultural family. It takes up a potentially tricky subject, but leavened with love and wisdom, the result is a daring, textured book that celebrates not just feminine strength but the human spirit.

"I was planning to write something completely different – another historical novel," the Montreal-born Nattel, 55, tells me in her living room, her small hands cradling a cup of hot tea. "And it just wasn't going anywhere. I needed to get back to writing. I started writing, and this is what came out." Nattel's heroine this time is not a Polish woman but a young Canadian mother of three. Sharon Lewis has a recognizably harried life of picking up kids from school, hurrying to and from programs and preparing meals. Her home is comfortably chaotic. All her husband and kids think is that Mom is a bit weird, but they love her for her quirks.

What sets Sharon apart is dissociative identity disorder (DID), a much misunderstood condition once called multiple personality disorder and always falsely labelled as split personality (which in turn, has been wrongly confused with schizophrenia).

Sharon, it soon becomes clear, has several "selves." Each is distinct and at least one is male. We never know who's going to show up.

This is no fly-by-night exploration of a little-known condition. Nattel "read everything I could get my hands on" and conducted in-depth interviews with some two-dozen people with DID. Neither is this the story of somebody she knows.

Lilian Nattel *[Allan Greenbaum photo]*

"It's distilled from the experiences of the people I got to know," she says. "Not a single one of those people feels that they can come out. Most of them are out with their spouses, children, therapists, and occasionally a sibling or best friend. But that's it. Because there's so much ignorance and misinformation about DID, people just don't feel they can [come out]."

As with her previous books, Nattel got an education on the subject.

"I came to realize that I hadn't recognized it because my own idea of DID was *Sybil* [the 1973 book about the treatment of Sybil Dorsett for multiple personality disorder]. That's most people's picture. And it's so far from the reality. As I absorbed that realization, I began to feel compelled to do something with all this knowledge that I had." Partly, Nattel seeks to dispel the stigma of DID. But Sharon's condition is a skeleton key. The novel opens on a shocking note meant to grab the reader by the lapels: Heather, a troubled, pregnant teenager and family friend, commits suicide (her baby is rescued by her mother, a doctor, in a none-too-gruesome way. The episode is based on a true event).

Not to give too much away, but the multiple personalities inside Sharon seem to know what happened to Heather and what may be happening to Heather's surviving sister (who is Sharon's son's girlfriend). Can Sharon rally herself and transcend pain and the taint of "mental illness" to rescue others?

It's not always an easy read and Nattel rarely takes the simple route. This is a vivid, warts-and-all portrayal of DID.

"There an argument that DID is not a mental illness," Nattel says. "It is listed in the DSM (the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*), but lots of things are listed in it that aren't mental illness." The condition, she explains, is an adaptation to trauma.

"You don't say your leg is sick when it breaks. It's more like an injury. You adapt to trauma in this way and then you grow with it. A mental illness implies a lack of functionality, something to be cured of." Those with the condition can have completely normal lives, she says. "DID has enabled them to compartmentalize the terrible things they've endured in order to function."

The goal is not necessarily a cure, but "to live co-operatively. It's about living peacefully and collectively in the present without holding on to the pain of the past."

And everyone can relate to Sharon, believes Nattel, herself a survivor of sexual abuse.

"I've never met a person who has gone through life unscathed. We all have pain."

Nattel never divulges how many personalities Sharon has. Among those with DID, revealing or asking that question is considered rude, she says. So is inquiring about personalities' names. "The point is to function, not to be seen as different."

Nattel says writing the book, which took eight years including research, was cathartic. Her character's ability "to use the pain of her experience to save two children is cathartic." Sensing she's about to issue a spoiler, Nattel promises the book's resolution "is extremely satisfying in every way."

> ***This is a vivid, warts-and-all portrayal of DID***

She concedes the book was a challenge.

"It's challenging to present an authentic picture that is also comprehensible to the reader. My background in historical fiction helped me with that because that's also a very foreign world. And this is the same thing. I'm building a world."

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Big defenceman recruited by NCAA D1 school

Paul Lungen
Staff Reporter

If you check NHL Central Scouting's current list of the best North American draft prospects, you've got to scroll down – way down – before you'll come across Ori Abramson's name.

There, listed in 210th place, is the six-foot-three, 215-pound defenceman.

Although his positioning suggests he'd be a late-round pick, it wasn't that long ago that Abramson wouldn't have made the list at all. Although plenty big, the knock on him was that he didn't skate very well.

"I was always big and strong, but I never had the foot speed or confidence other kids had," the 18-year-old acknowledged.

With a burning ambition to advance his game, Abramson decided to do something about it. "I found a Russian skating instructor, and he lengthened my stride," he explained.

For two years, five or six times a week, two hours at a time, Abramson hit the ice "working purely on skating."

The results are there in the Central Scouting list. It's also been apparent on the ice. The improved skating helped the Toronto teen develop with the Bay City Breakers, a Kingston, Mass., team that plays in the Eastern Junior Hockey League.

Division 1 NCAA teams also took note of the big kid who could skate. Several college teams pursued him, and not long ago, the Breakers announced he'd come to terms with the Providence College Friars, a Hockey East team that boasts some big name hockey people among its alumni, including Lou Lamoriello, Brian Burke, Ron Wilson and Hal Gill.

Despite offers from other New England NCAA schools, he felt he would best fit in with the Friars' rebuilding program, headed by coach Nate Leaman.

"I have been impressed with the success he brought in his previous head coaching job, and I know that he will enjoy the same success with Providence and its great hockey history and tradition. I look forward to the opportunity to learn from him and to play in Hockey East," Abramson said in a statement.

His American opportunity is something he's been striving toward, but it was far from a sure thing, especially when his skating was still a drawback.

Ori Abramson

"It started at 14 or 15 when I knew I had to do something about my foot speed, because I couldn't keep up in AAA," he said.

Abramson played a couple of seasons with the Brampton Capitals in the tier II Ontario Junior Hockey League (OJHL), a springboard for players eyeing the NCAA. As his skating improved, he got a look from the OHL St. Mike's Majors, who drafted him as a 16-year-old. He attended their camp, but going in, he knew he'd only last two days. He'd already set his sights set on the NCAA, and he'd be ineligible if he spent a third day with the OHL team.

Nevertheless, the experience was eye-opening: "I saw how fast the game is at the next level," he said.

Back in the OJHL, he was pretty successful. He was nominated for rookie of the year as one of only 10 16-year-olds in the league.

In the meantime, he continued to work on his skating, focusing on "explosiveness" in the first three steps.

Under the mentorship of Vince Laise, an assistant coach with the Oakville Blades, whom he trained with at the Varsity Hockey gym in Brampton, he began to look to Hockey East as a preferred destination for his post-junior development.

He agreed to play for the Breakers, figuring it would give him greater exposure to New England Division 1 schools. "It was an adventure," his father, Lanning, said. "He wanted to move away from home and live in a house with hockey players."

By the time he got to Bay State, "I was one of the fastest guys on the ice," Abramson said. Unfortunately, his season was marred by a hip injury suffered when he was checked through an open door at practice.

There was another setback due to a bout of mononucleosis, which sent him home until his health improved.

Still, his coach at Bay State liked what he saw. David McCauley said Abramson adapted well to a new league and new style of play. "Before he got injured, he was really starting to come along. He was learning the defensive side of things. I think his positional play got better, which allowed him to be more effective. He made a good first pass and was able to join the rush."

Abramson's strong work ethic also was evident. "He's a great kid, really works his tail off," McCauley said. "I think the kid's got a great future because of his work ethic."

His dad has seen the hours of dry-land and on-ice training pay off nicely.

"His story is that he wasn't a blue chip kid from the age of six. Ori didn't become the best kid on the ice until he was 17, but he worked his ass off to get there," Lanning said. "The more people told him he couldn't, the harder he worked."

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Hockey tournament to support autism awareness

Compiled by CJN staff

The second annual Joel Schwartz Memorial Hockey Tournament (JSMHT) will take place Sunday, March 11, at Chesswood Arena.

Presented by RioCan, the tournament will see 16 teams and their supporters come together to raise awareness about autism and help beat last year's fundraising total of more than $100,000.

Joel Schwartz was born with autism and was a client of Reena. He died March 3, 2009, two months after participating in a Birthright Israel trip with support from a Reena shadow. Proceeds from the tournament will go to the Joel Schwartz Endowment Fund at the Reena Foundation created to help young adults born with developmental disabilities.

JSMHT founders Zack Belzberg, 24, Jesse Abrams, 24, and Joel's younger brother, Jonathan Schwartz, 24, came up with the idea to host a hockey tournament in Joel's honour while on a subway ride to work.

"Joel loved to watch his brother's hockey games, and would be so happy to see his friends and hundreds of others come together in his honour," Belzberg said.

"Joel was a loving and kind person who had a profound impact on so many people," Abrams added.

The JSMHT is a full day round-robin event. The finals will run from 6 p.m. to – 9 p.m. and everyone is invited to attend.

For more information or to make a donation, visit www.jsmht.org.

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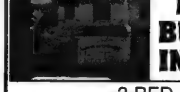

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Multimedia concert to feature music from video game

Kathryn Kates
Special to The CJN

Music from Final Fantasy, a popular role-playing video game series, will be performed in a multimedia concert to be presented in Toronto at the Sony Centre for the Performing Arts.

The March 31 concert, Distant Worlds: Music from Final Fantasy, features award-winning music from the record-breaking Japanese video game series.

Chicago-based Grammy Award-winner Arnold (Arnie) Roth will conduct the 71-member Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony and the 40-voice Tallis Choir of Toronto. Three local operatic soloists will also perform.

Unique to the Toronto concert is the appearance of Nobuo Uematsu, who composed much of the music for the Final Fantasy series.

Roth says that Uematsu is to video music what Hollywood composer John Williams is to film scores and feels very fortunate that Uematsu will join him on stage in Toronto.

"The most exciting thing is the new arrangement that I wrote that is entitled *Final Fantasy VI: Dark World*," Roth says. "We wanted to create a piece, so that the renowned composer would be able to play something live on stage with us.

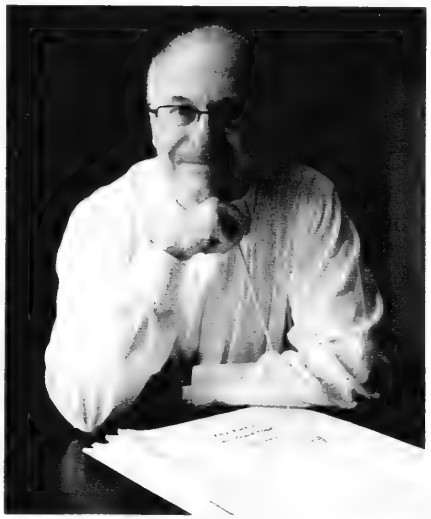
"He's a keyboard/piano player. He has agreed to play organ, and I will play the violin. So, the two of us will play the two solo positions with the orchestra on this piece, and we will be playing it in Toronto for the first time."

Roth says gamers and non-gamers alike will enjoy the Sony Centre concert. "If they are video-game fans, it needs little explanation of what this tour is. We have been touring around the world with this specific tour, Distant Worlds, now into our sixth year.

"Concert programs of the music of Final Fantasy have become legendary. If you are a fan of any video game, you will know some of the most famous titles of music and scenes from Final Fantasy. For instance, the song *One Winged Angel* is the single most popular piece of music in all of video games," he says.

"Video gamers are going to know that they are going to hear the most famous classic scores from the past 25 years of Final Fantasy on the stage at the Sony Centre."

Roth says those who haven't played the game will also enjoy the show. "If you are not into video games, this is about as legendary and the highest level of introduction as one could get. What you are going to be experiencing is what I would call very cinematic music scores.



Arnold Roth

"In that way, if you think of some of the most moving, emotional and heroic scores coming from movies, this is squarely in that same writing style and category.

"And, just the sheer size, with well over 100 performers on stage – it is an epic, massive production on every corner of that big stage at the Sony Centre," Roth adds.

A high-definition video screen will project characters and scenes from the video game above the musicians.

Over the last 25 years, the Final Fantasy franchise has sold more than 110 million copies, becoming the most recognized role-playing game in the world. The story continues to evolve, with unique characters, compelling storylines and engaging game play, driving the series into numerous sequels, live productions and films.

Final Fantasy video

Besides his mega Final Fantasy tours worldwide, Roth has performed with numerous orchestras around the world and is the principal conductor and music director of the Chicagoland Pops Orchestra. He is also a member of Mannheim Steamroller, an orchestra known for modernizing Christmas music. Roth won the best score award at the 2003 DVD Premier Awards for his soundtrack to the film *Barbie as Rapunzel*. The married father of three and grandfather of three now works with his grown son, Eric, who is also a conductor.

Tickets for Distant Worlds: Music from Final Fantasy can be purchased at the Sony Centre box office, by phone at 1-855-872-7669 or online at www.sonycentre.ca.

Check out our blog @ heebonics.ca HEEBONICS

Two Fans chase down childhood sports heroes

Riva Gold
Special to The CJN

For sports mega-fans Ethan Cole and Laurence Mandel Payne, it's never too late to pursue childhood dreams – even if they're completely ridiculous.

The 28-year-old Jewish Torontonians write and co-host a television series called *The Project*, where they attempt to track down their athletic heroes.

In their documentary-style shorts, Cole and Payne cross items off their sports fans' bucktet lists by chasing down their childhood sports heroes and setting them up in iconic – if not awkward – situations. Their 22-minute episodes are later edited and aired on The Score, the national sports television channel.

"So much sports content has a top-down, heavy-handed feel to it," says Payne.

"We wanted to put the power back into the hands of fans, so we created a show where two fans do crazy things that only other sports fans would want to do."

In one of their first episodes, the pair chased down arch-rivals Ben Johnson and Carl Lewis to meet for the first time in 20 years. Their goal was to get the pair to re-enact the 100-metre dash from the 1988 Summer Olympics in Seoul, South Korea, back when the filmmakers were just five years old.

"We knew roughly where Carl Lewis was, because he was running for state senate at the time. When we got to New Jersey, we asked everyone in the area if they knew where to find him," Cole says. "Then a guy at a 7/11 told us where he got coffee every morning, so we decided to wait for him there."

Cole and Payne got Johnson in the car and waited for Lewis in the parking lot until the two could be brought together. "Sometimes you can't write the stuff. You just have to take what's given," Cole says.

As the episode unfolded, the pair bonded with one of their longtime heroes.

"Ben called us idiots all the time, but in a fun way," recalls Payne. "We really became friends, and we hope to work with him again."

In another episode, the two chased around retired pro-wrestler The Ultimate Warrior, born James Brian Hellwig, in search of life advice.

"He told us to always follow our own compass, which was pretty interesting and inspiring," recalls Payne. "He also told us to get up really early in the morning, when there are fewer people competing for the world's energy."

Ethan Cole, left, and Laurence Mandel Payne, write and co-host *The Project*, a TV show on The Score. *(Adam Makarenko photo)*

But the most memorable moment for Cole was when the pair got Otis Nixon to re-enact a key moment from the 1992 World Series with them.

One snowy afternoon in Atlanta, Nixon re-enacted the worst memory of his career – the bunt that ended the World Series.

"Otis also taught us how to bunt and throw properly, and no one else had ever really taught us that," says Payne. "It was really nice to get actual baseball tips from a pro like that."

Of course, shooting a live, reality-style show is not without its challenges. Cole and Payne write, produce, and host the series but often have trouble predicting where their journeys will take them.

"You don't have much control over certain things," says Cole. "We're trying to create 22 minutes of interesting content for every episode, but when we're in the field, trying to track down athletes, we don't know what will happen. We have to take what we can get."

The key, says Payne, is to figure out how to make people laugh while keeping multiple backup plans in mind.

And in a sense, the creation of the show itself came as an unexpected event. Originally, Payne and Cole collaborated on a documentary about heavyweight boxing champion Buster Douglas.

"We showed a trailer of our film to people at The Score, and it was when we were all in that room together that we realized a more interesting idea would be to work off our bucket lists in a show where people could watch us as we attempt improbable things."

Cole and Payne, who met as students at the University of Western Ontario, were more than happy to join forces and pursue something radically different from their day jobs.

Payne had worked extensively in entertainment licensing at a web startup. He specialized in aggregating online content and worked in advertising production.

Cole was also in the advertising world, after obtaining a master's degree in international relations at Cambridge University. But Cole's passion for film and storytelling led him to The Score.

"We're basically two working guys with a crazy side project," Payne says.

"If we never just took the risk of making that first documentary, even though we had no budget, then none of the rest would have happened."

"You can't wait around for someone to find you, you have to figure out a way to get that first step done and hope someone likes it," Payne says.

For upcoming episodes, the two lifelong sports fans hope to become former NBA star Charles Barkley's personal assistants, pick up girls with tennis pro Boris Becker and submit baseball's Jose Canseco to a lie-detector test.

They're also looking for suggestions from viewers and other sports fans. To contribute show ideas or watch clips of their new series, visit www.thisistheproject.com.

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A visit with Granny

"Do you wanna drop by?" Alison, my new posh friend, asks me over the phone.

I'm very flattered. It's not every day you're invited to visit a rich, beautiful celebrity (she was on TV!) like Alison.

"I'll be honoured," I say immediately. Guess I'm not so hard to get.

I arrive in a festive mood.

"I'll only be gone for 20 minutes," Alison promises, blowing me a light kiss. "Two hours at the latest. Don't let her play with the recycle bin. She gets too excited. Ta-ta!" And she's gone.

I enter the house feeling defeated, to find Alison's Granny. I sit down in front of her. We're silent. I like old people. I mean, you can just sit and listen to their nostalgic stories for ever. Or at least for 20 minutes, as promised.

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"Hi, Granny! Would you like me to get you some tea?" I ask loudly.

Granny gazes at me angrily. "You're sitting on Katharina's seat," she says severely.

I jump up.

"Do you remember Katharina?" she asks. As I delay my reply, she continues, "She loved you very, very much, my Katharina. Even after all these years, I talk to her in my sleep, and she says you were her favourite!"

I nod humbly. "She was a dear, uh, woman," I say.

Granny looks at me suspiciously. "Woman?" she asks, her left eye blinking in a scary way. "She was my cat!" Granny shouts at me. "Try to focus here, Hester! Don't you remember my Katharina, Hester?"

I wish I remembered Katharina, I wish I were Hester, I wish everything.

"I have some metal bones," Granny announces proudly all of a sudden. "Remember? From the accident?"

I nod.

"Metal bones. I'm Steve Austin!" she says.

Another pause.

"How is your brother these days?" Granny asks. "Um… he's great, thanks," I reply nervously.

"It's a good thing you're a lawyer, Hester, now that he's in jail!"

I see the matter is very important to her, because she's shouting. "What do you call 500 lawyers at the bottom of the sea?" she asks me sternly, and gives me the answer: "A good start!" she hollers.

I wish I was a lawyer, I wish I had a brother, I wish…

Exactly three hours later, Alison enters the house in a good mood. "Hi Granny!" She kisses her warmly (how come I only get air kisses?) "Did you have fun with… (she looks at me, as I whisper, "Hester") Hester?"

Granny's not sure. "Actually, she was trying to kill me," she finally says.

Alison and I are on our way to the door. "Sorry, she's in that phase." She smiles her superstar smile. I melt instantly.

"It'll get better," I promise her.

"It *is* better. At least she's dressed! I'll call you next week. Maybe we'll do something together!"

I nod happily. I have a celebrity friend!

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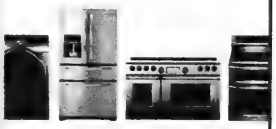
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The CJN's Hebrew-language columnist, Yosef Tastassa, writes about Lessons of Purim – Remember what Amalek did to you.

Canadian Mexican Jews respond to the food crisis in their homeland.

Ezra Ravins, left, mayor of the Central Arava Regional Council in Israel, wants to increase the population of this little known part of Israel.

Purim: God, neighbour and self

Megillat Esther tells the Jewish People to keep the days of Purim "as days of feasting and gladness, and sending portions of food to one another and gifts to the poor." It is the responsibility of all Jews to give two portions of food to a family member or friend (mishloach manot), and two bits of tzedakah to two poor people (matanot le'evyonim).

Urban Writer

Avrum Rosensweig

These two mitzvot do not start and stop with the self, but instead require interaction between us and others. The Torah refers to such a mitzvah as *ben adam l'chavero* – between a person and his friend.

There is another category of mitzvah in the Torah, however, called *ben adam l'Makom*, between a person and God, such as learning Torah.

But shouldn't there be a third? What about the mitzvot we do to strengthen our souls, such as *lashon naki*, speaking clean language? Shouldn't such a category exist? We'll call it *ben adam l'atzmo* – a mitzvah between a person and himself.

An answer to this question might emanate from the idea that it is our task to make our existence God-centric, one that requires some negation of the self.

In the Tower of Babel story, we find the sin of those who built the tower was their self-centredness and attempt to remove God from the picture. "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves" (Genesis 11:4). Because the people of Shinar were motivated by their desire to increase their own reputation, not by the Divine nature of reality, they were punished. From this we see that there is no reason for mitzvot between a person and himself. While speaking "clean language" reflects well on an individual, the real reason we are commanded to communicate in such a way is so that we can "see ourselves in the image of God."

Another school within Judaism states the opposite – that indeed God created the world for each one of us. Every person is commanded to be happy and to rest on Shabbat. We are told to give tzedakah, but not too much so that we do not ourselves become poor. It would seem from this – a recognition of individual needs – that a category of mitvot *ben adam l'atzmo* makes sense.

Perhaps the answer lies in the middle. The Jewish People are commanded to accept the Divine spirit as fundamental to their lives – hence the mitzvot *ben adam l'Makom*. In order to achieve this, however, Jews must also work within their world, to love our neighbour like ourselves, a condition of humanity thought to be more important than any other precept in the Torah: hence *ben adam l'chavero*.

The conduit to achieving these two goals is in fact the self, for how can I love my neighbour if I do not first love myself? So, while a third category of *ben adam l'atzmo* is in fact discussed, it appears to be secondary to the two others so that we do not get lost in ourselves and forget God and the importance of community. (Interestingly, while it is prohibited to put ourselves at the centre of existence, it appears God did just that.)

Mishloach manot and matanot le'evyonim are mitzvot that require the self to actualize but cannot start or stop with the need to do good. They must extend far beyond into a Godly place where we are commanded to love our neighbours like ourselves. Happy Purim.

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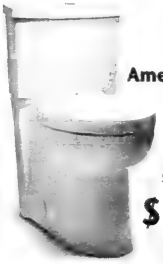

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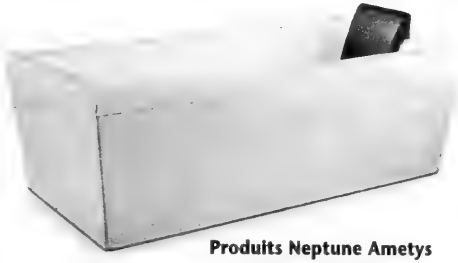

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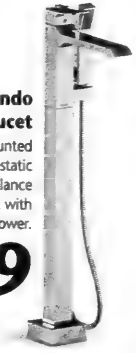

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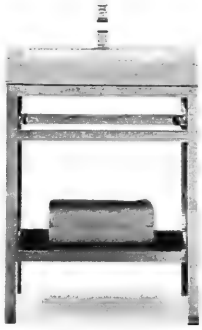

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LIVE & LEARN

The Canadian Jewish news

Section B

We salute educators...

Two years ago in this supplement, a popular article featured educators recalling the teachers who had a lasting impact on them.

This year, we revisit the same theme, with input from half a dozen people whose careers are a bit unconventional. They recall teachers who were sometimes unconventional too, and whose influence, for the most part, had little to do with academics.

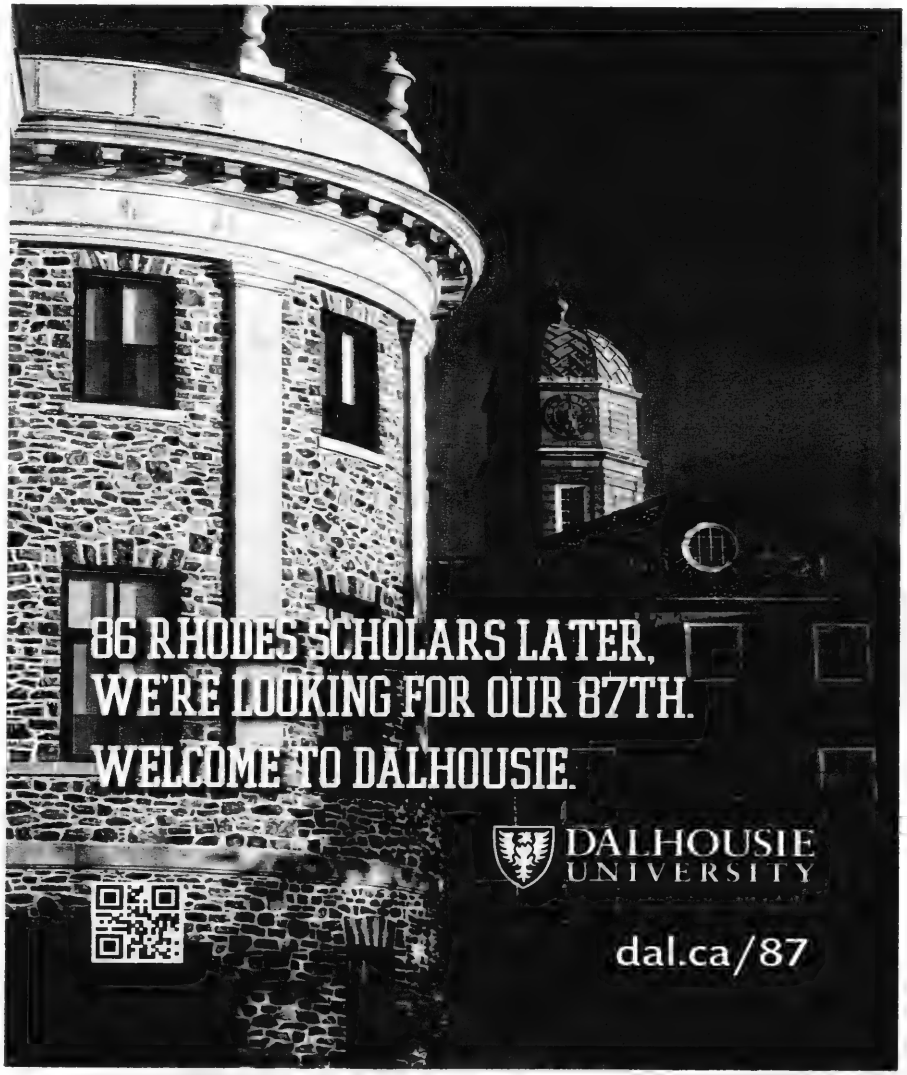
In the same vein, Ilanna Sharon Mandel shares memories of her father, Edward Yuditsky, who died in December. Mr. Yuditsky, as I think of him, led the junior congregation at my shul for 13 years until he retired at age 85 after a long career as a Jewish educator.

Contributor Marcy White reflects on the experience of her nine-year-old son, who has special needs, as he was being integrated into a mainstream public school class last year. She credits a receptive school principal and an "energetic, motivated and loving" teacher – as well as warm and accepting students – for making it work.

We also consider some of the other factors that come into play in education, particularly Jewish education. The former director of Toronto's Mercaz (formerly the Board of Jewish Education), Seymour (Epi) Epstein, advocates for the importance of a central Jewish education agency, and we look at the impact of high Jewish day school tuition, a perennial issue in our community.

Chag Purim Samayach.

–F.K.



On the previous page...

Clockwise, from top, Torah Tots preschool student Abbigail Rosenberg pats the new class chick; Leah Waldman, a nursery student at Associated Hebrew Schools Posluns Education Centre on Neptune Drive paints her tree; Beth Tikvah Synagogue's Rabbi Jarrod Grover gives Robbins Hebrew Academy junior kindergarten students Joseph Alkon (holding the silver yad) and Ben Stern a close-up look at the Torah; and Montessori Jewish Day School student Shahar cares for her plant.

At top, Bialik Hebrew Day School's senior kindergarten students touch and feel Israel on their "trip" to the Holy Land. From left, Zoe P., Olivia F., Elijah T., Chloe W. and Geoffrey U. feel soil from the desert in Israel. Middle, Michal, a senior kindergarten student at Netivot HaTorah Day School, enjoys a "taste of Israel." Bottom, students at the Joe Dwek Ohr Haemet Sephardic School get into the Hawaiian tropical theme of this year's Scholastic Book Fair. From left are Grade 3 students Eitan Cohen, Noah Loeb, Tal Davidov and Eli Azulay. Haim Assor is in front of them, on the floor.

To learn poetry, or not to learn poetry

Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf
Staff Reporter

Iambic pentameter. Alliteration. Haiku. Rhythm and rhyme. Shakespeare. Lord Byron. Yehuda Amichai.

Feeling poetic yet?

The art of the poem is something that can sometimes get lost or take a back seat to the myriad of other subjects being taught in the Jewish community's day school system.

Students in the parochial system today are faced with a course load that is not only laden with religious and Hebrew instruction, but also with the secular curricula mandated by government.

All of this can leave little room for learning to read and write poetry.

But is it a necessary subject? Most educators believe so.

Paul Shaviv, director of education at TanenbaumCHAT, believes poetry is still a vital element.

"Naturally, poetry and the appreciation and understanding of poetry is an integral part of the high school English curriculum, which is a compulsory subject throughout all four years of high school. At a fundamental level, every student is involved with reading and writing poetry," Shaviv said.

He added that poetry appears in many other subjects in his school. For instance, in their Hebrew studies, students study modern Hebrew poetry and they may also encounter poetry from other eras in Jewish history.

When students study Tanach, they encounter "many poetic passages, both embedded in the narrative text and, for example the Psalms," Shaviv said. "No literate person in either Hebrew, English or any other language should be deaf to the voice of the poet."

Shaviv said that in his school, the form of poetry instruction may vary depending on the teacher. Some ask students to memorize poems, others may not.

However, there are some who feel poetry instruction leaves a little to be desired in the school system.

Baila Ellenbogen, a poet and psychoeducational consultant with the TDSB, thinks today's students might be learning poetry more by rote and with less creative emphasis than the subject deserves.

"I think that poetry composition should be taught differently than poetry reading because it involves more than using [or] recognizing poetic literary devices, but an engagement with associative, creative thinking, and recursive, discovery-oriented editing processes," she told *The CJN* recently.

While she doesn't have in-depth knowledge of how poetry is taught in the Jewish day school system, Ellenbogen echoed Shaviv's sentiment about studying Jewish texts with an eye toward poetry.

"Some religious texts like Tehillim [Psalms] might be explored using poetry reading and writing lessons... that might be an interesting project," she said.

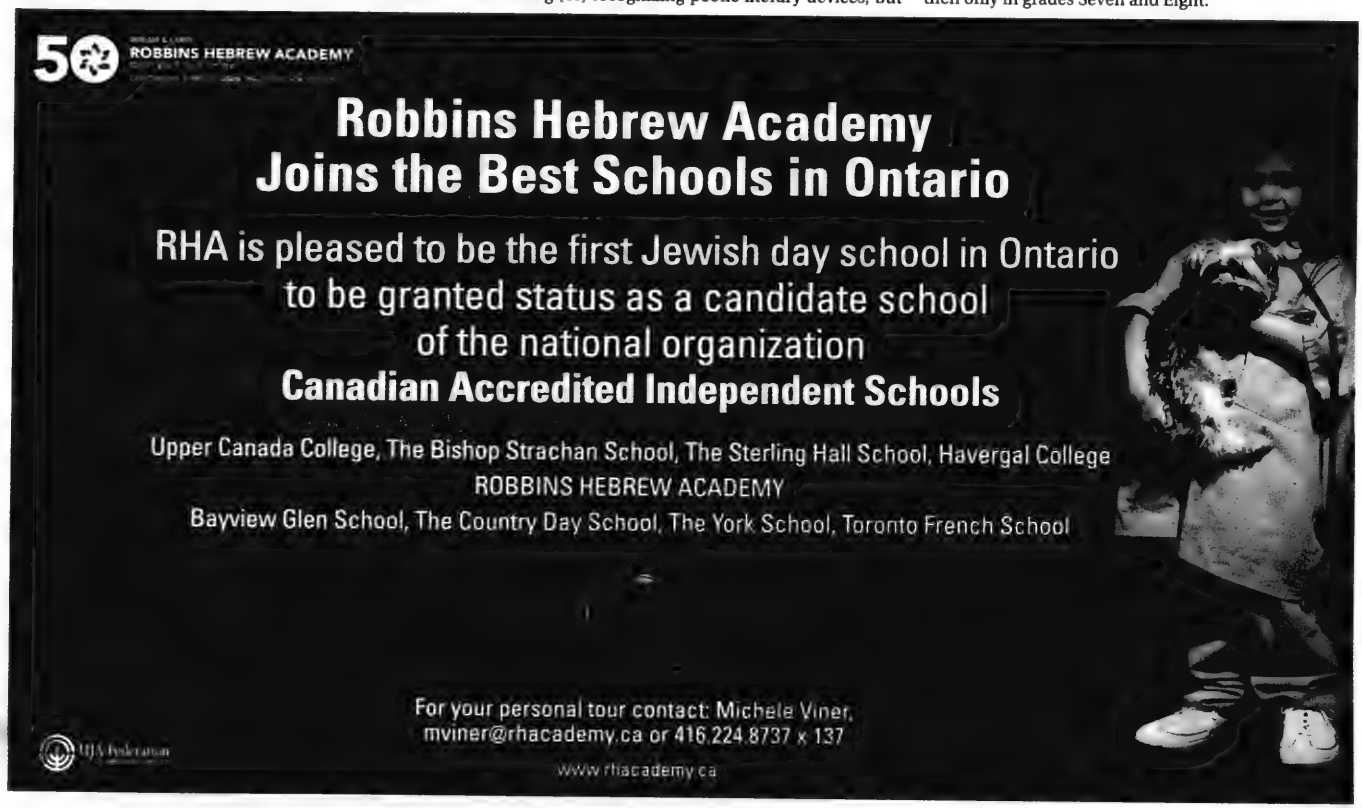
Over at Bialik Hebrew Day School, Benjamin Cohen, principal of general studies, said his students follow the same curriculum guidelines as all other day schools in the province. This includes instruction in poetry.

Children will learn some basics of form and rhyme in the earlier grades, he said, and as they progress through to grades seven and eight, will sometimes be given the option to produce a poem as part of an assignment.

"At age-appropriate levels, they learn about different kinds of poetry, formats of poems. In early grades they might learn about an acrostic poem, a limerick or a quatrain," Cohen said. "As [students] get older they learn about other literary devices like metaphor and figurative language. And eventually they do some creative writing themselves."

He said students don't generally memorize poetry anymore.

"The generation of my parents did a lot of [memorizing]... but we don't do much of that. Students might have to recite a few lines of a Shakespeare sonnet, and then only in grades Seven and Eight."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Schools experiment with interactive technologies

Sheri Shefa
Staff Reporter

If you can't beat 'em, join 'em.

That seems to be the philosophy most Toronto Jewish day schools are adopting as mobile electronic devices are quickly replacing paper and pens, and changing the way students get information and interact with their teachers.

In May, the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) voted to reverse a four-year-old ban on cellphones during school in order to foster "21st-century learning."

Former trustee (and current city councilor) Josh Matlow, who brought forward the policy in 2007, criticized the decision to reverse the ban.

"[Cellphones] are a distraction when you should be learning. The Internet component can be used for cheating. The camera and video components of many of the smartphones were used incredibly inappropriately, often for bullying," Matlow told the *Toronto Star*.

Leo Baeck Day School math and science teacher Ilana Cyna suspects the decision reflects the fact that public schools "may not have the access to technology that we have, so they're allowing students to use the cellphone, hopefully, in a constructive purpose so that they have access to the Internet and calculators."

Cyna said that at her school, many students in the older grades bring their own laptops to class.

"Not only do students bring in their own laptops, we have a laptop cart that we bring into the classrooms. We also have an iPad cart," Cyna said, adding that the school has about 20 of the tablets, enough for one classroom at a time.

But when it comes to cellphones, Leo Baeck doesn't allow mobile devices to be used throughout the day, "unless there is a specific activity that is very controlled... We think [cellphones] are more of a distraction at this point," Cyna said.

Frank Samuels, principal of Yeshivat Or Chaim, said he's skeptical that the real reason the TDSB lifted its four-year ban on cellphones in schools is that they wanted to foster "21st-century learning."

"I just think they gave up... it's a convenient PR spin on saying that they didn't know how to deal with it anymore."

Leo Baeck Day School Grade 4 students work on a social studies unit in their school's computer lab. From front to back are Noa Tulchinsky, Noah Lubov, Sabrina Sefton, Jayme Burke, Adam Friedman and Romy Weltman.

Samuels said his school's policy dictates that "the cellphone should not be used in any way that is disruptive. Not as a watch, not as a calculator, not as an organizer, not as an automatic defibrillator in case you have a heart attack."

However Samuels said some students will use the camera on their phones to snap an image of a homework assignment posted on the Smart Board – an interactive white board that connects to a computer and projector – rather than jotting it down the old-fashioned way.

Despite the school's policy against cellphones in class, Samuels said his school is tech-friendly, with a strong wireless connection and a netbook for each of the teachers.

Continued on page B5

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Students at Associated tweet feedback onto Smart Boards

Continued from page B4

A number of teachers, he added, send homework assignments directly to their students' e-mail inboxes.

Samuels said he wouldn't be opposed to teachers allowing their students to access Internet search engines such as Google during class for research purposes, but said it presents an issue for students who may not have access to a laptop or a smartphone.

"I don't want it to be that because you own an iPad that you are at an educational advantage."

But Samuels, who has his own Facebook and Twitter accounts, embraces new technology and encourages his students to stay current.

Last year, Samuels planned a "tweetfest" around the subject of Yom Yerushalayim and encouraged his students to tweet their thoughts about the holiday.

He said he hopes the development of new technologies will have a positive influence on the delivery of education.

"I think if you were to take an 18th century child... and put that student in today's classroom, too much of the room looks the same. One adult at the front, the desks, there is a board, et cetera. I think technology will force us to break that mould," he said.

Most Jewish day schools in Toronto are adapting to the new trends.

Robbins Hebrew Academy head of school Claire Sumerlus, said her school enjoys wireless service and has a laptop cart for her students. But she's interested in taking things further by incorporating cellphones and other mobile devices into lesson plans.

"It would be really interesting if students could tweet to their teachers. While the teacher is lecturing or teaching something, the kids could tweet their questions in and it could come up right away on the Smart Board. It's really a 21st-century way of doing things."

From left, Alexa Charlat, Josh Gertin, Jessica Weinberg and Lauren Backstein, Grade 4 students at Robbins Hebrew Academy, Beth Tzedec campus, use an online website called Popplet to learn about habitats.

Brenda Dzaldov, principal of Associated Hebrew Schools' Danilack Middle School, said her Grade 8 students are already putting Sumerlus' idea into practice.

"While the teacher is teaching on the Smart Board, they can tweet feedback and comments right onto the Smart Board," she said.

"That increases participation, it increases accountability and the students are way more engaged in the process, rather than having a kid with his hand up that the teacher can't get to."

While Cyna said she would worry about the distraction that cellphones in class presents, Dzaldov said students who don't want to pay attention will find ways to tune out, whether they have a cellphone or not.

"In the same way that a kid could be sitting in the class writing a note to a friend and not paying attention to the lesson, or staring out at the wall instead of focusing – we encourage the kids to be focused at all times and the teacher does monitor it. Is it a perfect system? Probably not. There's no such thing at any school."

The school policy says students can only use their phones before school, during lunch break, after school, or in class if it's part of the lesson.

Dzaldov, who recently obtained her PhD in literacy and technology education, and co-authored a book on literacy and interactive technology, said Associated students are required to sign contracts that outline the policies and procedures related to using mobile devices in class.

In addition to using cellphones, Dzaldov said that Grade 8 literacy classes could also use laptops to write an exam.

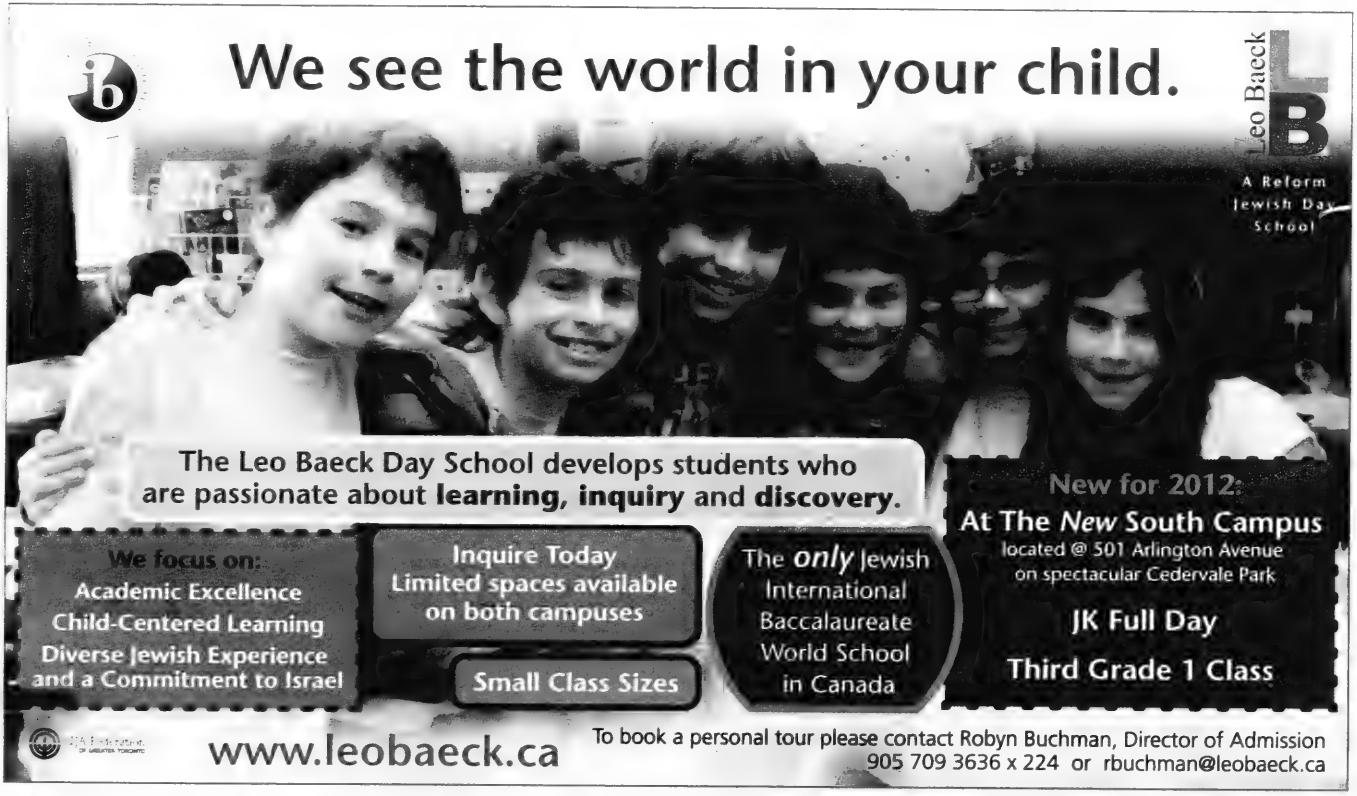
"The kids had the option of using paper and pencil or at a certain moment, the exam was e-mailed to them... They opened it up, opened a Word document, had the instructions on the computer and at the end of the exam, it was time stamped and they e-mailed it back to the teacher."

Sumerlus said that while introducing technology into schools is necessary, teaching cyber safety is the first step.

"It would be great to see all the schools collaborate and come up with something really wonderful that would be a part of the kids' education," she said.

Dzaldov agreed, saying that while it's important to stay current, safety is a priority.

"We're moving as fast as the world is moving because we don't want to fall behind, but we want to do it in a safe environment."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A good teacher can sometimes change your life

Frances Kraft
Staff Reporter

Earlier this year, the *New York Times* reported on a recent study by three American economics professors that showed the positive impact of some elementary and middle-school teachers on students' lives in later years.

According to the study, teachers who helped raise students' standardized test scores also seemed to have had other long-term beneficial influences, manifested in lower teen pregnancy rates, higher rates of college matriculation and greater adult earnings.

"Looking only at test scores, previous studies had shown, the effect of a good teacher mostly fades after three or four years. But the broader view showed that the students still benefit for years to come," the paper reported.

For this article, we thought it would be interesting to talk to people here who've followed unusual career paths, and hear about teachers who had a long-lasting impact on them.

Ian Leventhal

Ian Leventhal, artist and executive director of the Jerusalem Foundation of Canada's Toronto office, recalls that Joan Pemberton, his "extremely unique" high school art teacher at Bathurst Heights Secondary School created a "hands-on, nurturing and stimulating environment" for her students in the "prim and proper" late 1960s.

A believer in getting her students out of the classroom, she allowed them "to see different possibilities," Leventhal told *The CJN*.

A fine arts graduate of York University, Leventhal also studied at the Ontario College of Art (now OCAD) and in France. The prolific artist, now 60, is known for his exuberant work in Israel and Canada, including award-winning designs for Second Cup. As well, he spearheaded an exhibition of Jewish and Chinese artists in Shanghai.

"Miss Pemberton took us to her home, to museums, [to places that were] art-related but special – wherever you were going to find that creative spark. It didn't have to be in the classroom.

"We always thought she was a little bit off the wall, and that's why we loved her so much… There was a warmth. We were her little brood of chickens, and she was our mother hen.

"She gave us that sky's-the-limit, it's all out there, go-for-it attitude."

Robin Mednick

Robin Mednick, founder and president of Pencils for Kids, a grassroots charitable organization that helps children in Niger, credits Gladys Shibley Mitchell, who taught her public speaking, elocution and drama for many years, for bringing out the best in her students.

Mednick – who has a master's degree in politics and economics from Oxford University and a law degree from Osgoode Hall – also obtained her associate teacher's diploma in speech and drama from Trinity College in London, England.

In 1967, Mednick, then 14, began taking lessons at Shibley Mitchell's studio; her teacher was 75 at the time. They stayed in touch until Mitchell's death in 1984.

"She managed to reach out to you as a person. She encouraged you, inspired you, and made sure your mission in life was to fulfil your potential.

"I often ask myself, 'Would she be proud?' She was the measurement for me."

Ellie Tesher

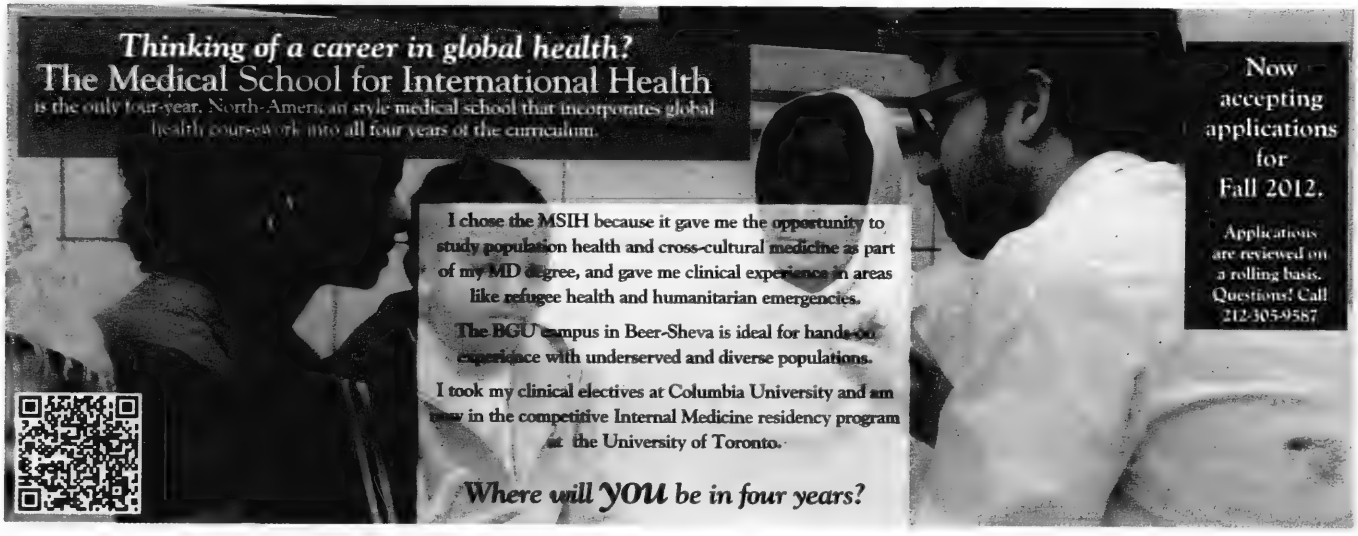
Ellie Tesher, syndicated advice columnist, says that the teacher who had the most impact on her was her father, Philip Goldman, even though he was a pharmacist, not a teacher.

Tesher, who started her career life as a social worker before becoming an award-winning journalist and writing a 1999 best-seller on the Dionne quintuplets, said that words were very important to her father, and that he had a wonderful sense of humour.

"For his leisure reading, he would read Encyclopaedia Britannica and the dictionary, and he made words very important. He would correct a word, without being a strict disciplinarian. He would show you the meaning and the etymology. He was very interested in language. That was a huge influence.

"[Also], when he had his little drugstore on Harbord Street, I used to sit on the rack of comic books and listen to people as they came in, and many came in just for advice."

Continued on page B7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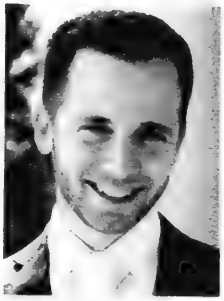
'It's not so much what they're teaching'

Continued from page B6

Mitchell Marcus, founder and artistic producer of Acting Up Stage Company, says that a few teachers had an impact on his career. He started acting professionally at age 16.

Sherri Helwig, who is now on the University of Toronto faculty, taught Marcus' arts administration course at York University. Marcus, who graduated from York in 2004, credits Helwig for recognizing and fostering his passion for the arts. The vision he had for his company grew out of a business plan he wrote for the first project he did in her class.

Earlier, at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto, English teacher Louise Novis not only taught Marcus how to write, but believed in him, he said.



Mitchell Marcus

And drama teacher Lori Cohen (now Fahidi) gave him the opportunity to direct a show, and supported him in his successful petition to have an OAC drama class added to the school curriculum.

"For me, the teachers who left the biggest impact didn't necessarily do so through curriculum, but through a real sense of care and support.

"In a non-traditional and perhaps 'risky' career, it was the teachers who showed a strong belief in me and really went beyond the call of duty as cheerleaders for me who stand out as having really made the difference."

Alisse Lee Goldenberg

Alisse Lee Goldenberg just published her first book, *The Strings of the Violin,* a young adult fantasy novel.

The mother of one-year-old triplets with a bachelor of fine arts degree from York University and a bachelor of education from d'Youville College in Buffalo, Lee Goldenberg said she always wanted to be an author, and that Amy Body, her Grade 6 and 8 English teacher at Leo Baeck Day School in the mid-1990s encouraged her to keep writing.

"We had all these creative writing assignments… She just made writing and reading so much fun for everybody that it really fostered a love for it.

"She encouraged the entire class. She never really singled anyone out. She gave us advice along the way, and almost treated us like her kids. She encouraged us to talk [things] out."

Michael Wolfson, senior advisor, food and beverage sector, for the City of Toronto, said his math teacher at William Lyon Mackenzie Collegiate Institute, David Simonoff, influenced his career path, but not through anything that had to do with teaching math.

Simonoff had a friend who was a maître d' at the now-defunct Westbury Hotel. At the time, Tony Roldan was the hotel's head chef, and Simonoff arranged for Roldan to speak at Mackenzie's career day.

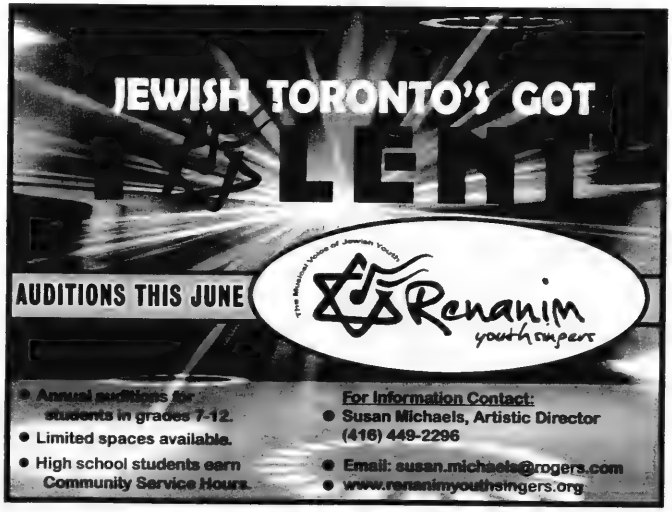
Michael Wolfson

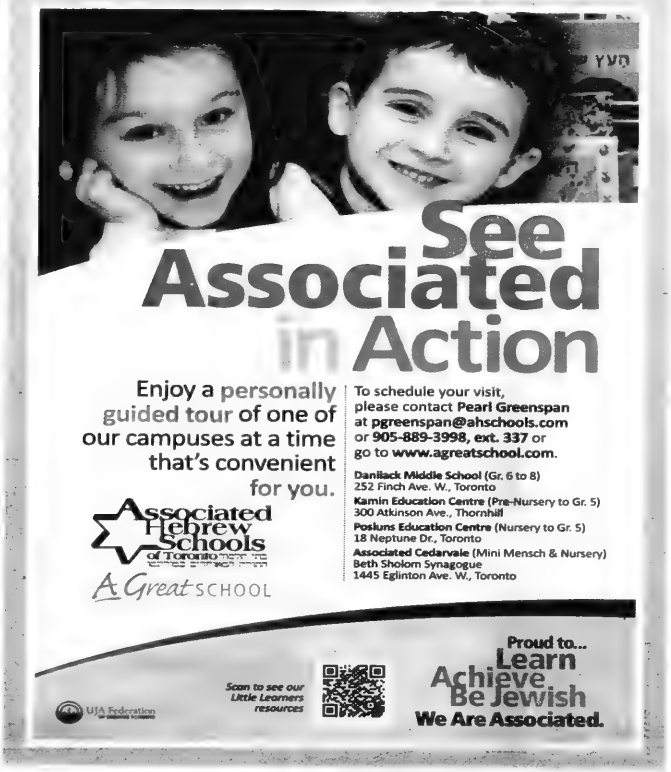
Wolfson, who went on to study food and beverage administration at George Brown College, recalls being impressed with Roldan's presentation, and with his entourage of several people.

After more than 30 years in the food industry, Wolfson – who graduated from Mackenzie in 1971 and later earned his bachelor's degree in economics at York University – recalls that the career he ended up with wasn't on his radar screen until Roldan's presentation.

"I was lousy in math. It was Mr. Simonoff's outside interest [that made a difference for me.] He had a real interest and passion for the food industry… He was a foodie, a nice guy, and an interesting guy to speak to.

"Most teachers have influence over students in a way that doesn't fall into their subject matter… it's not so much what they're teaching them [that matters], it's their interest in them as a real person."

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Writing project brings schools together

Jennifer M. MacLeod
Special to The CJN

Two Toronto schools are teaming up to write children's books together – and craft memories that will last a lifetime.

For Grade 2 students at the Toronto Heschel School, the arrival of Grade 12 Writer's Craft students from Ulpanat Orot (Ulpana) has quickly become a highlight of the school week. One girl even insisted that her family had to come back early from vacation because she didn't want to miss a visit.

The project, in its second year, was conceived by Frank Samuels, principal of Bnei Akiva Schools, which operates both Ulpana and Yeshivat Or Chaim.

Samuels stepped in to teach the optional Writer's Craft course in his early years at Ulpana when the teacher, Brenda Freedman, sister of York University professor Marty Lockshin, became ill. He hoped to hold the position for her until she could return, but she died not long afterward. That was 2006, and he's been teaching the course ever since.

"The whole [Writer's Craft] year is dedicated to showing the students how to become better writers and better readers," says Samuels. He hoped the collaborative writing project, as a part of that course, would create "real-life learning," offering the girls "not just an assignment," but the opportunity to "meet another person, writing for and with that person."

This year, there are eight Ulpana students to 21 Heschel students, so groups of younger kids work with each girl from Ulpana. At the end of the project, each student receives one copy of the story they've worked on, and all the stories are bound together into an archive – one for Heschel and one for Ulpana.

From left, Toronto Heschel School students Joseph, Samuel and Eden share story ideas with Nilah.

Words and pictures come together: Jack draws while Rebecca writes.

From left, Sammy and Jordan brainstorm with Hannah.

Last year's pilot run "worked way beyond my wildest dreams," Samuels says.

Teachers at Heschel agree. "From our end, it's been really an amazing project," says Malka Regan, an elementary division head who's been at Heschel for 15 years.

"We try to have our students connect with all kinds of different people."

Collaboration with public schools and other Jewish schools is part of Heschel's lifelong learning approach. "We feel very strongly about community as a whole and being part of a greater Jewish community."

For the kids, it's just plain fun when the girls come in. "There's a lot of laughter… when they're together," says Regan. "The volume of excitement… it's a wonderful environment. When people walk by the classroom, they want to pop their heads in, because it's such a joyful learning experience."

There's a surprising personal connection for Regan as well. At the time he approached Heschel, Samuels had no idea that she is Freedman's daughter. "He hadn't recognized the connection."

Regan credits her own career in education to her mother's influence. "She loved teaching, and that was part of who she was. It wasn't just her job, it was part of who she was – a teacher, a learner, a mother."

The Writer's Craft course was particularly dear to Freedman's heart. "She loved that Writer's Craft course… She was a wonderful writer, a voracious reader," Regan says. Collaborating with the next generation of Ulpana girls has been "a very interesting and lovely connection."

Samuels agrees that it has given the project "an extra special dimension that none of us was expecting."

The goal of Writer's Craft is to go beyond other English courses, he says. "Most of what we teach in English is not creative writing… it's not just a course, it's a life skill – kids are going to be writing forever."

One goal of the project, says Ulpana's Yael Jakubovic, was to "involve the little kids and see their perspective… as opposed to high school students imagining what little kids would like to read about."

The older girls develop not only writing but also problem-solving skills. Regan says they must realize that they "have their own curriculum and expectations" and are ultimately in charge. "We told them they're the experts. If a plot line is silly or not of the quality they want, [they should] discuss with the students what would be a more appropriate story line."

Working out story lines is a challenge in itself, says Samuels, who enjoys bringing real-life situations into the classroom. "What do you do when the other person wants to talk about aliens and killing… and you want to write a story with a moral?"

This year's stories are being written around ethical themes. These can be as simple as "treat others the way you want to be treated" or "don't wait for someone to ask for your help."

"I'm very proud of what the kids are doing," Samuels says. "Last year, one of my students… Ariel, had as her collaborator from Heschel a girl called Hannah. At the final meeting… Hannah was in absolute tears because it was the last time she would be working with Ariel."

"I have the sense that this is something our kids are going to remember forever."

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Day school parents feel the tuition pinch

Frances Kraft
Staff Reporter

"It's always a struggle, and it's always in the back of my mind," says Ilsa Kamen, a Thornhill mother of five, referring to the cost of Jewish day school tuition.

"I live my life filling out forms – subsidy forms, scholarship forms," as well as a variety of other forms for 11-year-old Avi, who has severe autism and is a student at Zareinu Educational Centre, she added.

In September, Ilsa, a legal secretary, and her husband Howard – a part-time bookkeeper, bar mitzvah teacher and Torah reader – were facing day school tuition costs for their five children totalling $61,000, in addition to the cost of their two oldest daughters' university and college tuition.

The amount included Zareinu arrears of $5,000, Zareinu tuition of $18,000, tuition for two children at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto totalling $26,000 (less a deposit of $1,000), and TanenbaumCHAT arrears of $13,000.

The total represents 55 per cent of their annual before-tax income, Howard said, referring to his pay, Ilsa's pay, and income from a trust left by Ilsa's late father.

Howard said that he and Ilsa also need to save money for Avi's future. "What is going to happen to Avi when Ilsa and I can no longer care for him?" he asked.

The couple reluctantly enrolled Avi in public school this year, pulling him out at the last minute when four people provided private funding after Howard sent an e-mail to synagogue friends.

The Kamens are stretched financially, emotionally and physically. "We don't have the energy," Howard said. Avi wakes up by 5 a.m., and requires full-time care, he explained.

But this year, even given the subsidies the family has been receiving, Ilsa and Howard didn't think they would be able to continue in the Jewish school system, and had enrolled Avi in public school.

"We don't know what's going to happen next year," Howard said.

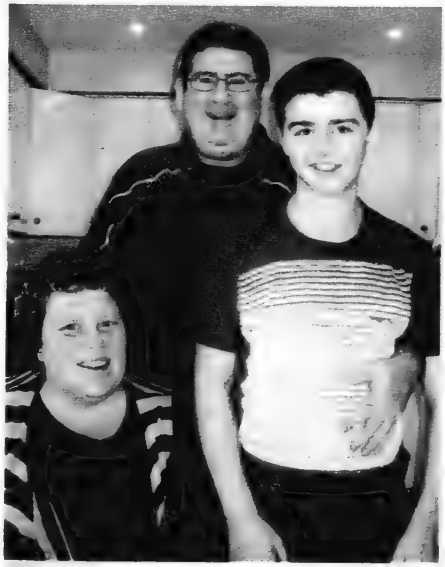
Ilsa, an Ottawa native who attended Jewish day school through Grade 8, said she and Howard, also a day school graduate, never considered pulling their children out of Jewish school. "That was my upbringing," she said softly.

She understands why some parents opt to leave the system because they don't like the subsidy application process. "It's not a pleasant grilling every year," Ilsa said. "The only thing extravagant that we do is send [four of] the kids to camp. To me, that's as important as their school. They go to Ramah... We don't take trips."

Steven Shulman, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's campaign director and counsel, said that the federation provides schools with a standard tuition subsidy form, which each school can customize, as long as they adhere to the criteria on the form.

The federation in Toronto allocates more money to tuition assistance than any other federation (in total dollars, not per capita), said Shulman, the father of two day school students. "You've got to look deeper than what can the federation provide. The federation provides a lot, but then you have to look at what other answers might there be. This is a process we're starting down right now. There's all kinds of alternatives we're talking about. We've been in dialogue with parents and parent groups. This is certainly a significant issue."

Continued on page B21



Ilsa and Howard Kamen with their son, Avi, a student at Zareinu who has severe autism. ***[Frances Kraft photo]***

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Marcy White
Special to The CJN

Last June, my nine-year-old son, Jacob, heard a school bell and experienced recess for the very first time.

Jacob is in a wheelchair. He can't walk but loves to be pushed as fast as possible, taking the turns as sharply as his chair will allow. He doesn't talk, but has little trouble letting people know what he wants and likes. He gets a thrill out of the rough and tumble play boys are known to love.

From age two to six, Jacob attended Zareinu Educational Centre, a therapy-intensive school. Then I wanted him to attend our local public school so that he could focus on the standard academic curriculum. I was told that this plan was impossible because the building was not wheelchair accessible. Jacob was placed in a "congregated facility," a school where all the children have a physical disability. At first, this was okay. He had a fantastic teacher who knew how to maximize his learning potential.

I still wanted him to be around "regular" kids though.

I broached this topic at Jacob's Identification, Planning and Review Committee (IPRC) meeting last spring when everyone involved in his care met to review his school year and start planning for the upcoming one. I requested that Jacob be placed in a regular classroom for a scheduled block of time on a recurring basis. Everyone at the meeting acknowledged the benefits of this kind of integration, but they were unsure about how to make it happen. There was concern about resources: his school did not have additional assistants to accompany Jacob, nor did they have a driver who could facilitate the transfer. And, most importantly, they didn't know of another school that would welcome such an unorthodox arrangement.

I wanted this for him – over the years, Jacob has had a variety of experiences with children who are developing in "typical" fashion, and they have all been positive. He has enjoyed listening to their little voices and being included in their games. And I love that the kids have seen past Jacob's wheels and limited movement.

A couple of weeks after the IPRC meeting, I followed up with Jacob's principal and attempted to address each of her concerns with the hope of finding a way to integrate Jacob. I acknowledged the challenges in this request but felt that, with some creative thinking, it might be possible. We both agreed to explore our contacts and see if we could find a placement.

We didn't have to look far and quickly located two schools that wanted to welcome my son. The school we chose was the one where the teacher, Cheryl Libman, knew Jacob from a previous year. How wonderful it would be for Jacob and Cheryl to be together again, I thought. They made a great pair: energetic, motivating and loving teacher and eager, attentive and adoring pupil.

Two days before Jacob's first day at Elkhorn Public School, I met with Paul Farrell, the principal. As I sat in Paul's office and answered his questions about my son, I couldn't help but remember my not-so-fruitful conversation with another school administrator the last time I tried to have Jacob exposed to a similar type of student body when he was five years old.

"It would be too traumatic for kids to be around your son" were the words she uttered when I inquired about having some of her students attend my son's school. At the time, her statement made me cringe with fury.

Continued on page B11

Jacob Trossman, with his teacher Cheryl Libman

Autistic teen has plenty to say

Carolyn Blackman
Staff Reporter

Like many teens, Carly Fleischmann, 17, attends gifted classes in a Toronto high school, corresponds with thousands of friends on Facebook and Twitter, and writes a blog.

Carly, however, who was diagnosed with severe autism and an oral motor condition at age two, can only speak through her computer.

A book about the teen, *Carly's Voice: Breaking Through Autism*, written by her father, Arthur, the president of an advertising agency, and blended with Carly's words, describes the daily struggles and her eventual success in communicating her inner thoughts.

The book begins with Carly, a twin, lagging behind her sister Taryn in such tasks as crawling and toilet training.

Eventually she is diagnosed as pervasively developmentally delayed, a spectrum of disorders that includes autism, and doctors tell Arthur and his wife, Tammy Starr, that Carly is below average intellectually, and will probably need to live in a group home eventually. Life was never peaceful for the Fleischmann family, which also included the twins' brother Matthew. "Once she learned to walk, she immediately began to run, generally headlong into dangerous situations, like a busy street," writes Arthur.

The book begins with Carly at seven years old, missing from the house. Her frantic father runs to the nearby park, where he finds Carly naked and alone. "I felt happy to find her, but I also felt a crush of frustration knowing that this would not be a one-time near-catastrophe."

Years of Carly's erratic behaviour, her parents' sleeplessness and many hours with two devoted therapists finally led to a breakthrough when Carly typed, "Stop, break, bathroom," on her voice box. "Barb and Howie broke into cheers, tears in their eyes."

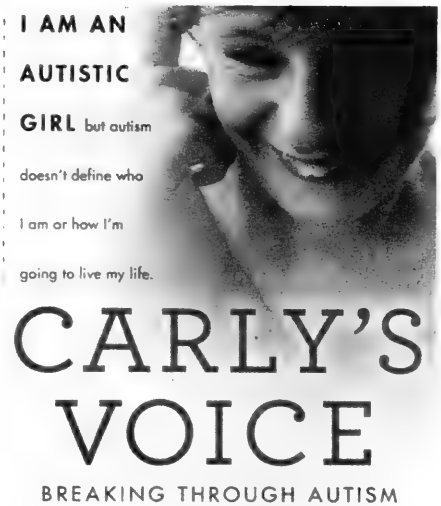
Fleischmann takes us through Carly's bat mitzvah, when she struck up an unlikely long-distance friendship with Ellen Degeneres, media interviews and her entrance into high school.

Throughout the book, we get a glimpse of Carly's "inner voice. "My whole life I was told I couldn't talk. And here is my voice talking to you."

Through her blog, she shares her thoughts about autism. "I have always said that doctors and so-called experts only know a little piece about autism. How could they know the real pieces of autism when they aren't inside our heads and living with it their whole lives." Her goal for the blog, she said, is to educate people about autism, "and at the same time, share with you a glimpse of my life.

"A wise man told me that without knowledge we can't have understanding. Hopefully my blog will give you, not only knowledge but, a chance to help bring understanding to people around you."

And to those who said she'd never learn to communicate, Carly writes: "people who cannot speak still have plenty to say."



'I wondered how other kids would react'

Continued from page B10

Although I knew she was wrong, a seed of doubt was planted in me. I was afraid that other people in similar positions would be equally as small-minded, and I was worried about exposing my little boy to that destructive thinking. As I recalled that disturbing conversation in Paul's office, I physically shook my head in an effort to rid myself of those thoughts. Instead, I continued telling Paul about my son. He seemed genuinely interested and was impressed that Jacob had met Andrea Boccelli and was a pseudo-television star. It was clear to Paul that Jacob could add a lot of positive energy to his student body.

Later that day, when I explained to Jacob that Cheryl would be his teacher once a week, his mouth opened and he let out an excited scream, accompanied by some squirming in his chair. It was obvious this idea pleased him. But, two days later as we drove to the school, Jacob started protesting and making noises. When I asked if he was scared and nervous, he nodded his head. I reassured him, saying I would stay with him as long as he wanted.

As I transferred Jacob from the van to his wheelchair, Cheryl came running over to us and began enthusiastically describing the plan for the afternoon. I couldn't help but smile when I saw the excitement on my son's face and heard the animation in Cheryl's voice. I asked Jacob if I could leave, and he didn't hesitate before nodding his head affirmatively. I desperately wanted this event to be a success. A few hours later, I walked into the school to pick up my son, anxious to learn how it went. I knew Jacob would be comfortable and safe with Cheryl, but I wondered how the other kids would react to him. The description I received from Cheryl was surpassed only by the sights I witnessed the following week upon our return.

Students and teachers lined up to meet the newcomer. There were some questions, including, "Why is he wearing a wheelchair?" but these inquiries were posed with innocence and acceptance – there was no fear or trauma involved.

When I dropped him off the next time, Jacob was presented with a hand-drawn sign that read: "Welcome Back Jacob." The artists were three students who had not been able to meet him the previous week but wanted to be among the first to do so upon his return. It warmed my heart to witness the little people congregated around Jacob's wheelchair, bending down so he could see their faces as they introduced themselves. When it became apparent that Jacob thought sneezing was hysterical, the room filled with faux-sneezes in attempts to elicit Jacob's contagious full-body laughter. The scene filled me with a sense of contentment.

So far, this unconventional arrangement has been outstanding and everyone has benefited from it. Jacob loves being around these warm and accepting children and he continues to do what he does best: grabbing the hearts of those who come close and refusing to let go.

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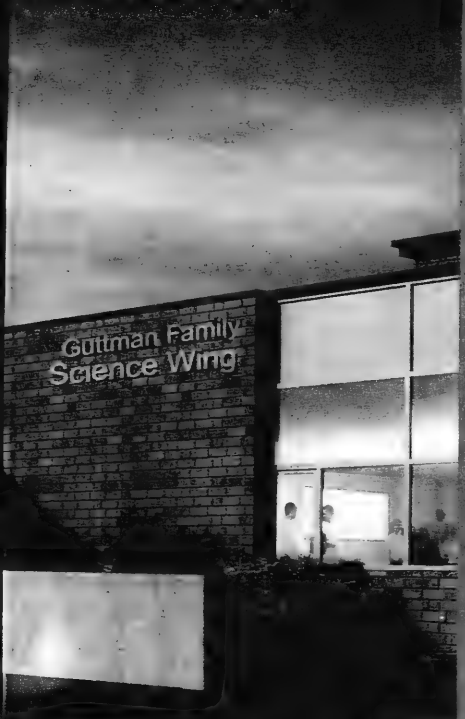

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Putting our foot down

Cathy Indig
Special to The CJN

I can still remember my mother's frequent expression: "I am putting my foot down."

Of course, she didn't mean this in a literal sense. She meant she wasn't budging, and nothing I could say would change her mind.

Do I agree with this approach of not listening to a child's perspective? Not completely. However, 40 years later, I believe we've lost sight of even the figurative sense of those words.

Children as young as one year old are literally putting their foot down when asked to do something, and screaming "no" at the same time.

The worst part is that, unlike my mother, the parents are giving in.

What is this teaching the children? Whenever they don't want to do something, just scream, cry or hit, and then they will get their way.

Parents say they don't understand why their children don't listen. But how many times has the parent said something and the child didn't have to listen?

I often hear parents ask their children if they would like to leave, and the quick response is a loud "NO."

The mom or dad's next words are often, "Okay, sweetie, we can stay five more minutes." Five minutes later, the same scenario occurs.

The problems are clear: Why is the child permitted to angrily say no and then get his or her way? And why is the parent asking if the child would like to leave in the first place?

Since my mother's day, parenting methods have gone from one extreme to the other. Luckily, there is a happy in-between.

Cathy Indig

In this situation, the best approach is to tell the child you are leaving in 10 minutes. Although young children have little sense of time, this lets them know they must finish soon.

When the time is up, a parent can kindly say, "We need to leave now." No questions, no choices.

The child may be angry the first few times you try this, but will soon learn that you mean what you say.

I'm not saying we shouldn't give kids choices.

Give them lots of choices for the things that are negotiable, remembering always that the child doesn't rule the house.

Negotiable is whether they want a grilled cheese or tuna sandwich for lunch, not whether they want to eat at the table or run around the restaurant with their food.

They can choose what colour of socks to wear, which book to read, or which toy to play with.

Children need to learn socially acceptable behaviours, and parents are their most important teachers.

Envision a child of three who has moved from a crib to a big bed. On Day 1, the child comes out every 10 minutes with excuse after excuse. The parent gives the child water, brings the child to the bathroom, reads another story or gives 20 more hugs. And the child learns that the parent will keep coming, no matter what.

By 11 p.m. on Day 10, the parents are exasperated and exhausted. From Day 1, the child needs to know that he or she is expected to stay in bed. Make sure all legitimate needs are taken care of, and perhaps keep a glass of water next to the bed.

If the child comes out with an excuse, remind them that this need was taken care of and send them back to bed, even if they're crying. This is hard, but it is harder, in the long run, to not teach them what is expected.

Children need stability in their lives. Part of this comes from seeing parents and teachers as people who can keep them safe, and part of it comes from rules.

Rules give kids grounding as to what is expected. They help children take ownership of their actions and let them take pride in doing something good.

Children may behave badly if they want attention, but when they get attention for doing appropriate things, they'll learn to prefer positive attention.

We are so afraid of disappointing our children and seeing them sad that we are willing to eliminate any possible sadness by allowing them to do whatever they like.

We want our children to be happy, but that doesn't mean they don't need rules.

In my school, I don't believe in time-outs, but I do believe children need to follow community expectations so that they fit in wherever they go.

We need parents to share this vision, so that children hear the same messages at school and at home.

Who is putting their foot down now? Hopefully, today, it is a combination of children making positive choices and standing up for what they believe in, and parents who want what is best for their children – the ability to understand and follow socially acceptable behaviours.

Cathy Indig is director of early childhood education at the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre.

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Two schools collaborate on environmental project

Sheri Shefa
Staff Reporter

When Leo Baeck Day School's head Eric Petersiel and Robbins Hebrew Academy's (RHA) head Claire Sumerlus learned about the ClimateSpark Social Venture Challenge – a contest that called on non-profit groups to pitch ideas to reduce Toronto's climate impact – they eagerly jumped on the opportunity to get involved.

"For many years we've had a focus on environmental education and how it relates to Judaism, but to date, everything we've ever found has always only been qualitative education," Petersiel said.

This project, he added, allowed his students to put theory into practice. Two staff members, one from each school, worked together to draft a proposal to enter the ClimateSpark challenge.

Leo Baeck and RHA came up with an "Inter-School Collaboration for Conservation Quantification" project that called on Grade 8 students and teachers to develop measurable energy-reduction actions in their schools.

"It's all nice and good for our kids to say, 'Here's why you should have litter-less lunch'… and philosophically, it makes a lot of sense, but that is a very hard sell until you can quantify the results," Petersiel said.

He said the idea is that students would track how much energy their schools use by measuring the electric bill, gas bill and water bill.

"Those bills have incredibly detailed metrics of usage, so we can simply chart them and in any month, you can identify… if you used more and decide how you can cut down your impact that would save dollars and also have a positive [carbon] footprint impact."

Petersiel said people tend to focus on habits that are easy to curb, such as turning off the lights, rather than making changes that will have the most impact.

"But the reality is that turning off the lights is a shockingly small piece of the actual measurement factor," he said.

"Should we be replacing windows, or installing solar panels on the roof? If you have a real understanding of the actual physical impact… you can have a much more intelligent conversation about which habits are going to impact real change."

Sumerlus said the project is about changing the way we think.

"That's how you can have a green effect," she said.

According to the proposal, the goal is to "establish a set of actions which can be done within schools, between schools in the same city or region, and between schools in different countries."

The plan is to use social media to connect and work with other schools involved in the project.

Sumerlus boasted that of the 60 proposals submitted by non-profit organizations, Leo Baeck and RHA are the only schools that entered the ClimateSpark competition.

She hopes that the lessons the students learn from their involvement with the project will affect their day-to-day lives.

"The kids can actually measure what they're doing, and they'll be doing it both in the school and in their homes."

However, until there is a commitment from an investor to fund the project, the kids' involvement is limited to making suggestions to improve on the idea.

In November, the proposal was selected as one of the top 10 finalists, making the Jewish schools eligible for $50,000 grants that were awarded to the three winners.

Although their project wasn't chosen as one of the three winners at a gala in February, Petersiel said two of the 26-member panel of venture capitalists – who pulled together grants, loan funds and equity investments to allocate to the projects – are still considering funding the proposal.

If an investor does commit to the project, the kids will be responsible for putting the idea into practice.

"They'll be the ones doing the work –measuring, deciding what they're measuring, how they're measuring and so on," Sumerlus said.

Regardless of where the project goes from here, Sumerlus said it's been a great experience.

"I know a lot more about improving carbon footprints than I did before."

She said the lessons the students are learning about environmental accountability falls in line with Jewish values.

"We're hoping that some of the project will be done through Judaic studies where they talk about passages about the environment," Sumerlus said.

"Taking care of your community and where you live… falls in line with the teaching that we do."

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Communities need a central agency for Jewish education

Seymour Epstein
Special to The CJN

In the history of federated Jewish communities across North America, some form of central agency for Jewish education has always been an integral part of communal organization.

These agencies used to be called boards or bureaus of Jewish education, and all large communities, along with many smaller cities, had one form or another of the same institution.

There are good reasons for the fact that most of these agencies changed their names in the last few years.

Although they, like the schools in their communities, were modelled after the public system, they never became the equivalent of a public board.

The mass immigration of Jews to North America coincided with the establishment and early development of public schooling, and resulted in the almost universal acceptance of the North American classroom as the model for Jewish schooling of all types.

As public schools established oversight boards, community leaders felt that a similar structure was needed for Jewish schooling, especially in the large communities.

Seymour Epstein

But, with few exceptions, these boards did not control curriculum, and none of them financed the schools as the public boards did.

Eventually, the various boards of New York, Boston, Toronto and other communities found their niche in the nexus of community and Jewish education. Some, like Cleveland and New York, produced learning material. Others, especially Toronto, stressed tuition support for less affluent families.

Sooner or later, most boards of Jewish education realized that they were not parallel to the public boards and changed their names to Central Agency for Jewish Education, the Jewish Education Project, Centre for Jewish Education, and the like.

Communities structured their Jewish education agencies in various modes.

In some communities, the board is a committee of the federation, in others an independent body funded primarily by federation, and in yet others a separate organ funded outside of central federation dollars.

What they all had in common was the mission of enhancing Jewish education in quantity and quality, and the vision of a literate and Jewish-identifying population. Recently, though, some of these agencies that were funded directly or indirectly by federations have either ceased to exist or have been restructured to become something other than their original form.

In arguing for their continuing existence (indeed, their growth and development), one might ask what the need is for such an agency if day schools, complementary schools, adult education, camps and youth groups share the mission and vision described above.

In fact, the educational institutions do operate with those same goals, but their perspective is radically different from that of a community agency.

Schools cater to a specific demographic of geography, ideology and income level, and while some schools are more open and pluralistic, they, too, have their boundaries.

But an important raison d'être of a central agency is its communal perspective. It must concern itself with all the Jews in the community – affiliated, less affiliated, and even the indifferent and disaffected.

Its overwhelming passion must be that no Jew gets cheated out of our rich heritage of values, literature, culture, spirituality and history, in whatever doses are suited to any particular family.

Where a specific school or camp is available and suitable, the family should be encouraged to enrol. And where a community demographic exists that does not fit what is available, every effort should be made to create an educational environment suitable for it.

It is this view from the top – which goes way beyond "the community" and searches for any and all communities of Jews – that is unique to a central agency.

Of course, Chabad has that view, but Lubavitch Chassidism isn't for everybody!

Which brings me to the next aspect of a central body for Jewish education: pluralism. Not tolerance or respect, but a 21st-century perspective on Jewish peoplehood that realizes that the modern period changed the face of Jewish life and that the post-modern age will change us even more.

Continued on page B17

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Agency must be committed to pluralism and inclusivity

Continued from page B16

Ever since the European Enlightenment, Jews have defined themselves in many different ways within spiritual, cultural, and national domains, and those multifaceted perspectives continue to develop and change in the 21st century.

The true pluralist will also realize that not every Jew need subscribe to the authenticity of all Jewish paths.

This kind of pluralism permits Jews of many different views to engage in meaningful dialogue without abandoning their own strongly held perspectives.

It permits a flexibility that leads to growth in thought and spirit. On the negative side, it admits that – strangely – intolerance is as rampant among liberals as it is among the less liberal.

True pluralism has its difficulties with fanaticism, but it also has the potential to create a new positive fanaticism of the pluralist sort.

Pluralism has already created its own communities, which must be on guard against the kind of self-righteousness that destroys the pluralist spirit.

A central agency, by 21st-century definition, must be totally committed to a pluralist and inclusive agenda while guarding the rights of individual employees and lay leaders to have and share their own Jewish path.

From a communal perspective, a central agency must be even more pluralistic than a "community school."

Another attribute of a central agency must be its dual concern for both identity and literacy.

There was a time, not long ago, when formal education was seen as leading to literacy, while the informal modes of camping, youth groups and educational travel were viewed as the realm of identity formation.

Much has been written about the failure of some schools to even produce literacy, and some Jewish camps do little in the domain of identity.

That, of course, deserves ongoing attention. More recently, it has been suggested that one without the other is just as counter-productive.

The various community arms of Jewish education, formal and informal, will continue to do what they do best, but, here again, a central agency has a unique role of co-ordinating the paths to literacy and identity by assisting its partners to blend the formal and the informal where possible.

This can only be accomplished by one community body that has influence in both spheres of education. Separating them is a recipe for keeping literacy and identity sterile, one without the other.

Every large community must fashion the central body according to its particular structure and needs, but all agencies of this sort should consider the following menu:

- In-service training and consultation for all educational institutions at all levels of staff: educators, management and administration;
- Educational planning for the community at large;
- Consultation and training for Jewish education lay leadership;
- Co-ordination and planning for central events such as Bible contests, festivals and other inter-school activities;
- Establishing and guiding "communities of practice" (groups of professionals who study together around common themes of concern) for like-minded educators;
- Funding that enhances the quality of education, and financial assistance that increases capacity by permitting more learners in the system;
- Cutting-edge, visionary thinking that challenges the status quo.

Some agencies will excel in certain domains where others fail, but an ongoing review with input from all stakeholders and wannabe partners should keep the body on track.

In this respect, there is a lesson to be learned from the tradition. The study of Torah is the mitzvah that leads to all other mitzvot, but it is also a mitzvah in its own right.

Certainly, the major goal of a central agency is to assist schools, camps and youth groups, but the process of running a central agency is also an educational experience for its staff, lay leaders and "clients" – the great variety of Jews in any contemporary community.

If we have learned anything from our history, it is that a community that cares deeply about Jewish education as a lifelong activity is a community that adapts well to changing realities, and ensures Jewish creativity and growth, not mere continuity.

Such a community, with the ongoing intervention of a central agency, will recognize that Jewish education is essential to all Jewish life, that it must pervade all the organs of the community, and that it is strategic. Indeed, as I have written and said many times, "Jewish education is the strategic plan of the Jewish people."

Seymour Epstein (Epi) is the former director of Toronto's Mercaz, formerly the Board of Jewish Education.

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New yeshiva offers tools to succeed

Michael Isenberg
Special to The CJN

Boys at Yeshivas Binyan HaTorah dive into Jewish studies as any yeshiva students would. But while other yeshivot teach Talmud and Halachah in depth, in Hebrew or Aramaic, Binyan HaTorah students study *The Path of the Just*, a book on Jewish ethics in English.

That's because Binyan HaTorah is a 10-student school for boys with mild learning disabilities.

"Our boys work hard, and they succeed in their studies," says Rabbi Moish Krocotski, principal and founder of the school.

In its second year, Binyan HaTorah is unique for being one of the only yeshivot in Toronto for students with exceptionalities.

With other yeshivot unable to accommodate students with special needs, parents within the religious community wanted a new school that would provide an environment that supports the students' needs.

They approached Rabbi Krocotski, who'd had a positive impact on many boys in his 10 years with the remedial program at Yeshiva Yesodei HaTorah.

Whether they have severe anxiety, attention deficit disorder, mild behavioural issues, or difficulty with memory, Binyan HaTorah enables its boys to succeed in a Torah-based environment.

The remedy, says Rabbi Krocotski, is accommodating the boys' learning needs.

The school has three Jewish studies teachers, allowing for small group classes and one-on-one attention. There is also an English teacher and a few others for general studies.

"We create engaging learning opportunities by doing fun activities," says assistant teacher Jason Renard. "Our classes are shorter than other yeshivas. We provide frequent breaks for them. We play games and create a welcoming environment."

Rabbi Krocotski says he even individualizes each student's tests to focus on his personal strengths.

"I love it," says 18-year-old Yerachmiel Weiss, a first-year student. "There is no point in testing us on things we don't know. It doesn't mean we are going to get perfect, because the tests are reasonable."

Renard says the key is tailoring the learning to each student's interest and capability. "I had a student who literally could not remember anything you taught him and yet he learned the first two aliyot of Parshat Noach. It was [the] one-on-one attention we're able to give students here. We only spent five minutes a day learning a few lines of the parshah, and would do the same lines the next day. Eventually he started picking it up. But it's also the relationship we created… I would say, 'How are you doing?' and not 'How is your learning going?' "

Rabbi Moish Krocotski studies Gemara with some of his students.

Despite learning non-traditional texts such as *The Path of the Just*, the boys do have classes on Halachah, Mishnah, Talmud and chumash. The difference is that they are mostly optional.

"[Teachers] allow us to choose our classes," says 17-year-old Chanoch Greenwood, a second-year student. "They encourage us to learn certain subjects or to learn in more depth, but they understand if we're not there yet."

Binyan HaTorah's mission statement strives "for students to seek success as productive members of klal Yisrael, as individuals committed to Torah learning and observance, and as contributing members of society."

Though the school is not certified to grant the Ontario Secondary School Diploma this year, Rabbi Krocotski plans to provide high school credits next year.

The school offers two general studies tracks: an academic stream to graduate high school and a "trades" stream for those who want to work right after school.

After its first-year success, the yeshiva moved from a single room at Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto to multiple rooms in the basement of Congregation B'nai Torah. The ultimate goal is for the school to have a building of its own, with more staff and students.

"All we need is funding," says Renard. "That is the only thing from making us huge."

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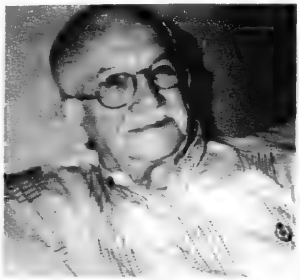
A legacy of education

Ilanna Sharon Mandel
Special to The CJN

In December, my father, Edward Yuditsky, lost a brave battle with cancer at age 91.

His legacy will be handed down for years to come: a career that spanned 50-plus years, educating generations of Jewish children in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Ontario.

In each school where he served as teacher or principal – sometimes both at the same time – he was revered as a progressive educator who believed in empowering the spirits and minds of his students.



Edward Yuditsky

Although his family was poor because of the Communist takeover of all their property in Russia, our dad, who immigrated with his family at age five, was determined to become a teacher.

As a young boy growing up in Winnipeg, he found sanctuary in his neighbourhood synagogue whenever the difficulties of the Depression and family hardships overwhelmed him.

Even though he could never afford college, he was mentored by other Jewish educators who recognized his potential.

As a relatively young man, he became principal of the Talmud Torah Elementary School in Winnipeg. After our family moved to Regina, he served as principal of the Hebrew school at Beth Jacob Synagogue. Later, when we moved to Toronto in 1974, my dad taught at Bialik Hebrew Day School.

His career ended only at the age of 85, when he retired after 13 years of leading the junior congregation at Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am Synagogue.

I vividly recall that he often answered my questions with a story, which would lead to more questions and ultimately more stories.

Dad strongly believed that the ability to sustain ourselves through our stories and learning has been, and continues to be, one of the paths to salvation for the Jewish people.

My father often said that the innate beauty of the Jewish faith, and our unique history, must never be forgotten.

I have met many of his students over the years who recalled a kind, warm-spirited man who influenced their own choices in life.

His ability to invigorate his students was evidenced by the number of them who came to his shivah. As well, former participants in Beth David's junior congregation have dedicated a Facebook page to the man who lovingly directed their services for so many years.

My father taught that a person does not have to be religious or even observant to appreciate the importance of education.

As a teacher and principal, my dad taught his students, including me, to open ourselves up to new ideas while continuing to cherish the old.

He believed that it is through our educational programs that we train the next generation to assume Jewish leadership. If young people lack an appreciation for their heritage, then we will lose part of the essence of who we are.

One of the ways in which our father encouraged continuing education was to engage both parents and students in the Junior Congregation.

Before his time at Beth David, he started junior congregations in Winnipeg and Regina.

The concept of co-ordinating a service for Jewish students up to bar/bat mitzvah age, together with their parents, encourages parents and their children to connect on a deeper level. They have an opportunity to embrace learning Torah and Haftorah together. As children prepare for their ascent into Jewish adulthood, parents are given the gift of re-embracing their own learning.

For more than half a century, our father ignited a passion for education in people of all ages. He often sought out obscure texts for new stories that would educate and entertain at the same time.

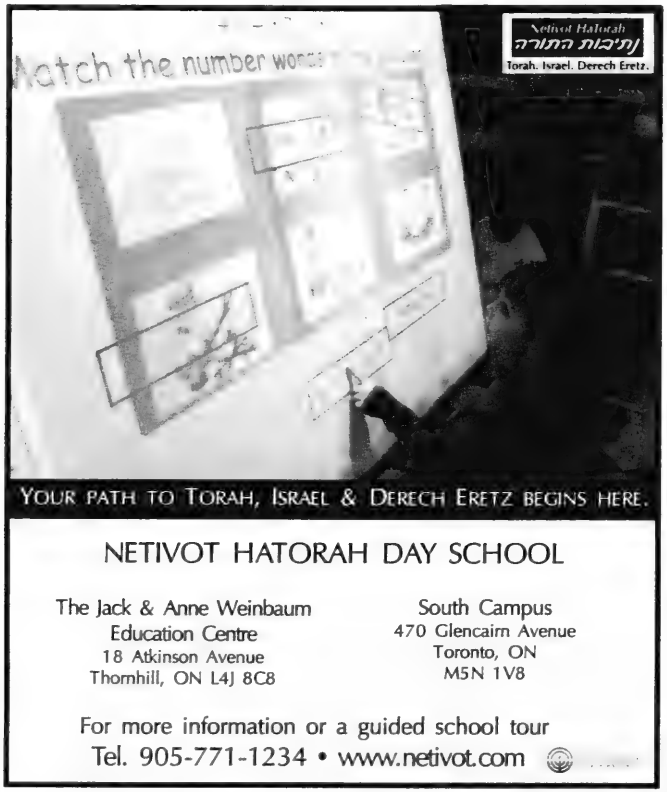
An easygoing man who genuinely loved children, he delighted in the opportunity to teach them something new.

His gift was a genuine love of knowledge, which he was determined to pass on to as many students as possible.

Personally, I will always cherish the fact that he taught me to chant the Haftorah. I sing it to this day, and it provides me with a valuable way of participating in my own synagogue in the Beach Hebrew Institute.

Perhaps my fondest memory will be of the only time we chanted together, in Beth David Synagogue last August on the occasion of my late mother's yarzheit.

The greatest lesson from my father's life is to remember who we are, and hold on to that great fabric of Jewish history that binds us together with a collective love of knowledge and learning.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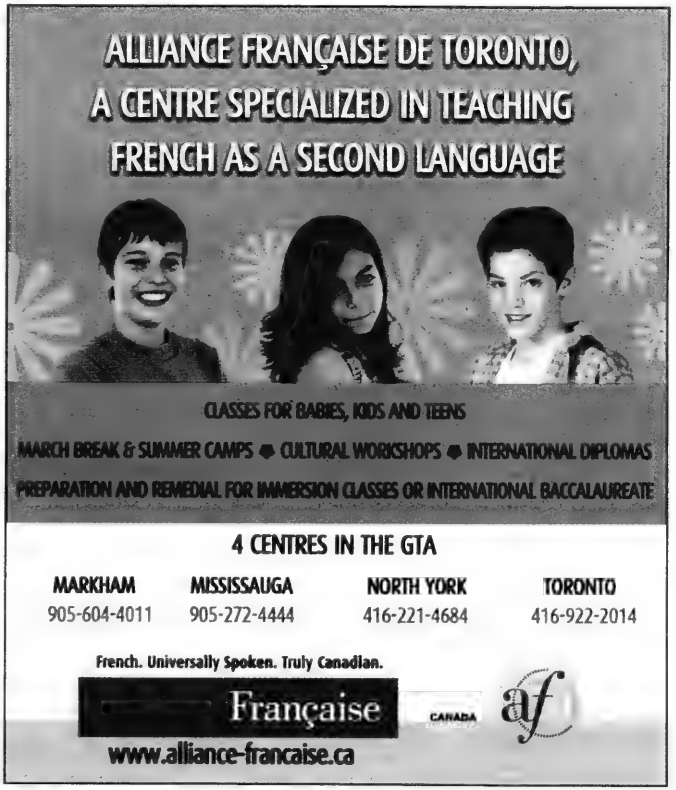
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Orthodox homeschoolers defend their choice

Jennifer M. MacLeod
Special to the CJN

We all try to make the best choices for our kids' education: academically, emotionally and spiritually. That's why many of my fellow homeschoolers were shocked to open the religious weekly *Yated Ne'eman* a few weeks ago to find eight rabbis, leading educators, speaking out against this choice.

The weekly Chinuch Roundtable began with an anonymous question from a reader hoping to withdraw her daughter from school for "a year away from the social pressures and stress."

Responses went far beyond socialization. Rabbi Yaakov Bender of Far Rockaway, N.Y., jumped in to call homeschooling "a fad bordering on epidemic," and each rabbi in turn seemed determined to curb the "epidemic" as forcefully as possible.

Rabbi Dovid Engel, principal of The Toronto Cheder, an Orthodox boys' elementary school, worried that parents might talk to homeschoolers who would "defend their choices instead of giving accurate pros and cons." Perhaps he means parents like me, who rave about how much our kids are learning and growing, and what a privilege it is to join them along the way.

I called Rabbi Engel to clarify, and he explained that while the Torah's responsibility to educate children falls on parents, as early as the first century CE, children were losing out. "Parents weren't educated enough, or [they] were labourers who didn't have the time that the children needed." Rabbi Yehoshuah ben Gamla stepped in to create elementary schools that grew into today's cheders and day schools.

Yet, Rabbi Engel said, "school is not only about academics. The most successful children… are those that do well socially." Socialization may be possible for some children through sports leagues, Boy Scouts and other extracurricular programs, but, "in a more haredi world… in our circles, that's not true."

As a principal, Rabbi Engel lists four essential ingredients for any teacher: "Foremost… is to have a connection with the rebbe [teacher]." He must also teach so that each student feels he can grasp the material, be punctual and act as a role model. Though Rabbi Engel says it's important to develop connections beyond the home, he admits that "parents are certainly all those four things."

However, he also wrote that "parents may fancy themselves as great teachers, but in reality they're not."

I suspect that, like paid teachers, some teaching parents truly are great and most are pretty good. Few are lazy, yet Rabbi Nosson Scherman, general editor of Artscroll Publications, who began his career in education, wrote that parents' "drive to learn and teach will dwindle as the weeks go by."

For six years, I schlepped my children 45 minutes to school, every school day. Did my "drive" to drop them off at school dwindle as the weeks went by? You bet, but they never missed a day. Some homeschool days are more inspiring than others, but you don't stop showing up, which is lucky, because the good days – a symphony concert where your toddler whispers excitedly, "That's a French horn!" or the moment your kid "gets" the link between Ancient Persia and the Purim story – are truly great.

Yet Rabbi Shneur Aisenstark of Beth Jacob Seminary in Montreal wrote that he'd only recommend homeschooling "when there is absolutely no other alternative," while Rabbi Bender suggested it be "left only for those who cannot function in a classroom – a handicapped or learning disabled child." Yael Aldrich, a Maryland homeschooler helping to organize the fourth annual Torah Home Education Conference in Baltimore this May, says, "These rabbis have never met a homeschooling family who have done it for positive reasons.

Jennifer MacLeod, left, homeschools her daughter Naomi Rivka.

"They've met families who are homeschooling because… a child is being bullied, a school can't deal with the special needs of a child. That's one way to come into homeschooling. Other people want to come to a place where their family is the centre of their life."

Homeschooling is hard work. Even those who "unschool" (where learning follows children's interests) usually educate themselves first, then plan and implement the best education for each child. Nobody should write this process off as a fad.

Rabbi Avrohom Neuberger, an educator and translator for Artscroll's Schottenstein Talmud, offered a rare quasi-positive insight, listing three modern rabbinic leaders who studied unconventionally: "I guess the gamble sometimes pays off." Rabbi Bender, too, sees homeschooling as playing dice with our kids' souls: "We have all seen too many *korbanos* [sacrifices]. Don't gamble with your children."

Beneath these responses is a veiled threat that children who aren't in Torah schools could be lost to Judaism. No parent wants to gamble with her kids, but faith that the education system will keep kids religious is also a gamble. If even one school offered a guarantee that graduates would love and live Torah forever, I'd sign up my kids in a heartbeat.

Aldrich, who began educating her four children at home with the blessing of an Orthodox rabbi who used to homeschool his own kids, says, "We don't have any control over what happens to the *neshamas* [souls] that HaShem entrusted us with. We don't say… they're going to be chassidic if we're chassidic.

"We put our energy into them, try our best to do that, and daven a lot." She hopes her children will appreciate the effort she puts into their education, and grow into "Ovdei [servants of] HaShem in their own way… whether they look or act different from me."

Aldrich sees the rabbis' responses as insecurity. "I was disappointed that they felt a need to belittle a different method of educating Jewish children." Rabbi Engel stresses that this was not the rabbis' intention: "A lot of thought goes into our answers."

Despite the controversy, plans for the Torah home education conference continue. Aldrich hopes homeschooling will grow, inspiring more parents "to take full responsibility for their children's education." Yet there's no threat to established institutions, she says. "Most people don't live a lifestyle in which homeschooling will be honestly possible… We're going to need those schools."

Just as she has learned from friends who are classroom educators, Aldrich hopes the educational world will find something to learn from homeschoolers. "More honest give and take will be good for everybody."

For more information on the Torah Home Education Conference, visit www.eventbee.com/v/torahhomeeducation.

Community urged to 'come up with creative solutions'

Continued from page B9

About four years ago, UJA Federation determined that, given the number of students in the day school system, it would need an endowment of approximately $750 million to cut the costs in half across the board, Shulman said.

"The answer has to be to work with parents in the schools to build on some alternative options," Shulman said.

Wayne Levin, who in the 1990s was involved in lobbying for government funding for Jewish day schools, has three children, ages 13, 17 and 20, all of whom were pulled out of their Jewish day schools for issues not relating to tuition.

Taking them out was "very painful.

"I wanted them to have a good Jewish grounding, which I didn't get," Levin said. However, he added, "Every year the form letter goes out with yet another increase… I can't say I miss paying."

Instead of full-day Jewish school, the Levins opted for alternatives such as after-school tutoring and Jewish youth groups, but, he noted, they're "not ideal."

Joseph (Yossi) Adler, a lawyer and father of three whose wife is a trustee in bankruptcy, said day school tuition can run to more than $55,000 for three children.

Despite their solid dual incomes, "We find it difficult," said Adler, who identifies as modern Orthodox and as a "parent activist" on tuition and other communal matters.

As well, he noted, there is – for his family and many others – the cost of eating kosher, paying synagogue dues, sending kids to Jewish summer camp and owning a house in Toronto. "That's where it becomes prohibitive for a lot of people."

It's "a common thing" for parents to refinance their homes, he said.

In the Orthodox world there's communal pressure to send children to Jewish day school, he added. "There's a message that's sent to your friends, relatives and community members that you're not a committed Jew if you don't."

As well, he said, parents want their children to have Jewish friends and a stronger Jewish identity, and even modern Orthodox Jews, not just haredim, are concerned about influences from the outside world at non-Jewish schools.

Tuition has become a form of birth control, he added.

Adler believes high tuition costs will have a detrimental impact on contributions to UJA and other communal organizations. "If our leaders continue to announce to the world that we subsidize Jewish education more than any federation, that alone will not cut it. That does not make an impact on the community.

"If the community doesn't come up with creative solutions, then parents will make their own decisions," he warned. "Increasingly, people are thinking about public school as an option."

Leonard, a father of five grown children who didn't want his real name used, said he and his wife had "no way around" asking for a subsidy. Over the years, he said, the subsidies started "drying up" and he had to pay an increasing percentage of tuition.

He and his wife made do by using a line of credit and renewing their mortgage. "I didn't send my kids to school. My house sent the kids to school," he said, noting that he has no other investments, and the house still has a "sizable" mortgage even though his kids are out of the school system. "Fortunately, property values keep going up. What happens if they go down?... The fact that we still have the debt is kind of unsettling."

Pulling their children from Jewish day school wasn't an option for the Orthodox family. "We're committed to Yiddishkeit. Our kids needed to get a Jewish education."

He believes that other forms of Jewish education don't offer "the same kind of Jewish grounding" as day school. That's the sad part of it… A day school education is something that sticks with people."

"We don't live exorbitantly," said Leonard, who described his salary as "pretty good." Instead of vacations, he added, "we basically did local stuff." As well, their kids didn't attend summer camp, because of the cost, and extracurricular activities were limited.

"It wasn't until years later that they told us it affected their social life. They weren't part of the *chevra*."

He added: "Most of the people I work with have a cottage, a boat. I think to myself, they invested in that; I invested in my kids. I don't feel bitter, but I guess I felt the unfairness.

"I'm not angry at the system. I'm very grateful for what we got that helped us get through."

He said the financial burden for day school parents has grown proportionately larger since his parents' day.

Leonard, who has served on a tuition committee himself, said "I realized they did the best they could for me, but it still wasn't enough."

Sadly, he noted, there are parents "who try to bilk the system… on paper it would look like they earned nothing."

The ultimate answer, he said, is that the government of Ontario "has to realize the inequity" of day school parents paying taxes for education and not getting any funding in return.

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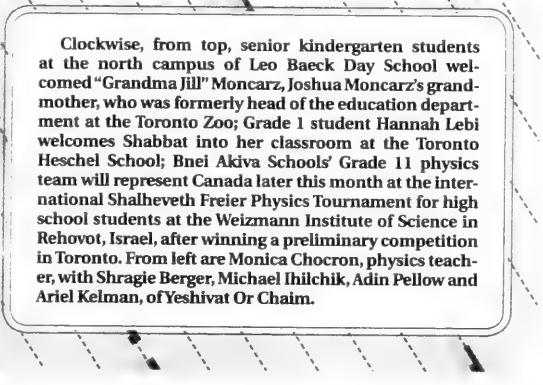

Clockwise, from top, senior kindergarten students at the north campus of Leo Baeck Day School welcomed "Grandma Jill" Moncarz, Joshua Moncarz's grandmother, who was formerly head of the education department at the Toronto Zoo; Grade 1 student Hannah Lebi welcomes Shabbat into her classroom at the Toronto Heschel School; Bnei Akiva Schools' Grade 11 physics team will represent Canada later this month at the international Shalheveth Freier Physics Tournament for high school students at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot, Israel, after winning a preliminary competition in Toronto. From left are Monica Chocron, physics teacher, with Shragie Berger, Michael Ihilchik, Adin Pellow and Ariel Kelman, of Yeshivat Or Chaim.

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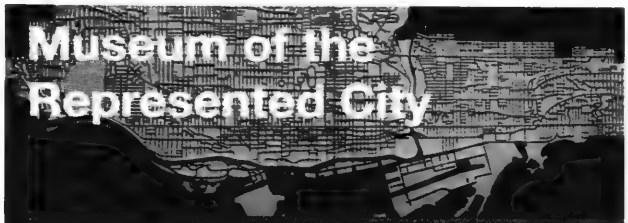

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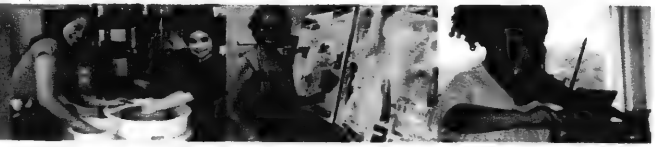

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This Week

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Age no barrier to sharing knowledge

Israeli President Shimon Peres last week met with Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, left, and Google co-founder Sergey Brin, both of whom have helped change the world of technology and information sharing. The 88-year-old Peres visited Facebook headquarters and enlisted the 27-year-old Zuckerberg's help in launching a personal Facebook page aimed at creating dialogue with young Arabs who live in countries that lack diplomatic ties with Israel. While still in California, Peres met with Sergey Brin, 38, at Google's headquarters, where Brin showed Peres a prototype of the driverless car that Google will soon be presenting to the public. *[Christophe Wu and Israel Sun photos]*

Abbas threatens to dismantle the PA

Barak Ravid
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — The Palestinian issue has been pushed to the margins of Israeli and world media attention in recent weeks, as well as to that of the diplomatic agenda.

The massacre in Syria, the presidential elections in Russia and the increasing tension with Iran have held the attention of Washington, the United Nations and western Europe.

The lack of interest in the Palestinian issue was a source of frustration for Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and his advisers. And the fact that Israeli officials were delighted that the Palestinian issue barely came up during Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's talks with U.S. President Barack Obama last week only increased the frustration in Ramallah.

Analysis

Western diplomats and Israeli officials said that despite the fact the issue has been sidelined, officials in Ramallah are planning to take a diplomatic step that has been worked on diligently last week.

Abbas and his advisers finished putting together a letter to be delivered to Netanyahu, most likely by the end of this week. The letter will reportedly place the blame on Israel for the freeze in the peace process and will offer an ultimatum to Netanyahu.

Continued on page 40

Mahmoud Abbas

Vayakhel – Pekudei
Candlelighting: 7:07
Havdalah: 8:12
Greater Toronto Area

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Rockets from Gaza strike 40 km south of Tel Aviv – See page 39

CANADA

Store Owner Dies

MONTREAL — Steven Kirman, founder and owner of the iconic Steve's Music Store, which sold everything from amplifiers to guitar picks, died March 3 after a brief illness at age 65. Customers at the store, established in 1965 on St. Antoine (then Craig) Street West near a string of pawn shops, included Céline Dion, Sam Roberts and April Wine, as well as many other professional and amateur musicians. The store became known throughout North America and expanded to nine locations at its peak, including stores in Ottawa and Toronto.

IAW Condemned

OTTAWA — Citizenship Minister Jason Kenney condemned Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW), the annual anti-Israel event that takes place on many Canadian university campuses, saying it creates "a toxic environment that prevents meaningful dialogue." He was joined by interim Liberal Leader Bob Rae, who said IAW singles out and demonizes one country while ignoring atrocities elsewhere, including in Syria. Conservative York Centre MP Mark Adler also called the event "hate-filled" and a "smear campaign," while Toronto city councillor James Pasternak called IAW "offensive and repugnant."

More Money Sought

WINNIPEG — The charitable arm of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights CMHR), now being built in Winnipeg, has raised its fundraising goal from $150 million to $200 million, its head, Gail Asper, told the *Globe and Mail*. The group has raised $130 million so far, on top of $100 million pledged by Ottawa and $64 million in total from the governments of Manitoba and Winnipeg. Originally $265 million, building costs have risen to more than $350 million. The national museum was the dream of Asper's late father and will be the first outside Ottawa.

DA Probes Infant Death After Brit Ritual

NEW YORK — The Brooklyn District Attorney's office is investigating the death of an infant from herpes following a controversial circumcision-related rite as a possible criminal matter, a newspaper reported.

A spokesperson for DA Charles Hynes told the New York *Jewish Week* that the office's Crimes Against Children Bureau is investigating.

The report of the death of the unidentified infant last Sept. 28 at Brooklyn's Maimonides Medical Center apparently sparked the investigation. The cause of death was listed as "disseminated herpes simplex virus Type 1, complicating ritual circumcision with oral suction," according to the *New York Daily News*.

The report comes more than six years after a controversy erupted in New York City over the haredi practice of *metzitzah b'peh*, which involves a mohel orally suctioning blood from a circumcision wound. The controversy arose when an infant died from herpes after *metzitzah b'peh*. The baby's twin was also infected. Another child circumcised the previous year by the same mohel also contracted herpes. The mohel denied being the cause.

The New York health department then issued a warning against the practice, which haredi leaders called unnecessary and unwelcome. Haredi leaders have resisted calls to replace direct oral suction with alternative approaches, such as the use of a sterile tube.

WORLD

Hoops Team Loses

DALLAS — An Orthodox Houston high school lost its Saturday night state basketball final 46-42 March 3 in Dallas after fighting for the right not to play on Shabbat. Robert M. Beren Academy had won a semi-final game the previous day that had been scheduled for Friday night. It and the final were moved after Beren's captain, along with teammates and parents, filed suit against the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools. The athletic league had earlier rejected two appeals by Beren Academy to move the games, saying Beren Academy knew tournament games are played on Friday nights and Saturday when it joined in 2009.

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CIJA setting up community security force

Doron Horowitz

Focus to remain on passive observation

Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf
Staff Reporter

The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) is looking for a few good men and women.

It's organizing a recruitment drive to find Jewish volunteers to train in the arts of passive observation and deterrence to increase the sense of security in Canada's major Jewish population centres.

The initiative is called the "community security network" and is touted as being similar to a neighbourhood watch program, only on a national scale.

Doron Horowitz, CIJA's director of national security infrastructure and head of the new initiative, told *The CJN* that the project aims to have the Canadian Jewish community take more responsibility for its own security and project the image that it's looking out for itself.

"We will be less reliant on external [security] resources and will… complement law enforcement," he said. "This is the Jewish community taking an active role in [its own] security on a civilian level."

Horowitz will begin training 25 volunteers in Toronto starting next month before eventually recruiting members in Ottawa, Hamilton, Winnipeg, Regina, Calgary and Vancouver, although not necessarily in that order.

(One notable exception is Montreal, where the Jewish community has its own security program in place, for which Horowitz said he's serving as an adviser.)

Recruits will not carry or use weapons, and training sessions in Toronto will take place at unnamed facilities around town, he said.

Horowitz – a security specialist and a decorated ex-Israeli Defence Forces officer, with specialized training in counter-terrorism – said he hopes to bring in local police to speak to the volunteers to help them understand their role and limitations.

Most of the training, he said, won't be physical in nature. Instead, it will focus on preventative measures and methods.

Continued on page 12

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Save the Christians

From the editor's desk...

Israel's ambassador to the United States, Michael Oren, is a compelling figure. Soldier, scholar, writer, thinker, the American-born diplomat is a distinguished and imposing figure.

Since his Washington appointment almost three years ago, he has frequently proved his strength of intellect and mettle of character representing the Jewish state to the decision-makers of the American administration, the legislators of Congress, fellow diplomats, hyper-inquisitive, cynical media and even thuggish, derisvely heckling university students. He is a man of exceptional capabilities. He writes and speaks authoritatively.

It is for that reason, therefore, important to call readers' attention to an op-ed essay Oren wrote last week for the *Wall Street Journal* called "Israel and the plight of Mideast Christians."

In crisp, concise prose, Oren tells readers of the rising dangers for and the declining numbers of Christians throughout the Middle East, save in one country: Israel.

"The church in Bethlehem had survived more than 1,000 years, through wars and conquests, but its future now seemed in jeopardy," Oren begins the article. "Spray-painted all over its ancient stone walls were the Arabic letters for Hamas. The year was 1994 and the city was about to pass from Israeli to Palestinian control. I was meeting with the church's clergy as an Israeli government adviser on inter-religious affairs. They were despondent but too frightened to file a complaint. The same Hamas thugs who had desecrated their sanctuary were liable to take their lives.

"The trauma of those priests is now commonplace among Middle Eastern Christians."

Oren writes that Christians now comprise less than five per cent of the Middle East's population. A century ago, Christians constituted some 20 per cent. And even this meagre five per cent, he sadly points out, is a rapidly declining figure.

Citing facts and figures Oren brings shocking illustrations of rabidly anti-Christian behaviour in, for example, Egypt, Iraq and Iran.

His most elaborate illustrations however relate to the harassment of the Christian communities in the Palestinian territories. "Since the Hamas takeover of Gaza in 2007, half the Christian community has fled. Christmas decorations and public displays of crucifixes are forbidden. In a December 2010 broadcast, Hamas officials exhorted Muslims to slaughter their Christian neighbours. Rami Ayad, owner of Gaza's only Christian bookstore, was murdered, his store reduced to ash."

"The West Bank is also hemorrhaging Christians," Oren adds. "Once 15 per cent of the population, they now make up less than two per cent." But by pointing to the overall economic prosperity of key Arab cities in the West Bank, he effectively skewers the specious and simply incorrect arguments that attribute the Christian exodus from the West Bank to Israeli administrative and economic policies.

"Under Israeli auspices, [Bethlehem's] Christian population grew by 57 per cent. But under the Palestinian Authority since 1995, those numbers have plummeted. Palestinian gunmen seized Christian homes – compelling Israel to build a protective barrier between them and Jewish neighbourhoods – and then occupied the Church of the Nativity, looting it and using it as a latrine. Today, Christians comprise a mere one-fifth of their holy city's population."

In writing about the distressing plight of Mideast Christians, Oren echoes an alarm sounded recently by many observers and experts. In the February 2012 edition of *Commentary*, former foreign correspondent for *Time* and currently professor of history at Patrick Henry College, David Aikman, writes about the worldwide persecution of Christians, specifically emphasizing the Christian communities of China. His description, however, of the persecution of Christians in Saudi Arabia and Iran are quite horrifying.

Aikman laments the failure of western governments "to come to terms with its responsibilities in the protection of these people [persecuted Christian communities]." And he condemns U.S. President Barack Obama for failing to hold accountable "offending regimes."

Oren pointedly characterizes the plight of the Christians in the Middle East as "the extinction of the Middle East's Christian communities" and describes it as "an injustice of historic magnitude."

Only one country in the Middle East, he reminds readers – Israel – promises to protect the Christians within its midst and guarantee equal rights of worship and access to all Christian holy places.

That the Jewish state does so imperfectly, he emphasizes, does not abate in the slightest way the country's commitment enshrined in its Declaration of Independence to "ensure the complete equality of all its citizens irrespective of religion."

It is an ironic yet humanity-affirming irony of history that it is the Jews in 2012 who are at the forefront saving Christians.

– MBD

SeeJN

The Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto's Kimel Family Education Centre recently held its first-ever Israel Advocacy Week. Organized by the school's student-run Israel Advocacy Club, it featured student displays, Hebrew class presentations, lunchtime speakers, and spontaneous debates held in the cafeteria. The goals were to inform students about the importance of supporting Israel during "Israeli Apartheid Week." Pictured are members of the student leadership team, from left, Dean Walt, Daniel Lazarev,and Jacob Pesachov, with teachers Mahra Hart, left, and Yael Amar.

Voter fraud alleged in Toronto riding

Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf
Staff Reporter

Elections Canada may or may not be investigating reports of alleged voter fraud in the riding of Eglinton-Lawrence during the 2011 federal election.

A March 7 CBC News report unearthed evidence that some 2,700 unregistered voters got on the voters' list in the riding – won by Conservative Party candidate Joe Oliver, who defeated longtime Liberal MP Joe Volpe – by providing either false addresses or no addresses on their voting cards, which is in violation of Elections Canada rules.

Oliver won the riding by more than 4,000 votes.

Diane Benson, a spokesperson for Elections Canada, told *The CJN* said it's policy to "not deny nor confirm" whether her agency is investigating the allegations.

Oliver told reporters last week he would co-operate with Elections Canada if it decides to launch an investigation, but said he had not been contacted by the federal elections body.

Marianna Gagliardo, a constituency assistant at Oliver's riding office, said she was aware of the allegations but as of last Friday, had not been contacted by Elections Canada about the matter.

Meanwhile, Volpe has referred all questions on the subject to his lawyer, Tony Pascale.

Neither Volpe nor Pascale could be reached for comment, but Pascale told CBC last week that he wanted Elections Canada to investigate, because there were "an inordinately high number of voters registering who were not on the voters list in order to cast ballots."

Volpe had held Eglinton-Lawrence for the Liberals since 1988.

According to the 2006 census, the riding has a population of about 110,000, 39 per cent of whom were immigrants. About 17 per cent were Jewish and 11 per cent Italian.

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Panelists discuss ways to support Israel

Vicky Tobianah
Special to The CJN

A panel of three community leaders discussed Zionism and Israel at Temple Sinai recently.

More than 50 people attended the March 5 event to hear the panellists' views on the topic, "Wherever We Stand, We Stand with Israel: Exploring Pathways to Support Israel."

Rabbi Michael Dolgin

Temple Sinai's Rabbi Michael Dolgin, who moderated the discussion, said that the panel was particularly timely, as Israeli Apartheid Week was taking place on many university campuses and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had recently visited Ottawa.

"What better time to have these three people here to give different windows on how to support Israel," he said.

The panel included Paul Michaels, director of research and media relations for the Canadian Council for Israel and Jewish Advocacy (CIJA); Jay Brodbar, executive director of the New Israel Fund (NIF) of Canada, and Anita Bromberg, national director of legal affairs for B'nai Brith.

CIJA is the "advocacy arm of the federations," said Michaels, and helps strengthen the Canadian-Israeli relationship through political and cultural missions to Israel, seminars on the Middle East and speaking out against boycott campaigns.

NIF Canada deals primarily with Israel's internal challenges, such as the growing gap between the rich and the poor, religious pluralism and tolerance. The fund does this by supporting Israeli NGOs that strengthen civil and human rights.

B'nai Brith, Bromberg said, represents the interests of the Jewish community to governments and NGOs.

Rabbi Dolgin asked the panellists what each organization does to strengthen the Zionist cause.

Bromberg said that "B'nai Brith is working hard to remind the community that the Zionist dream is alive and well."

Brodbar said NIF strengthens the "Zionist cause in a complementary way – by supporting Israelis."

Bromberg, however, criticized NIF Canada for what she called its "wavering support of Israel."

Brodbar replied that "sometimes we confuse strength with rigidity," maintaining that "things are not black and white, but you have to have some flexibility that others may see as wavering [support]."

Paul Michaels

Bromberg also criticized NIF Canada for funding Arab NGOs and for supporting the Goldstone report, which accused Israeli forces of war crimes during the Gaza war.

Brodbar defended his organization, saying that "the New Israel Fund of Canada should not apologize for what we do. Twenty per cent of Israeli citizens are Arabs, and they experience systemic discrimination.

"We work with Israeli NGOs to address these inequalities, so they don't have to turn to Muslim extremism," he added.

Brodbar said that internal challenges, such as social inequalities, must be resolved for Israel to be strong enough to deal with external threats.

"Eighty-four per cent of Israelis were supportive of the summer demonstrations, which called for more equality in Israeli society," he said, proving that these internal issues must be dealt with before they are exacerbated.

Michaels spoke about the rising challenges in supporting Israel. "The biggest challenge facing CIJA right now is the mounting campaign to delegitimize Israel – this new form of antisemitism," he said.

Brodbar stressed the need to protect Israel's young democracy. "No one is saying Israel doesn't have external pressures, but what we're saying is those aren't the only pressures, and if you care about Israel being a democratic, Israeli state, you have to also deal with the internal pressures," he said.

"We may have disagreements on the means of accomplishing our goals, but not on our love and support for Israel."

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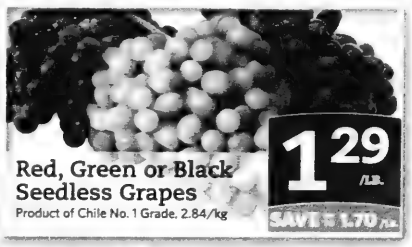

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UJA goes SMASH to help underprivileged kids

Susan Minuk
Special to The CJN

Comedian Martin Short hosted the first annual SMASH celebrity ping-pong tournament, a United Jewish Appeal fundraiser that raised more than $100,000 to send underprivileged children to summer camp.

"I love ping-pong. UJA is an amazing cause, and there is nothing nobler than helping kids enjoy a summer camp experience," Short said at the March 1 event at a nightclub in downtown Toronto.

"I went to Camp Wanakita in Haliburton, Ont., and when I wasn't at camp, I spent my time in cottage country. I have great memories of camp, and that is why I am here to give countless Jewish children that experience, too."

Jay Silber and Julie Albert United Jewish Appeal co-chairs with host Martin Short ***[Susan Minuk photo]***

Comedian Carla Collins, one of many celebrities and professional athletes at the event produced by Solutions with Impact, said, "I am from Sault St. Marie, Northern Ontario, so I grew up on a lot of ping-pong.

"There are three things I always support for charity events: children, women and dogs. When [Solutions with Impact president] Joel Hock, approached me, I was happy to fly in to Toronto from Los Angeles."

Some 300 people attended the fundraiser. The ping-pong tournament consisted of 26 teams of three people each, playing four doubles matches over the course of approximately four hours, including a championship game with the highest fundraising teams. The top 10 highest fundraising teams played with a celebrity teammate.

Team Frodismash, comprising Dani Frodis, Jeff Stal and Jacob Zaidenberg, who raised $8,564.37, won the tournament. Their celebrity player was former Toronto Maple Leaf captain, Wendel Clark.

Throughout the evening, music flowed and the energy escalated. Ping-pong balls flew in midair as the crowd, watching displays of skill, screamed and applauded their teams, while sipping cocktails, drinking beer and sampling hors d'oeuvres. Guests also bid on items in both silent and live auctions.

Julie Albert, who co-chaired the event with Jay Silber, said, "The fact that both of us are ardent ping-pong enthusiasts didn't hurt, but, more than that, it was all about raising money to help send underprivileged Jewish kids to summer camp, an experience so many of us take for granted and so many of us have benefited from."

Dan Horowitz, editorial director of the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, said it was "great to see so many members of Jewish Toronto – of all backgrounds and ages – come together to have a great time, shmooze, and, of course, play some serious ping-pong, all to support this event which is all about helping to build and strengthen Jewish identity among our next generation by helping them experience Jewish summer camp.

"I hear from so many people today that Jewish summer camp was their bridge, their connection, to Jewish life, where they made lasting friendships, and great memories," he added.

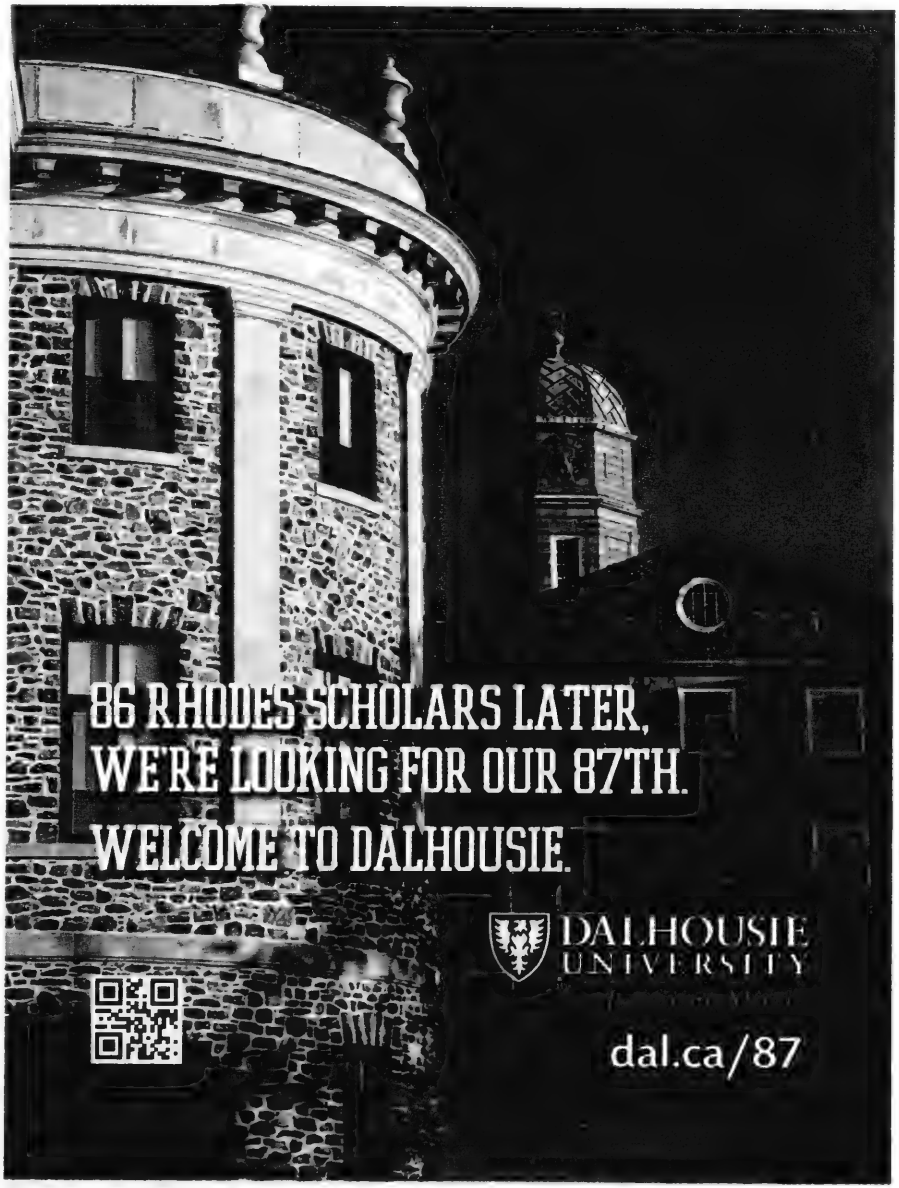
John Salley, former NBA player and current broadcaster, said that "you strengthen people... by helping those who are not as [fortunate] as you may be or think you are."

Actor William Baldwin said, "First and foremost, the organization UJA brought me here to assist kids to attend summer camp. A very interesting concept – speaking as one who was a poor Irish kid who never went away to camp in his entire life."

Les Dukes, an information technology consultant, said, "I am an avid player. I even brought my own paddle and have been working very hard practising to get ready and prepare for the tournament.

"It is awesome to see the celebrity support tonight, to be able to raise money for kids to have a summer at camp, an experience they may not have been able to enjoy."

Also attending the fundraiser were actor Ellen Dubin, former Leafs and Calgary Flames player Gary Leeman, actor Kiowa Gordon and Toronto Raptor Amir Johnson. Singer Chantal Kreviazuk wowed the audience with her performance at the event.



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Déjà vu of sorrow and suffering

Palestinian terrorists are once again firing rockets into southern Israel.

As of this writing on March 12, over a four-day period beginning last Friday, they had sent some 110 rockets into civilian-populated areas of the south. The terrorists had actually launched 150 rockets, but 40 of them landed inside Gaza.

Due to technical failures Sunday in Israel's Iron Dome missile interception system, two Grad rockets struck Be'er Sheva. One smashed into a school that was, thankfully, empty at the time due to the cancellation of all classes. The other struck a parked car in a residential neighborhood. No one one was killed. Eight people were wounded, one severely. Some 15 houses suffered major damage. Despite the failure to intercept the Be'er Sheva'bound rockets, the Iron Dome had intercepted and obliterated 40 rockets by Sunday night. More than 90 rockets had crashed in Israeli territory during that time, but the Iron Dome is intended to bring down only those rockets identified as heading toward populated areas.

And Israel, appropriately, retaliated.

JTA reported Sunday night that the Israeli Air Force had struck 21 targets in Gaza, including 13 air strikes to halt rocket-launching attempts and eight attacks against weapons factories and storage sites. Some 18 Palestinians, including a 14-year-old, have been killed by the air force attacks. The terrorists launched their latest barrage in retaliation, they said, for the targeted killing by Israel of Zuhir al-Qaisi, the leader of Popular Resistance Committee (PRC). Qaisi was said to be planning a potentially catastrophic terror attack on Israel's southern border. He was also the mastermind behind the attack last year near Eilat that killed eight Israelis.

The self-righteous, indignant finger-pointing at Israel accompanied by shouts of disproportionality have already sounded from many rostrums. Israel was right to pre-empt the impending Qa'isi planned terror incident.

The plain, irreducible truth of the matter is that the terror groups that operate in Gaza such as the PRC and Islamic Jihad – in addition of course to the Hamas Gaza government – take their cue from the ruling Hamas chiefs. Indeed, Hamas could shut them down at will were it their will to do so.

It has been seven years since Israel withdrew entirely from Gaza. No Israeli soldier or civilian is to be found there. And yet, the Hamas rulers have directed their people to commit themselves to only one national project: the destruction of their Jewish neighbour. It is likely that more rockets will fall in Israel over the coming days and that Israel will respond with its far more accurate, deadly force.

This is what the Palestinian leaders have brought and continue to bring to their people, a disheartening drama, déjà vu, of sorrow, suffering and despair.

25 years ago in *The CJN*

Canada's 85,000-strong Ukrainian community raised $120,000 to help accused war criminal John Demjanjuk cover his legal costs. The Ukrainian-born Demjanjuk, a retired Cleveland-area autoworker, was on trial in Israel after having been accused of being Ivan the Terrible, a guard at the Nazi death camp Treblinka.

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Withholding support to universities

When I received the annual call for pledges to continue to support three Canadian universities, I had this to say: "I will resume my support when I see the development of a policy ensuring that your university will no longer hide behind free speech in order to allow propaganda against the State of Israel and intimidation of Jewish students."

Gila Martow
Thornhill, Ont.

* * *

Marriages at the temple

In the article "New Montreal rabbi hopes to 'open doors'" (March 8), on the hiring of Reform Rabbi Lisa Grushcow at Montreal's Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom, Janice Arnold writes that the temple allows same-sex and interfaith marriages to be performed there, if there is a commitment to create a Jewish home. The Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), the Reform movement's rabbinical association in North America, has consistently opposed interfaith marriage (intermarriage). In their journal *American Reform Responsa* (Vol. XC, 1980) on the topic *Reform Judaism and Mixed Marriage*, they quote a resolution passed in Atlanta in 1973 that reads: "The Central Conference of American Rabbis recalling its stand in 1909 that mixed marriage is contrary to Jewish tradition and should be discouraged, now declares its opposition to participation by its members in any ceremony which solemnizes a mixed marriage."

In performing interfaith marriages, Temple Emanu-El goes against the Reform movement's own stance on this issue. In a National Jewish Population Survey in 2000, by Antony Gordon and Richard Horowitz, it was shown that 53 per cent of young Jews belonging to the Reform movement marry out. With such an attitude toward intermarriage, is it any wonder?

Rabbi Mordechai Bulua
Montreal

* * *

Torah egalitarianism

Regarding the article "Beth Tikvah implements Torah egalitarianism" (Feb. 16), to be precise, Beth Tikvah Synagogue has marked Shabbat morning bnot mitzvah during the Torah service since the congregation's inception. A bat mitzvah chanted the Haftorah and its accompanying blessings but did not receive an aliyah. Her father received the Maftir Aliyah at the Torah. Secondly, with kudos to Betty Rumberg, the first non-bat mitzvah adult woman to receive an aliyah at the Torah at Beth Tikvah was Gail Sandler, following the promise of a woman receiving an aliyah at the Torah on a donation dare from the rabbi during the Yom Kippur War. The promise was fulfilled.

Lorne Hanick
Toronto

* * *

Remembering the Struma

On Feb. 24, Romania paid homage to the 768 Romanian Jews who lost their lives 70 years ago trying to escape war-torn Europe for British-mandated Palestine on board the ill-fated SS Struma, which was sunk by a Soviet submarine in the Black Sea. However, Romania still has far to go to atone for its crimes against humanity during that dark period of our history. During World War II, the pro-Nazi, fascist and antisemitic regime of Marshal Ion Antonescu was directly involved in the murder of as many as 400,000 innocent Jewish men, women and children in Romania and throughout Ukraine and Moldova. Romania has yet to officially acknowledge, apologize and/or offer reparations of any kind for its past heinous and barbaric behaviour toward the Jewish People. Perhaps, it's about time that it did.

Ralph Schleichkorn
Montreal

LET THEM GO...

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz

* * *

Old Toronto

I read Ellen Weiser's article "Memories of old Toronto" with a smile on my face (March 8, cjnews.com). Taking a walk down gastro memory lane warmed my heart. I lived just north of Wilson and Bathurst, so we didn't share all the same eating experiences, but my favourite by far was Basil's Restaurant. Every Sunday night, my dad would drive down Avenue Road to University Avenue, turn left on to Gerrard Street, and always find a free parking spot, and I do mean free. We would patiently wait in the line until the maitre d' called the infamous "party of four" before we were seated in the best booths in the city. My meal was always the hamburger special, with chocolate cream pie for dessert. Weiser was right on with the rice pudding for the parents. Thanks for bringing back this wonderful memory for a native Torontonian.

Louise Gale-Miller
Thornhill, Ont.

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We must remain masters of our fate

Following are excerpts from an address by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) Policy Conference on March 5.

Tonight, I'd like to talk to you about a subject that no one has been talking about recently: Iran. Every day, I open the newspapers and read about these red lines and these timelines. I read about what Israel has supposedly decided to do, or what Israel might do.

Well, I'm not going to talk to you about what Israel will do or will not do. I never talk about that. But I do want to talk to you about the dangers of a nuclear-armed Iran. I want to explain why Iran must never be allowed to develop nuclear weapons.

President [Barack] Obama has reiterated his commitment to prevent that from happening. He stated clearly that all options are on the table, and that American policy is not containment.

Well, Israel has exactly the same policy. We are determined to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons. We leave all options on the table, and containment is definitely not an option. The Jewish state will not allow those who seek our destruction to possess the means to achieve that goal. A nuclear-armed Iran must be stopped.

Amazingly, some people refuse to acknowledge that Iran's goal is to develop nuclear weapons. You see, Iran claims to do everything it's doing, that it's enriching uranium to develop medical isotopes. Yeah, that's right. A country that builds underground nuclear facilities, develops intercontinental ballistic missiles [ICBM], manufactures thousands of centrifuges and that absorbs crippling sanctions is doing all that in order to advance... medical research. So you see, when that Iranian ICBM is flying through the air to a location near you, you've got nothing to worry about. It's only carrying medical isotopes...

Fortunately, President Obama and most world leaders understand that the claim that Iran's goal is not to develop nuclear weapons is simply ridiculous.

Yet incredibly, some are prepared to accept an idea only slightly less preposterous: that we should accept a world in which the ayatollahs have atomic bombs. Sure, they say, Iran is cruel, but it's not crazy. It's detestable but it's deterrable.

Responsible leaders should not bet the security of their countries on the belief that the world's most dangerous regimes won't use the world's most dangerous weapons. And I promise you that as prime minister, I will never gamble with the security of the State of Israel.

From the beginning, the ayatollah regime has broken every international rule and flouted every norm. It has seized embassies, targeted diplomats. It sends its own children through minefields; it hangs gays and stones women; it supports [President Bashar] Assad's brutal slaughter of the Syrian people; it is the world's foremost sponsor of terrorism. It sponsors Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas in Gaza and terrorists throughout the Middle East, Africa, even South America. Iran's proxies have dispatched hundreds of suicide bombers, planted thousands of roadside bombs, and they fired over 20,000 missiles at civilians.

Through terror from the skies and terror on the ground, Iran is responsible for the murder of hundreds, if not thousands, of Americans. In 1983, Iran's proxy Hezbollah blew up the Marine barracks in Lebanon, killing 240 U.S. Marines. In the last decade, it's been responsible for murdering and maiming American soldiers in Afghanistan and in Iraq. Just a few months ago, it tried to assassinate the Saudi Ambassador to the United States in a restaurant just a few blocks from here. The assassins didn't care that several senators and congressmen would have been murdered in the process.

Now this is real chutzpah: Iran accuses the American government of orchestrating 9-11, and that's as brazen as denying the Holocaust, and they do. Iran calls for Israel's destruction, and they work for its destruction – each day, every day, relentlessly.

I say all his to make one point clear – this is how Iran behaves today, without nuclear weapons. Think of how they will behave tomorrow, with nuclear weapons. Iran will be even more reckless and a lot more dangerous. There's been plenty of talk recently about the costs of stopping Iran. I think it's time we started talking about the costs of not stopping Iran. A nuclear-armed Iran would dramatically increase terrorism by giving terrorists a nuclear umbrella. Let me try to explain what that means, a nuclear umbrella. It means that Iran's terror proxies like Hezbollah [and] Hamas will be emboldened to attack the United States, Israel and other countries because they will be backed by a power that has atomic bombs. So the terrorism could grow tenfold.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addresses the AIPAC Policy Conference in Washington March 5, 2012 ***[Amos Ben Gershom/GPO photo]***

A nuclear-armed Iran could choke off the world's oil supply and could make real its threat to close the Straits of Hormouz. If you're worried about the price of oil today, imagine how high oil prices could get once a nuclear-armed Iran starts blackmailing the world.

If Iran gets nuclear weapons, it would set off a mad dash by Saudi Arabia, Turkey and others to acquire nuclear weapons of their own. The world's most volatile region would become a nuclear tinderbox waiting to go off. And here's the worst nightmare of all, with nuclear weapons, Iran could threaten all of us with nuclear terrorism. It could put a nuclear device in a ship heading to any port or in a truck parked in any city, anywhere in the world.

I want you to think about what it would mean to have nuclear weapons in the hands of those who lead millions of radicals in chants of "Death to America" and "Death to Israel."

When you think about that, you'll reach a simple conclusion: for the sake of our prosperity, for the sake of our security, for the sake of our children, Iran must not be allowed to acquire nuclear weapons!

Of course, the best outcome would be if Iran decided to abandon its nuclear weapons program peacefully. No one would be happier than I and the people of Israel if Iran dismantled its program. But so far, that hasn't happened. For 15 years, I've been warning that a nuclear-armed Iran is a grave danger to my country and to the peace and security of the entire world.

For the last decade, the international community has tried diplomacy. It hasn't worked. For six years, the international community has applied sanctions. That hasn't worked, either.

I appreciate President Obama's recent efforts to impose even tougher sanctions against Iran. These sanctions are hurting Iran's economy, but unfortunately, Iran's nuclear program continues to march forward.

Israel has waited patiently for the international community to resolve this issue. We've waited for diplomacy to work. We've waited for sanctions to work. None of us can afford to wait much longer. As prime minister of Israel, I will never let my people live in the shadow of annihilation.

Some commentators would have you believe that stopping Iran from getting the bomb is more dangerous than letting Iran have the bomb. They say that a military confrontation with Iran would undermine the efforts already underway; that it would be ineffective; and that it would provoke an even more vindictive response by Iran. I've heard these arguments before. In fact, I've read them before. In my desk, I have copies of an exchange of letters between the World Jewish Congress and the United States War Department.

Here are the letters: the year was 1944. The World Jewish Congress implored the American government to bomb Auschwitz. The reply came five days later. I want to read it to you.

"Such an operation could be executed only by diverting considerable air support essential to the success of our forces elsewhere... and in any case, it would be of such doubtful efficacy that it would not warrant the use of our resources..."

And, my friends, here's the most remarkable sentence of all, and I quote: "Such an effort might provoke even more vindictive action by the Germans." Think about that. "Even more vindictive action" – than the Holocaust.

2012 is not 1944. The American government today is different. You heard it in President Obama's speech...

But here's my point: the Jewish People are also different. Today we have a state of our own. And the purpose of the Jewish state is to defend Jewish lives and to secure the Jewish future. Never again will we not be masters of the fate of our very survival. Never again. That is why Israel must always have the ability to defend itself, by itself, against any threat.

We deeply appreciate the great alliance between our two countries. But when it comes to Israel's survival, we must always remain the masters of our fate.

Courtesy of the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs

We must help the Syrian people

© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

From 2004 to 2006, I was partner to secret and informal contacts with representatives of the Syrian regime, with the aim of examining the possibility of reaching a peace agreement. During the talks, which were held alternately under Turkish and Swiss sponsorship, a not-surprising argument developed.

The Israeli participants requested a Syrian gesture that would show them that there had been a change of heart, but Syrian President Bashar Assad replied (via his emissaries): "I'll smile at you after I get back the Golan." Later on, the talks became more formal, but ultimately collapsed, as will be remembered, in January 2009, in the wake of Operation Cast Lead in the Gaza Strip.

Alon Liel

So, it is possible to inform you officially now, Mr. Assad, that you will not get the Golan, even if you suddenly begin to smile at us all the time. After the monstrous teeth you have bared in the past year, you can forget about us – both the left and the right. If at any time we choose to speak with Syria about the future of the Golan Heights (and I believe this will happen), it will not be with you, nor with any regime that resembles the one you are still heading at this time.

It is no simple matter for me – as someone who exactly five years ago set up the Israel-Syria Peace Society, and still heads it – to write these words. But I am convinced Assad has lost his legitimacy as a ruler and, therefore, also the right to demand the Golan back at any time. This will be the case even if he succeeds to remain in power.

Looking at this issue from a broader perspective, it is difficult today for Israel to make any kind of substantive move during the Syrian crisis, and that is a shame. In recent years, our government decided to make do with strengthening its ties with the western world, and especially with eastern Europe, and it has neglected attempts to strengthen our legitimacy in the Middle East. The severe decline in relations with Turkey is a salient example of the damage that has been caused.

And so it is that when a mere few dozen kilometres from our border a horrific civil war is taking place, we have become so paralyzed out of fear that if we intervene on behalf of one side or another, we shall wreak political havoc upon it and undermine its image.

It is precisely we, who are so close geographically, so strong militarily and so shocked at the killing taking place at the very threshold of our home, who are prevented from acting. Those who could take action – the western world, and particularly the Americans – are geographically removed. They are tired of the wars of the past decade, and are busy with economic tribulations (Europe) or frozen by domestic politics (the United States).

Israelis recently demonstrated outside the Russian embassy in Tel Aviv to protest Moscow's defense of the Assad regime. ***[Flash90 photo]***

Other than expressing deep sorrow over the thousands of dead in the war in Syria, and accusing Assad of the killings, we are left now only with the possibility of acting on a humanitarian level. It is incumbent upon the Israeli government, assisted by civil society, to get prepared, and without delay, for the possibility of absorbing Syrian citizens in the Golan Heights, and providing medical or humanitarian assistance to any Syrian citizen who needs it.

In this scenario, we cannot lose. If the outstretched hand comes in contact with a cold shoulder on the part of the Syrian population, we have at least demonstrated our goodwill. And if, surprisingly, Syrian citizens do agree to come to the Golan in order to find refuge, perhaps we will be able to change the tenor of our relationship with the Syrian people over the generations.

Alon Liel served as director general of the Foreign Ministry, and teaches at Tel Aviv University and the Interdisciplinary Center in Herzliya.

How about Arab apartheid week?

In Syria, one of the Middle East's most oppressive regimes (after the fall of the Ghadhafi clan in Libya) has killed thousands of its citizens, but university campuses in North America and Europe are silent.

There are no demonstrations, no moral outrage, no conferences and no boycott campaigns. There is also no "Saudi apartheid week," no protests against the killings of members of the Coptic community in Egypt, and no boycott of Turkey for systematic discrimination against its Kurdish citizens, or of Iran for systematic attacks against non-Shiite minorities.

Instead, the self-proclaimed voices of liberalism, progressivism and peace are using all of their energies and resources for an obsessive attack against Israel with another round of "Israeli apartheid week." The use of the "apartheid" libel is inherently racist and discriminatory, targeting the existence of Israel as the nation-state of the Jewish people. The political warfare accompanied by boycott, divestment and sanctions campaigns is a direct continuation of the Arab rejection of the November 1947 UN Partition Plan. This strategy was also embodied in the infamous 1975 UN "Zionism is racism" resolution. In the words of Liberal MP Irwin Cotler, "Let there be no mistake about it: to indict Israel as an apartheid state is prologue and justification for the dismantling of the Jewish state, for the criminalization of its supporters, and for the consequential silencing of their speech."

This campaign immorally exploits the suffering of the real victims of apartheid and racism, and transforms a political dispute into a racial conflict. The comparison was categorically rejected and denounced by Judge Richard Goldstone in the *New York Times*. Goldstone, a former justice of the South African Constitutional Court, wrote that, "In Israel, there is no apartheid. Nothing there comes close to the definition of apartheid under the 1998 Rome Statute." Goldstone added that "while 'apartheid' can have broader meaning, its use is meant to evoke the situation in pre-1994 South Africa. It is an unfair and inaccurate slander against Israel, calculated to retard rather than advance peace negotiations."

Many others who had experienced the real apartheid expressed similar views. Benjamin Pogrund, who was a journalist in South Africa, wrote "Use of the apartheid label is at best ignorant and naive and at worst cynical and manipulative."

The reality is that Israel's Arab citizens own property, have full voting rights, are proportionately represented in the Knesset, and are appointed to the High Court of Justice. Arab and Jewish patients receive identical medical treatment, and while there is room for improvement in the distribution of income, the differences in Israel are not simply due to ethno-religious distinctions.

Gerald Steinberg

in Jerusalem

In the face of these blatant double standards, the power of the "apartheid" campaign is derived from the resources that are available, in both political and financial forms. Politically, as noted, this divisive agenda is supported by the Arab and Islamic blocs at the United Nations and its associated institutions, providing numerous platforms, as well as access to the media.

Financially, the availability of significant European government funding for ostensible human rights organizations that actively promote the "apartheid" libel is a major factor, including Adalah, Badil, Al Haq, and Al Mezan. Similarly, Electronic Intifada, which is indirectly funded through Dutch government humanitarian aid, plays a central role in this political warfare, as do various Palestinian solidarity committees, whose funding sources are entirely hidden.

If the officials of these governments and of the groups they support under the banners of human rights and democracy actually took these principles seriously, they would use their resources to protest the real oppression of the Arab and Iranian dictatorships. Similarly, if students and faculty on university campuses who preside over the attacks on Israel were sincerely concerned about morality, they would be leading protests against these abuses. Their silence speaks volumes about the double standards and cynicism that has captured and distorted the moral agenda beyond recognition.

Obama hardens his position on Iran

Amid escalating speculation that Israel was on the cusp of launching a pre-emptive attack on Iran's nuclear facilities, President Barack Obama of the United States and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel met in Washington, D.C., on March 5 to discuss that contentious issue

With Israel having declared its implacable opposition to a nuclear-armed Iran, the debate over Iran's capabilities and intentions has grown exponentially.

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

Indeed, Iran's quest for a nuclear arsenal has supplanted the Arab-Israeli conflict as the overriding problem facing the two allies and has become a test of Israel's strategic relationship with the United States.

And in a year when Obama is seeking a second term in the White House and his Republican rivals are falsely accusing him of being soft on the Iranian regime, Iran has pushed aside all other issues in Israel's dialogue with the United States.

Netanyahu, who has described Iran as an existential threat, arrived in Washington after talks with Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper in Ottawa.

In a preview of his message to Obama, Netanyahu demanded that Iran must abide by certain conditions before renewed international talks on its nuclear program get under way. Saying that Iran's leadership is cynically playing for time to deceive the world, Netanyahu insisted that negotiations should resume only after Iran ends its nuclear activities. Netanyahu called on Iran to stop the enrichment of uranium, dispose of its current stock of enriched uranium and dismantle an underground facility in Qom.

Rejecting Netanyahu's ultimatum, Obama said that Iran would never agree to it. The following day, the United States, Russia, China, Germany, France and Britain announced they had accepted Iran's offer to launch a fresh round of discussions. These negotiations are expected to begin in April.

Prior to this announcement, the International Atomic Energy Agency expressed "serious concerns" about the possible military dimensions of Iran's atomic program and disclosed that Iran has tripled its production of higher-grade enriched uranium.

Of added concern to Israel was the news that in last week's Iranian parliamentary elections, the majority of seats were won by candidates loyal to Ayatollah Ali Khameini, Iran's hardline supreme leader, who has branded Israel a malignant "cancer" that must be excised from the Middle East.

Netanyahu's meeting with Obama – the ninth and arguably the most important one in three years – occurred after a series of high-level Israeli-U.S. consultations on Iran took place.

To ascertain how the Obama administration might react to an Israeli strike, Israel sent three senior officials to Washington: Tamir Pardo, the director of the Mossad; Ehud Barak, the defence minister, and Moshe Yaalon, the vice-premier.

Obama dispatched three envoys to Jerusalem: Defence Secretary Leon Panetta, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin Dempsey and National Security Adviser Tom Donilon.

Upon returning home, Panetta was reported to have said that an Israeli attack would most likely occur this coming spring. Dempsey, meanwhile, warned that a strike would "not be prudent at this point" and could destabilize the region. These comments were obviously designed to discourage Israel from taking action.

Donilon kept his opinions to himself. But shortly after his visit, the *New York Times* published an intriguing op-ed piece by Israel's former chief of military intelligence, Amos Yadlin, on this highly charged topic.

Yadlin pointed out that Israel's "military ingenuity" should not be underestimated, argued that a non-nuclear Iran was "the best guarantee" for long-term Mideast stability, and stated that Israel needed "iron-clad" assurances from the Obama administration to induce it to exercise restraint.

Yadlin's article, which was probably part of an orchestrated Israeli plan to convince the United States to harden its policy on Iran, ran alongside a flurry of stories suggesting that time was running out on diplomacy, that Israel was seeking a clear answer from Washington concerning its "red lines" on Iran's nuclear program, and that Israel had ceased sharing its plans on Iran with the United States. Still other articles left the impression that the Obama administration was "buying time" and that Washington disagreed with Israel's assessment that economic sanctions against Iran had been or would be ineffective.

With tension rising, Obama tried to cool passions by saying that Israel had not yet decided whether to act militarily, that he was not "bluffing" about attacking Iran if it built a nuclear weapon, and that he was committed to preserving Israel's qualitative military edge.

In a bid to stiffen Netanyahu's resolve on the eve of his discussions with Obama, Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman said that Israel would act in its own best interests and would not be influenced by outside powers.

U.S. President Barack Obama

To no one's surprise, Obama urged Netanyahu to give diplomacy a chance, requested restraint from Israel, spoke of the dire regional consequences of a strike on Iran and warned that "too much loose talk of war" only benefited Iran by driving up oil prices and creating a measure of sympathy for Iran in Muslim lands.

Yet, in a significant hardening of his position, Obama said, "My policy here is not going to be one of containment. My policy is prevention of Iran obtaining nuclear weapons."

Obama also pleased Netanyahu by observing that Iran is as much an American issue as an Israeli one, and that Israel has the sovereign right to make its own decisions on national security.

Netanyahu, who has used Holocaust imagery to describe Israel's bitter confrontation with Iran, laid down markers as well, saying that Israel "must always have the ability to defend itself, by itself," and that Israel will always be "the master of its fate."

Although Netanyahu claimed that neither diplomacy nor sanctions would nudge Iran to abandon its nuclear program, he acknowledged that he has not made a decision on striking Iran.

In the wake of Netanyahu's visit, it remains to be seen what Obama's response would be should Israel resort to force in the future.

Obama, who inherited unpopular wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and is loath to make new military commitments in an era of economic uncertainty, is certainly not the first U.S. president who prefers diplomacy over war.

Obama's hawkish predecessor, George W. Bush, one of the most pro-Israel presidents in history, rejected an Israeli request for refuelling aircraft and bunker-busting bombs to attack Iran.

To compensate Israel, Bush bolstered Israel's ballistic missile defences and stationed an advanced radar station in the Negev Desert.

Like Bush, Obama has upgraded defence relations with Israel. Last week, Israeli President Shimon Peres noted that Israel and the United States have never had better security cooperation.

In telltale signs that Israel and the United States are co-ordinating their respective positions on Iran, Israel announced that its chief of staff, Gen. Benny Gantz, is due to visit Washington later this month for consultations, and Obama instructed Panetta to consider an Israeli request for upgraded bunker-piercing bombs.

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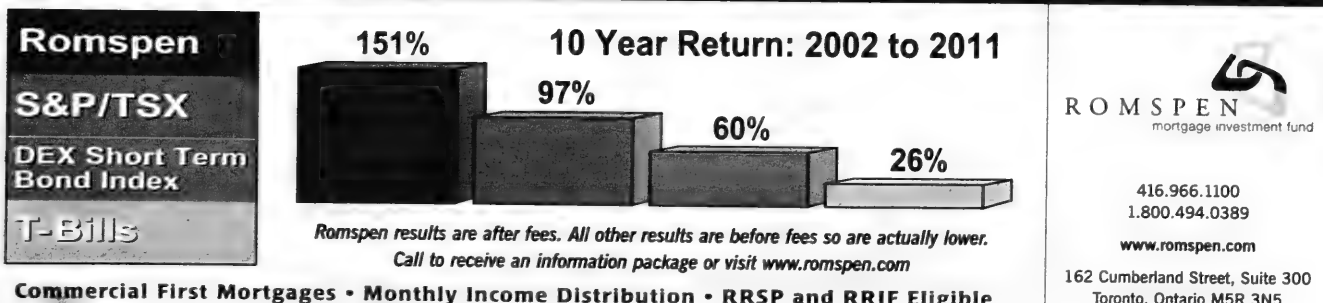

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Trainees to learn counter-surveillance methods

Continued from page 3

One way the community security network can help police is by accurately reporting details to investigators about crimes or suspicious activities, he said.

"If we have individuals who are trained on how to take the proper description of a person, or how to get involved in thorough, professional response to [police] queries, that helps law enforcement help us," Horowitz said.

Trainees will learn about counter-surveillance methods, as well how to conduct proper patrols and how to recognize signs of suspicious activity, Horowitz said.

"We're not training individuals on how to engage. We're training them how to react, think objectively, keep a distance and stay out of harm's way in order to protect the members of the community."

He said this last point differentiates the community security network from more militant organizations that either verbally or physically engage "hostile individuals."

Some people might want to volunteer for his group because of personal ideology, but anyone who is motivated by "extreme or radical thinking" will be rejected, he said.

Horowitz said an applicant who has a vigilante attitude, is aggressive or is looking to instigate fights won't pass his screening process, which will involve medical and background checks.

Asked why this initiative is being undertaken now, he said the current anti-Israel climate means it's "more likely than not" that threats will increase against Jewish communities and now is a "good time to prepare."

But he added that "the Jewish community has, is and will always be under a certain amount of threat. What's important is for us to focus less on the intention of our enemies and more on what we should do to establish a [security] standard that will allow us to operate and fluctuate based on the threat."

Horowitz said Canada and Canadian Jews aren't the prime targets for terrorists, but they're relatively high on the list.

"Europe, Africa and South America are more attractive for logistical and political reasons. But Canada, given that nothing has happened here and we're in a liberal society, for better or worse, lends itself to be attractive to those who wish to cause harm," he said.

"Radical militant Islam is active here. Canadian authorities are going to have to learn to deal with radical Islam, and I think they are starting to learn. But understanding something and doing something about it are two different things."

Horowitz said he'll consider all applicants, regardless of religious or organizational affiliation. As long the person is "Jewish, cares, is capable and is a rational thinker, I'll train you."

For more information, e-mail dhorowitz@cija.ca.

100th Day: In honour of the 100th day of school at Robbins Hebrew Academy's Beth Tzedec campus, senior kindergartners each collected 100 books to donate to Gracedale Public School. Gracedale junior and senior kindergarten students then joined Robbins kindergarten students to read and play together.

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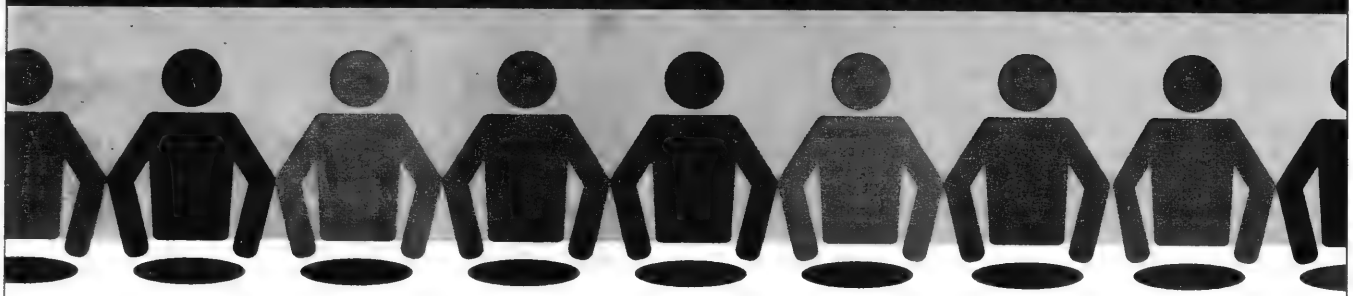

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Survivors are models of tolerance, panel told

Carolyn Blackman
Staff Reporter

Holocaust survivors have become her role models, says social worker Paula David.

"I am totally committed to looking at the flip side of terrorism, oppression and pain, and learning what comes out the other side," said David, a gerontologist at the Institute for Life Course and Aging at the University of Toronto and a lecturer at the school's Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work.

David, who previously worked at Baycrest, where she was co-ordinator of the Holocaust resource program, spoke last week at an International Women's Day panel held at Toronto City Hall. It was sponsored by the Azrieli Foundation Holocaust Survivor Memoirs Program and the Woman Abuse Council of Toronto.

Also speaking was Renate Krakauer, who along with her father, William Tannenzapf, wrote a memoir for the Azrieli Foundation titled *Memories from the Abyss: But I Had A Happy Childhood.*

Naomi Azrieli, chair of the Azrieli Foundation, said Holocaust survivors are now in their 80s and 90s, "and we are only beginning to see how women's experiences have differed from men's.

"We need to see how the suppression of emotional and physical needs results in long-term effects, [which] have repercussions for families and relationships into the future," she said.

David said that it takes a "madman to imagine what Hitler did to people. This [started me thinking] about resilience – how we turn can something around and come out a little better. We can't change the past, but we can get up again."

Paula David, left, and Renate Krakauer

She said that one of her clients at Baycrest once told her that Hitler had turned her heart to ice. "There will always be a piece of ice, and it will never be OK again, but how you live with that is how the resilience factor comes in."

Her theory about resilience, though, is that, like muscle tone, it gets weaker as people age. "I believe that at 85, we are not as resilient as we are at 40. When we have a smaller group of people around us, the impact of one of them leaving is greater."

Studies on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) have been mostly about men, she said, because men have historically served as soldiers. "PTSD became a diagnosis in 1980, but [if these studies] are looking at soldiers, where does that leave the women?" David asked.

There are results of war that aren't physical, she said, and women are humiliated in different ways than men. "People don't recover from PTSD. They learn to live with it. They learn to build back their self-esteem, " she added.

She said she learned from elderly Holocaust survivors the importance of protecting their stories. "It is important for them to tell stories of who they are, but some [stories] are very private. It takes a lot of resilience and strength to tell a painful story."

Krakauer, who survived the war as an infant, said that she was her mother's motivation to survive. "Her primary thought was for her child."

She learned from her parents, she said, not to talk about what the family went through, "or they would think we were crazy. [They think] people can't survive that and come out OK. They can come out OK, though."

Her father despaired when he couldn't carry out his role as a provider for the family, she said. "Until he was established in a new country, it was very difficult for him. My mother, however, saw her role as the most important – to save a child's life. That was her way of coping with PTSD."

Female leaders honoured on Women's Day

Carolyn Blackman
Staff Reporter

Penny Krowitz and Barbara Landau were honoured last week at a multifaith event commemorating International Women's Day.

The event was sponsored by the Women's Intercultural Network (WIN) in co-operation with the Noor Cultural Centre, the Canadian Association of Jews and Muslims, and Act to End Violence Against Women.

Krowitz, executive director of Act to End Violence Against Women, was awarded the International Women's Day Award for her commitment to raising awareness, and working to eliminate violence against women everywhere.

Barbara Landau, left, and Penny Krowitz

Landau, a lawyer and psychologist, was given the Vara P. Singh Award, which is presented to a woman whose years of volunteer contributions have enhanced the quality of life for women of all cultural backgrounds. She is co-chair of the Canadian Association of Jews and Muslims and a founding member of Together in Hope, a women's Arab-Jewish dialogue group.

The event, which was organized to raise awareness about the nature and extent of violence against women in Canada, began with a dramatic presentation called "Unspoken Words," which highlighted the faces and voices of abuse.

In her keynote address, which followed, Krowitz said violence against women can happen to anyone. "Abuse is an imbalance of power – physically, emotionally, sexually, financially or spiritually. It is damaging to the body and damaging to the soul, and the soul [can be] damaged forever.

"Emotional abuse erodes a woman's self-esteem, [but] some women do not recognize the behaviour as abuse, because they are not knowledgeable about it."

Krowitz said that we must continue to speak out against violence against women. "We must educate boys and girls about healthy relationships, and teach young women that they deserve to be treated with respect.

"We must break the cycle of violence, so in the future, there can be a true celebration of International Women's Day."

Social worker Mubarka Alam, who has worked with abused women for more than 40 years, said they don't have to feel alone. "There are resources available."

She referred to 211, a directory of more than 20,000 community, social, health and government services. It can be accessed by dialing 211, or online at 211.ca.

Krowitz said the abuse of women is not really a women's issue. "It's a man's issue, because they abuse more than women."

ART CONNECTION: Yafim Gour, a member of the Baycrest Community Day Centre for Seniors, proudly admires a painting of the house he grew up in as Grade 9 Westmount Collegiate Institute student Hani Gutin carefully holds the edges of the painting in place. Students and Baycrest seniors were paired on an intergenerational heritage art project last month to learn about each other's life stories and heritage, and create collaborative multimedia artwork to represent their combined histories. ***[Kelly Connelly/Baycrest photo]***

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March 24–26, 2012

March 24 Innis Town Hall, 2 Sussex Avenue	7:00PM	Film Screening, Canadian Premiere Mikhail Kalik's *Goodbye, Boys!* (Mosfilm, 1964) In Russian, with English subtitles
March 25 Debates Room, Hart House 7 Hart House Circle	All day	Book Exhibit
	10:30AM	*Annual Chancellor Rose and Ray Wolfe Lecture in Holocaust Studies* Ilya Altman, "The Holocaust in the Soviet Union: Unknown Pages"
	1:00PM	Pogroms in 1941: New Research
	3:30PM	Yiddish Culture in 1941–1944
	5:10PM	Soviet Writers Witnessing the Shoah
March 26 Debates Room, Hart House 7 Hart House Circle	10:30AM	New Sources on Soviet Jewish War-Time Experience
	1:00PM	Destruction of Jews in Ukraine and Byelorussia in 1941–1943
	4:00PM	Jewish Participation in the Soviet Army
March 25–26 Debates Room, Hart House 7 Hart House Circle	All day	Photo Exhibit from Blavatnik Archive Foundation, New York: *Lives of the Great Patriotic War: The Untold Stories of Soviet Jewish Soldiers in the Red Army during World War II* Continues March 27–April 4 at the Congregation Darchei Noam, Toronto

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Why we remember Amalek

Rabbi David Cadoch

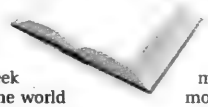
The Shabbat before the festival of Purim was Parshat Zachor, in which we are commanded to recite the maftir concerning Amalek. As it's written in Parshat Ki Tetze, "Remember what Amalek did unto you by the way as you came forth out of Egypt. How he met you by the way, and smote the hindmost of you, all that were enfeebled at your rear, when you were faint and weary; and he feared not God. Therefore it shall be, when the Lord thy God hath given you rest from all your enemies round about, in the land which the Lord thy God gives you for an inheritance to possess it, that you shall blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; you shall not forget."

We are commanded to blot out the memory of Amalek, and yet we are told to remember this episode. It seems to me there are two points that seem contradictory to the spirit of Judaism: remembering what we must blot out is in fact bearing a grudge, and by blotting out we nurture the desire to hate. Is it appropriate to hate human beings who were made in the image of God?

We need to understand that the focal point of Judaism is the Exodus from Egypt, as we recite every Shabbat in the Kiddush. Once out of Egypt, the Jewish nation established its principal goal: a nation guided by the Almighty and destined to be a beacon of light unto the world. Therefore, the mitzvah to read and listen carefully on Shabbat Zachor (the Sabbath of Remembrance) is one that obligates the Jewish nation to remember why we were freed and what our goal in life is. To this end, we will always encounter obstacles and those who oppose the Almighty's will.

So who is Amalek? Amalek

Rabbinic Reflections



stands for all those that seek to destroy godliness in the world and annihilate the moral fibre of mankind, because they do not recognize or fear God. This darkness needs to be blotted out and its memory uprooted to make way for God's will on Earth. It is a public declaration of the Creator's existence and omnipresence. By remembering to blot out this dark force, we call to mind our duty and the duty of mankind to show kindness and justice to all, with the exception of Amalek, unless this nation does tshuvah. Bravery does not come from attacking the weak or feeble of a society, but by defending and protecting their cause and right to life as human beings.

Uprooting evil in our midst is a mitzvah, as tolerating it breeds hatred. We live in a world where martyrdom is worshipped on the altar of innocence. Parents teaching their children to hate and die for a cause is rooted in the distortion of truth and disrespect for life.

Empowering this kind of evil endangers every human being created in the image of God. When there is no reverence for life, there is no sanctity, and we become even more savage than the most dangerous creatures.

It's the duty of every human being to stand up and fight for the cause of justice and mercy and the respect of life. We the Jewish nation are the teachers of this mission, with this privilege comes tremendous responsibility and accountability.

Rabbi David Cadoch is spiritual leader for Shabbat and holidays at the Beth HaRambam Synagogue in Maimonides Hospital, Montreal.

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Life and death

In Anglo-Saxon tradition, there is the story of a bewildered swallow that flies through an open window into a large brightly lit banquet hall – only to disappear through an open window on the other side.

This ancient story remains a faithful allegory of human life. Like the swallow, we enter the world out of the darkness of a primordial past, enjoy briefly life's light and beauty and then disappear into a dark eternity.

Bookmarks

Bernard Baskin

Many of my friends and colleagues are passing from the scene and more than ever death is something to be reckoned with. Eventually it will claim each of us. It's only a question of when and how.

Philosophers have held various views about death. Lucretius taught that non-existence after death is merely the mirror image of non-existence before birth. There is no reason to be more disturbed by the one than by the other. Socrates when sentenced to die by an Athenian court serenely drank the fatal cup of hemlock. Death, he assured his friends, is either a long dreamless slumber, or the migration of the soul from one realm to another. Either way, it is nothing to be feared. Despite his numerous problems, Spinoza declared, "A free man thinks least of all about death."

But it is not death alone and our unequal struggle against mortality that I consider. There is the inescapable fact that life compels us to let go of our youth. Inevitably, our muscles lose their flexibility, our reflexes are slowed and our physical strength and vitality are diminished.

The years pass, and where there was once a sense of eager anticipation, there is now some hesitancy in the face of tomorrow and a greater tendency to dwell upon yesterday with lingering regret. We pray for old age, but how reluctant we are to pay the price of our advancing years.

Life also has a way of compelling us to let go of our children. It has been said that the three things we can offer our children are dedication, education and abdication. Of the three, who will deny that the last mentioned duty is the most difficult to discharge.

And so in many vital areas, life sternly demands of us to renounce and relinquish. Loved ones die, youth fades and our children leave us.

We must surrender so much that is precious to us. But that should encourage us to enjoy these very things while they are still ours. Because we and those closest to us are mortal, we must love each other while we may and serve each other with added tenderness. Because life is of limited duration, ours is the task to make it of unlimited depth. Because as quantity is fixed, we should enrich its quality.

Youth fades. But let us not squander it recklessly, nor spend it in such a way as to bequeath a burden of guilt to our later years. "Well spent is our youth," our sages remind us, "if it does not embarrass our old age."

May God give us a heart of wisdom-the ability to transform the sorrow of bereavement, the passing of our years and the independence of our children into a triumph of the spirit.

Antisemitism in the academic voice

We've now had the eighth iteration of that ignominious week of campus events that accuses the State of Israel of apartheid practices. Year after year, shrill variations on the same ugly themes assault our senses, undermine intellectual debate and integrity, and create a chilled, divisive environment at our universities.

Opinions are mixed on the impact that "Israeli apartheid week" (IAW) has on the hearts and minds of those who traipse the hallowed halls of the academy. There are those who would have us believe that its influence is marginal, while others report a very different picture. Much depends on the organizational abilities and energy levels of anti-Israel activists at any given time on particular campuses.

What's clear, though, is that Jewish students and faculty, and the community agencies that support them, have not been able to effectively counter the lies and distortions that are at the core of "IAW" messaging.

An argument that was thought to have some merit uses the tenets of the "new" antisemitism as its anchor. Accordingly, the well-recognized 3Ds – demonization, delegitimization and the application of a double standard regarding the discourse on Israel – are invoked to make the case for obvious or intended antisemitism.

That demonization and delegitimization are implicit in the word association of "Israeli apartheid" is self-evident, and it's certainly not difficult to identify a raft of examples that confirm the double standard component of the definition. Where the problem arises, however, is that my university administration, and likely others as well, are tending more and more to dismiss our linkage of anti-Zionism with antisemitism.

And while it may be premature to relinquish the 3D para-

My View

Lawrence Hart

digm, we need nonetheless to examine other ways to get our point across more successfully.

In an insightful research paper, titled "Antisemitism in the Academic Voice," Kenneth Lasson, a professor at the University of Baltimore School of Law, presents a comprehensive analysis of antisemitism on North American (including Canadian) campuses.

Amid his list of recommendations to confront manifest antisemitism in the academy, he advises that we use self-restraint. We need to pick our battles. He also recommends that we derive strategies for "driving a wedge between the Jewish state's soft- and hard-core critics – between for example human-rights groups that take issue with Israeli policy and radical Islamists who deny the state's very legitimacy."

"It is the obligation of all academics," Lasson states, "either to recognize or refute claims that have no basis in fact or logic, and not to ignore them." He comments, moreover, that "not only can offensive speech and conduct be constitutionally confronted and condemned, but responsible administrators, faculty and students should have a moral imperative to do so." It's our responsibility to respond when "logic and common sense have gone awry and objective fact and documented history [have been] either ignored or denied." He adds: "History and logic should not be rendered meaningless by twisted rhetoric."

Lasson's advice is straightforward and sensible. But the problem we continue to encounter is that it's not so much what we say, or whose recommendations we follow, but who, if anyone, among our university leadership, is willing to listen – and take action.

'A Jew and an alcoholic'

Purim is behind us. Passover lies ahead. And between them are several Shabbats, twice as many kiddushes and who knows how many other opportunities to raise a glass and say l'chaim. And to seriously overdo things.

In reality, abuse doesn't need an excuse. And the problem doesn't stop at alcohol. For a long time, there has been a perception that Jews were not afflicted by the same addiction problems plaguing western society. Thankfully, there are now many organizations and individuals willing to listen and help Jews in distress. If you have a problem or if you have a family member with a problem, you can begin your search for resources online.

Long before people talked openly about these problems, there was JACS, Jewish Alcoholics, Chemically Dependent Persons and Significant Others. Established in 1979 as a group for Jews in recovery, JACS now maintains branches and websites based in New York [http://bit.ly/jdrink26], Chicago, Baltimore, Florida, Brazil and Toronto. [http://bit.ly/jdrink27]

Perhaps the most moving site warning about potential dangers of alcohol was created by the family of Yehuda Aryeh Mond. At the age of 19, with his life ahead of him, Yehuda died due to alcohol abuse. His family created the Yehuda Mond Foundation to spread the word about alcohol and to provide resources to others. One of the highlights of the site is a chilling 40-minute video that includes a young man who shares how as a teen, "I had an orange juice container mixed with whisky in my fridge in yeshiva that I used to take swigs from throughout the day ... By the time I was 18, I was on the streets of Yerushalayim throwing up, wondering why I can't stop drinking." [http://bit.ly/jdrink28] I was interested to see that major streams of Juda-

Jewish & Digital

Mark Mietkiewicz

ism also recognize that problems exist in our own backyards. In its 1993 resolution, "dealing with substance abuse," the Union for Reform Judaism called for the introduction of "religious school educational programs for all levels, including the very young." [http://bit.ly/jdrink29]

The Orthodox Union site carries the piece, Orthodox Youth and Substance Abuse: Shattering the Myths. [http://bit.ly/jdrink30] And the Conservative movement has published From Addiction to Recovery: A Jewish Spiritual Journey. [http://bit.ly/jdrink31]

Other Jewish resources include Baltimore's Jewish Recovery Houses [http://bit.ly/jdrink32], New York's Yatzkan Center [http://bit.ly/jdrink33], Los Angeles' Beit T'Shuvah [http://bit.ly/jdrink34] and the Haderech 12-Step Treatment Center based in the Western Galilee. [http://bit.ly/jdrink35] Many more links here. [http://bit.ly/jdrink36]

When you do a search for substance abuse and Judaism, Rabbi Abraham Twerski's name is bound to come up often. Dr. Twerski is the medical director of Gateway Rehabilitation Center in Pennsylvania [http://bit.ly/jdrink37] and the author of countless compelling articles and books on the subject including The Twelve Steps and Judaism [http://bit.ly/jdrink38] and Tackling a Shandeh. [http://bit.ly/jdrink39]

Fortunately, there are successes. In Today I Am 20 Years Sober, the anonymous author writes, "My sobriety is a credit to God's name and none to me. Thank you, God. Thank you for all you have given me and all you have taken from me. Thank you for another day of life. Thank you for making me a Jew... and an alcoholic." [http://bit.ly/jdrink41]

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Iran issue highlights Sunni-Shia tensions

Following Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's talks with Prime Minister Stephen Harper in Ottawa and U.S. President Barack Obama in Washington, D.C., last week, substantial media coverage implied that Netanyahu is recklessly itching for war with Iran.

The reality is that Israel has been warning for years that a nuclear-armed Iran is a menace to the international community, not just to Israel, which has been repeatedly threatened with destruction by Tehran. Israel has emphasized that it's the responsibility of the international community to rein in Iran by all means necessary, short of war. This includes tough economic sanctions, some of which are only beginning to take effect. Still, many analysts see these as too little too late, and thus insufficient to derail Iran's illicit nuclear program.

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

By the middle of last week came the announcement that major powers, including China, Russia, the United States, and some EU countries, had decided to once again try negotiations with Iran. Catherine Ashton, the EU's foreign affairs chief, hoped that "Iran will now enter into a sustained process of constructive dialogue which will deliver real progress."

But there's widespread skepticism that further talks with Iran, scheduled to start in April, will provide anything other than a cover for Iran to stall for time while it pushes ahead with nuclear fuel enrichment and related weapons programs. Words such as "sustained" and "progress" have a double entendre meaning where Tehran is concerned.

This skepticism is bolstered by other considerations. Efraim Halevy, a former head of Israel's Mossad, recently argued (in the *New Republic*) that Arab and Muslim leaders in the Middle East have learned a valuable lesson from last year's NATO campaign in Libya. Recall that in 2003, then-Libyan leader Muammar Gadhafi gave up Libya's nuclear arms program in exchange for re-engagement with the West. The lesson for Iran today: don't follow Libya's lead if you plan to survive, since having nuclear weapons is the best guarantee against attack.

Halevy put this starkly: "In light of the Libyan experience, what nuclear aspiring nation can now put its trust in a rollback deal of any sort? When NATO took to the skies over Tripoli, Benghazi and Misrata, it delivered the greatest possible blow to future non-proliferation diplomacy."

Efraim Halevy

Chatter about such a "peaceful" resolution of the Iran nuclear crisis contrasted with commentary about Israel's "aggressive" inclinations. But there was an important element of the overall story that was missing from almost all the coverage, namely, that Sunni Arab states, especially Saudi Arabia, feel very threatened by the prospect of a nuclear-armed Shia Iran.

In the past, the Saudi king has urged the Americans to "cut off the head of the snake" in reference to Iran. His ambassador to the United States urged the same, and was subsequently found to be the target of an Iranian assassination plot planned to unfold in Washington.

Reports at the time indicated that the Saudis, while certainly not saying so publicly, were also secretly counting on the Israelis (with U.S. backing) to confront Iran militarily.

As the "Arab Spring" has resulted in the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood (in Libya, Tunisia, Egypt, etc.), a fascinating paradox has emerged. The Brotherhood is extremely hostile to Israel. But it's also hostile to Shia Iran (even though Iran has offered to provide funds to Egypt, whose economy is teetering and whose leadership has been pulling away from the Americans). Yet while Iran is helping Syria's Assad brutally repress a rebellion led mainly by the majority Sunnis, even Hamas, an outgrowth of the Brotherhood which formerly relied on Iranian funds, has had to distance itself from Iran and side with its Sunni brethren.

So it was most unexpected to see a report last week in the *Guardian* that a senior Hamas official said Hamas might not react if Israel were to attack Iran (although this was later denied). But in the broader context of the contest between Sunni and Shia forces in the Arab world, this story might not be as shocking as it appears.

Paul Michaels is director of research and media relations for the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs.

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Reena Community Residence, Apartments Now Renting

By Ellen Rajzman, Residence Manager

An innovative new housing alternative, the **Reena Community Residence, is opening on the Lebovic Jewish Community Campus in Vaughan.** There are 60 apartments, some of which are wheelchair accessible. The Residence supports a mixed community of 84 adults and seniors with developmental, cognitive, physical and mental health needs.

Reena's philosophy recognizes that physical presence is key in enhancing inclusion and integration. "This is a very unique and special living environment," says **Sandy Keshen**, President and CEO of Reena. Membership at the nearby Schwartz/Reisman Centre will be offered to residents at a reduced rate. This includes a seniors' centre, indoor aquatics centre and therapeutic pool, community arts centre, athletic activities, and a wide range of classes. Residents will be integrated into campus/community life, with easy access to on-site Jewish communal agencies such as Circle of Care, Jewish Family & Child and the Mount Sinai Wellness Clinic.

Designed as an Intentional Community for residents with special needs, the Residence offers tenants the benefits of living and sharing life together. Thirty of the 60 units are designated as rent-assisted through the York Region Rent Assistance Program. In addition to the rent, there is a support component at a cost of $450 per month. This provides 24/7 on-call staff for safety and security, medication reminders, and activity prompts. Any additional supports are costed on a fee-for-service basis.

While requests for apartments for people with developmental disabilities are being placed on a wait list, there are still a few units available for seniors and people with physical disabilities. For information on rentals for seniors and people with physical disabilities contact **Arnold Foss** at Circle of Care at 416.373.4090. To be placed on a wait list for units for people with developmental disabilities contact Reena at 905.889.6484 Ext. 2050 or Ext. 2057.

NCJW Passover food drive returns for 29th year

Carolyn Blackman
Staff Reporter

When Bonnie Dale volunteered at National Council of Jewish Women Canada, Toronto section's first Passover Food Drive, there were about 200 recipients.

This year, for the organization's 29th food drive, volunteers will deliver food to about 2,500 addresses, said Dale, who is co-chairing the drive with Karen Fenwick.

Recipients, who include individuals living in poverty, recent immigrants in need and people with disabilities and inadequate financial resources, are referred from agencies, synagogues, schools, service groups and chaplaincy services.

From left, Karen Fenwick, Bonnie Dale, Dara Ronen-Nathanson

One recipient, a single father with a 12-year-old daughter, lost his business in the economic downturn and went bankrupt. When his daughter leaves for school each day, she thinks her father is working from home. In reality, however, he's receiving welfare. The Passover box provides him with the food and ritual items necessary to celebrate Passover.

Each box contains such items as matzah, gefilte fish, tuna, canned fruit, matzah ball mix with soup, Passover wine, a Haggadah, candles and sweets.

Fenwick said that kosher for Passover food – collected at participating grocery stores, schools, community centres and synagogues – makes up approximately 10 per cent of the needed supplies.

"The project is solely funded by donations, and monetary donations are needed so we can buy the necessary items at wholesale prices," she said.

She said that in the last couple of years, organizers have noticed that people who were formerly working are starting to have financial difficulties. "There is an increase in single-parent families, and we've seen that there are a number of men between the ages of 50 and 64 who have lost their job and are without income. These growing demographics affect the food drive. There is a decrease in funds and an increase in need."

Dara Ronen-Nathanson the drive's scheduling coordinator, says when she retired as a teacher in the Jewish school system, she wanted to volunteer. "I saw the schools get involved in the drive, and now I'm seeing it from the other side."

When the drive started, she said, it was in about two or three schools. "Now we're in 20 schools, and we've started a project called Matzah Bricks. The kids buy a "brick" for $2, and their name is put on it. This encourages them to give tzedakah."

One preschool, she said, has the kids create a Passover shopping list, "and then they go shopping to buy food to donate. We're trying to educate kids at an early age to help other kids in financial need."

The community is "tremendous" in its support of the food drive, she said, and more than 1,500 volunteers donate their time to sort, pack, supervise and deliver food boxes.

Beginning March 11, schools, groups and organizations began coming in to pack boxes, she said. "A greeting card is placed in every box, so it becomes more personal," Fenwick said.

She said organizers always need volunteer drivers to deliver the boxes on delivery day, which this year is March 25, 8:30 a.m. until noon.

"Delivery day – volunteers can show up at 4700 Bathurst St. – is always a heartwarming day. We really see the good in the community," said Fenwick.

"Some volunteers come with babies in car seats, and others drive their grandchildren, who drop off the boxes."

Ronen-Nathanson called the food drive a labour of love. "We want everyone in financial need to celebrate Passover with dignity."

Dale said it's a real "hands-on project. It's not just about giving money. It's about getting involved."

For information on donating to the drive or volunteering, call 416-633-5100.

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March of Living honours people with disabilities

Sheri Shefa
Staff Reporter

For many Jews, the words "six million" subconsciously and automatically connect to the Holocaust.

In addition to the six million Jews murdered during the Holocaust, millions more were victimized by the Nazis.

March of the Living and the Israel Guide Dog Center for the Blind (IGDCB) have organized a special tour that will honour the tens of thousands of people with disabilities who were murdered by the Nazis in their evil quest to create an Aryan master race.

On April 16, a group of about 22 people – including six visually impaired Israelis and their guide dogs – will spend five days touring Poland's concentration camps on a March of the Living tour.

"It's really a powerful statement, because as the Nazis used dogs to kill and maim, we are going to show how dogs are used for independence... and self-worth," said Sara Gabriel, the executive director of the Canadian Friends of IGDCB, an Israeli non-profit organization that provides visually impaired Israelis with trained guide dogs.

The Nazis began persecuting their most vulnerable citizens in 1933 after passing a law that stated anyone suffering from a mental illness, physical deformity, blindness or deafness was to be sterilized, and was labelled as "life unworthy of life."

By the end of World War II, about 275,000 people with disabilities were murdered.

But Eli Rubenstein, who's led March for the Living Canada for the last 25 years and volunteers as IGDCB's chair, said this trip is about more than highlighting the Nazis' crimes against the vulnerable.

"March of the Living is not just about what the Nazis did, it's about telling ourselves and the world that Jewish people stand for exactly the opposite of what the Nazis stood for," Rubenstein said.

"They were out to build a world of cruelty and barbarism and exclusion, and not to build a world of compassion and kindness and inclusion. In Judaism we believe that all humanity was created in the image of God and all humanity has infinite preciousness and dignity."

Moti Levy and his dog, Sammy, will be going on the March of the Living tour next month.

Gabriel, who has been working to promote and raise funds for IGDCB from her Thornhill home since 2009, said this is the first time the centre has sent its clients on a March of the Living trip.

When Gabriel approached the donors about the idea to send IGDCB clients to Poland, she received "an overwhelming response."

Thanks to their generosity, six blind Israelis will fulfil their dreams of experiencing the march, Rubenstein said.

"I remember one who told me, 'Blind people have challenges, more than most. But when I hear a Holocaust survivor speak, and I see how they overcame their challenges, mine are incomparably minor and they give me strength, hope and courage,'" Rubenstein said.

He said he was also motivated to organize a march that would display the contrast between the way Nazis used dogs and the way the centre uses dogs.

"You think of what the Nazis did to the Jews, you think what the Nazis did to people with disabilities and you think of what the Nazis did to dogs. They took dogs and turned them into killers," he said.

"We're doing the opposite... we're coming with dogs who were trained to be the gentlest, kindest, most giving creatures you could possibly imagine."

On April 18, on Yom Hashoah, the IGDCB group will join roughly 14,000 people from all over the world in a three-kilometre march between Auschwitz and Birkenau.

"Whether you're sighted or whether you're visually impaired, the physical presence of being in Poland on Yom Hashoah is a very powerful statement," Rubenstein said.

Joining the IGDCB group will be York Centre MP Mark Adler, the son of a Holocaust survivor, who will be honoured at the centre's IGDCB annual gala called the Evening of Miracles. It'll be held at the Eglinton Grand in Toronto on May 31 and will feature a performance by singer Nikki Yanofsky.

For more information about the March of the Living tour or the upcoming gala, contact Gabriel at 416-577-3600 or sara.israelguidedog@rogers.com.

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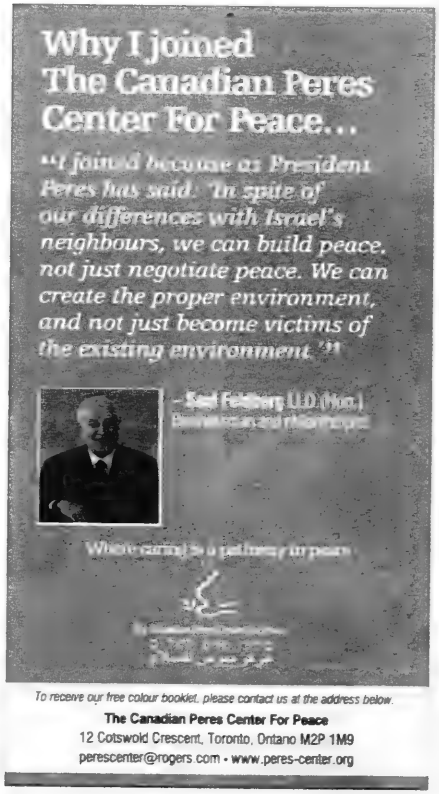
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USY holds two conventions in Toronto area

Compiled by CJN Staff

Toronto recently hosted two youth conventions organized by the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.

United Synagogue Youth (USY) is the high school affiliate of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism and Kadima is the middle school affiliate. Both conventions offered Jewish teens from all across Ontario the opportunity to enjoy exciting activities – a blend of education, social action and fun.

Eastern Canada Region United Synagogue Youth (ECRUSY) delegates gathered at Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am Synagogue in Toronto from Feb. 24 to 26 to explore Jewish humour.

USYers enjoyed an evening of laughter that included a medley of YouTube videos voted on by USYers as the funniest videos of the year, as well as a show by renowned hypnotist Chris Johnson. They explored Jewish stereotypes as they appear in Jewish jokes and Jewish comedy, and discussed how joking and practical jokes can go too far and hurt people. They also learned about Purim customs.

"Our conventions are designed to allow Jewish teens from across Eastern Canada to get to know each other while engaging in both fun and educational activities," said ECRUSY director Rabbi Irit Printz.

ECRUSY Kadima delegates began their convention, at the Homewood Suites Hotel in Markham, Ont., on March 2. The convention's theme was "Kadima Goes to the Circus."

United Synagogue Youth regional board members, from left, are Noa Zaifman, Jake Pascoe, Michaela Sadinsky, Ben Levine, Josh Ull, International USY president, and Jonah Eisen

Kadimaniks discussed the team skills needed to run a successful circus – or any group gathering. They learned about the Jewish value of caring for animals, experienced a fun and spirited Shabbat, and enjoyed a night of circus training at Centre of Gravity in downtown Toronto.

"The trainers did a demonstration for us. They were like ninjas, except they had hula hoops and ropes," said one Kadimanik.

Beth Jacob Synagogue in Hamilton, Ont., will host ECRUSY's spring convention from May 10 to 13. The convention's theme, "Back to the Future," was announced by convention co-chairs Joshua Seed and Haley Szereszewski.

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RHS alumni gather as school marks 50 years

Frances Kraft
Staff Reporter

Robbins Hebrew Academy (RHA) – formerly United Synagogue Day School (USDS) – will celebrate its 50th birthday this month at a gala event followed the next day by a Kabbalat Shabbat service and dinner for alumni at Beth Tzedec Congregation.

The hors d'oeuvres and dessert gala, featuring comedian Elon Gold, will be held at 7 p.m., Mar. 22, at the Warehouse Event Venue at Downsview Park.

Shauna Merkur, gala co-chair with Sara Gottlieb, expects about 300 people at the event, a fundraiser for technology, bursaries and alumni initiatives.

Claire Sumerlus, head of school for the past three years, describes RHA as "an incredibly warm community that is dedicated to academic excellence in both Jewish education and general studies."

She lauded the "great foundation" the school had built before she arrived in Toronto from Winnipeg. It made it "easier to move it into the 21st century, because education has really changed and the world has really changed."

Her predecessor, Lucy Cohen, retired in 2007, and the school was without a head of school for more than a year.

RHA, which has 600 students from junior kindergarten to Grade 8 at two campuses, is the largest school in the Solomon Schechter Day School Network. The network operates under the umbrella of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.

Debbie Rothstein

Alumni chair Debbie Rothstein said she made lifelong friends at USDS, which was renamed in 2010.

As well, she credited her former teachers for "assuming a certain level of intellectual maturity" on the part of the students. "They were constantly challenging us. They spoke to us as if we weren't kids."

Rothstein – a school parent and also the granddaughter of one of the school's founders, J. Barney Goldhar – noted that RHA is the only Conservative school in the city. As a parent and a Conservative Jew, that was important to her, she said.

USDS' first principal, Aaron Nussbaum, recalls that the school actually dates back a few years longer than half a century.

USDS started as a "foundation school" at Beth Tzedec in the late 1950s, said Nussbaum, who retired as director of education 19 years ago.

The term "foundation school" meant "that children would be attending nursery [through] Grade 2, like a foundation," he explained.

"The kids would get a fantastic background in language and many other things – in happy living Jewishly – and then the idea was to go to the public school, so that you get both worlds – the Jewish world, the Hebrew world – and that when they started an afternoon school they would be starting with a great foundation.

"At the same time, you would not keep kids out of the mainstream of the public school. That was a very important ideal for many of the early generations. As well, this was supposed to be the approach of the Conservative movement in the '50s and early '60s… The idea was to integrate into [North] American life, not to be ghettoized."

The foundation school approach was proposed by the Conservative movement but taken up only by a small number of congregations, he said. Rabbi Stuart Rosenberg, then Beth Tzedec's spiritual leader, was a driving force in the school's creation.

But something unexpected happened, Nussbaum said. "When children reached the end of Grade 2, the feeling was 'It's so good to have a day school – let's continue on.'"

The new school, for which Nussbaum was hired as principal in 1961, was sponsored by all of Toronto's Conservative congregations – hence its name. There were 115 students.

"It was a small, little school," Nussbaum said. "Everybody knew everybody."

Among the school's innovations, he noted, it was termed a *beit chinuch* (house of education) instead of a *beit Sefer* (*sefer* is Hebrew for book), to reflect the idea that education isn't limited to books.

As well, there was an attempt to integrate general studies material into the Hebrew department and vice versa, a new idea at the time.

The school grew, and in 1969 a second branch opened at Beth Tikvah Synagogue on Bayview Avenue. (A third branch, in Richmond Hill, opened about 30 years ago, but has since closed.)

At one point about 30 years ago, USDS ran a Jewish day high school, Nussbaum said. It merged with the Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto after three years of operation.

Also, he mentioned, in the mid-1970s USDS was the first school to get a Solomon Schechter award for excellence in Jewish education.

For more information about the 50th anniversary events, go to rhacademy.ca/birthday.

Reena in the News

Reena

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UJA Federation funds gender-based violence training in Juba

IsraAID experts lead first ever workshop in South Sudan

By Daniel Horowitz

On Thursday March 2, IsraAID: The Israel Forum for International Humanitarian Aid dispatched a delegation of Israeli experts to Juba, South Sudan, with the support of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, IsraAID's largest financial supporter. The delegation - which includes three highly-skilled Israeli therapists with extensive experience in trauma and sexual abuse - is conducting the first ever Gender Based Violence (GBV) training program for social workers in Juba, aimed at fighting violence against women in the new nation.

On March 6th, the South Sudanese Minister of Social Development, Her Excellency Helen Murshalli, officially inaugurated the program which, during the 10-day workshop, will see IsraAID teach 29 social workers from the ministry and the local NGO Confident Children out of Conflict (CCC) the practical skills needed to guide and support survivors of GBV from Juba and the entire Central Equatorial district.

In her speech, her Excellency stressed the key role that social workers play in building a stable and healthy nation. For this reason, training social workers should be a priority in the development of South Sudan. Her Excellency also praised IsraAID for organizing the first training on GBV for social workers, and highlighted the historic relationship between Israel and South Sudan, calling for a deepening and strengthening of the ties that connect these two nations, as did the Executive Director of IsraAID, Shachar Zahavi.

"IsraAID recognizes the dramatic opportunity for the organization - as well as for Israel as a whole - to contribute to nation-building and development in South Sudan through the transfer of Israeli expertise," said Zahavi. "Israel benefits from unique 'know-how' and technologies in a wide range of areas, and is therefore capable of organizing rich and impact-oriented training programs in response to the local needs, while respecting and promoting local ownership."

IsraAID's team of experts are in Juba, South Sudan, to train local social workers about violence against women and young girls.

On March 1st, news of IsraAID'S efforts in Juba made its way to the House of Commons, where the MP for St. Paul's, Dr. Carolyn Bennett, made the following statement.

MP Dr. Carolyn Bennett

"On the eve of a visit to Canada by Israel's Prime Minister, I would like to acknowledge the important work of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto in partnering with IsraAID, an Israeli humanitarian organization, to help South Sudan fight violence against women," said Dr. Bennett. "...The program is funded primarily by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, and by extension, charitable donations from Toronto's Jewish community, and is an example of the close level of cooperation between Canadians and Israelis on important global issues. I applaud UJA and IsraAID for this important contribution to nation-building and development in South Sudan."

"UJA Federation has long been a supporter of IsraAID's remarkable search and rescue, medical, trauma and other life-saving efforts when natural disasters have struck around the world," said Ted Sokolsky, UJA Federation's President & CEO. "And now, to enable these gifted Israeli experts to help eradicate senseless, brutal violence against women and young girls in South Sudan, is extremely gratifying. We will continue to provide IsraAID with our support, and the support of Toronto's compassionate Jewish community."

Two-year-old's birthday benefits underprivileged Israeli children

By Monique Gottlieb

When Reuben Hason turned two last December, his parents, Cheri and Yuval, decided to celebrate a little differently. In lieu of gifts, Reuben's family and friends were asked to contribute to the Reuben Hason Birthday Fund at the Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto, the endowment arm of UJA Federation. Given the festive time of year and the family's strong connection to Israel, the Hasons decided to put the funds raised toward a Chanukah party for underprivileged children at the Youth Futures program in Eilat.

Historically, Eilat-Eilot has been a single-industry region, with 80% of the population employed either directly or indirectly by the tourist industry. These jobs generally don't demand professional training or promise a stable income. Through various initiatives, UJA Federation is working to transform Eilat-Eilot into a centre of opportunity. The Youth Futures program is one such initiative which empowers disadvantaged Israeli youth, providing them with equal opportunity to develop their academic and social skills, and shaping them into successful adults.

Thanks to Reuben's gift, the children at the Youth Futures program had an unforgettable Chanukah, participating in various holiday activities like cooking latkes, making candles, and decorating dreidels. As well, each child received a Chanukah present – for many of them, their first. In a letter thanking Reuben for his gift, the children wrote, "It doesn't matter who you ask, this Chanukah was like no other! All through Chanukah's school break the Youth Futures home was lit and anywhere you looked you could see happy faces."

While Reuben is still too young to understand the impact he has made, the idea of *tzedakah* runs strong in his family. The amount of money raised in honour of his birthday spoke volumes. "Everyone was happy to contribute," explained Reuben's mother, Cheri. "It was really reassuring to know that our family and friends were so eager to participate in something like this. Hopefully others will be inspired to do the same."

By giving his birthday gifts to underprivileged children, Reuben has already practiced *tikkun olam* (repairing the world.) Reuben's gift demonstrates how easy it can be to make a difference in the world. "I think people are intimidated; that it's a hard thing to do, but the staff at the Jewish Foundation made it so easy," explained Cheri.

Reuben Hason celebrating his 2nd birthday

The Jewish Foundation is involved in many charitable projects in Canada, Israel, and around the world. The Foundation specializes in matching individuals to projects and causes they are passionate about, enabling them to make a positive, meaningful impact in the lives of others. By housing a fund at the Jewish Foundation, fund-holders have the freedom to choose how they want to spend their charitable dollars without the hassle of maintaining a private foundation.

"My grandmother always said, 'do the right thing, not the easy thing,' said Cheri. With the help of the Jewish Foundation, Reuben's birthday project was both."

For more information on the Jewish Foundation or for details on how to establish a fund, visit www.jewishfoundationtoronto.com, or contact the Jewish Foundation at 416-631-5703 or jewishfoundation@ujafed.org.

Landmark deli Schwartz's enters new era

Janice Arnold
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Hy Diamond signed over Schwartz's to new owners last week, confident that he did all he could to ensure it remains the old-fashioned Jewish-style deli that is known around the world.

Diamond, who bought Schwartz's Charcuterie Hebraique de Montréal Inc. in 1999, after acting as the accountant for years to its previous owner, always referred to himself as "only its curator" rather than proprietor.

"I built it up into the institution it is today, a part of Quebec known all over the world. When I walked in, it was just going along – going downhill," he said in an interview.

"I hate like hell to sell it. I really enjoyed it, but I'm not getting younger and my health is not getting better. It was time to pass on the legacy. I'm leaving [Schwartz's] in good shape."

After weeks of rumours, Schwartz's was sold March 5 to the Nakis family and René Angélil, along with his wife Céline Dion and two of his nephews, for a reported sum of almost $10 million.

Diamond is satisfied the 85-year-old little restaurant on the Main is in the hands of Montrealers who recognize the restaurant's historical and cultural significance and will carry on the tradition.

"Hy Diamond has poured his heart and soul into building this business, and not only do we want to thank him for his dedication, but we want him to be proud of our efforts to continue along the same path," Angélil said in a press release.

"Of course, we'll make a few improvements as necessary, but we're not interested in diluting the brand by franchising or making the deli something that it isn't. It's truly one of a kind, and we intend to keep it this way."

"Paul Nakis [the family patriarch] is a friend of mine, a successful restaurateur. René has been coming in here since he was a youngster," Diamond said.

Angélil noted that his close friend and then-manager of his band, the late Montreal show-business promoter Ben Kaye, first brought him to Schwartz's in 1961.

"I've been going there ever since. I have so many great memories of being there with the guys, and with Céline and our families throughout the years. It's the most unique restaurant in the world, and we're thrilled to be part of it."

The younger partners make it sound like they have been handed a sacred trust. "I am honoured to be able to contribute to one of this city's greatest legacies," Anastasia Nakis said in a statement.

"My brother Eric and I are extremely proud to be part of this wonderful heritage," Martin Sara said.

The new owners extol how great the smoked meat is and how well it sells, so it would seem that they won't change it.

They're not the first non-Jews to own Schwartz's. Diamond's predecessor was the legendary "Madame" Armande Chartrand, who inherited it from her friend, Maurice Zbriger in 1981.

Neither was a restaurateur – Zbriger, in fact, was a violinist, composer and conductor – nor did they take an active role in running the place.

Diamond said that when he took it over, Schwartz's was deteriorating. He put a lot of money into bringing the physical premises up to date without changing the seedy

Schwartz's deli has been a fixture on the Main for more than eight decades. *[Jonathan Wenk photo]*

way it had looked for decades. He also hired new staff and improved the food quality, without touching the menu.

He was a hands-on owner. His office was upstairs (he also owned the building) and was in the restaurant nearly every day.

"I had no restaurant experience. I just used common sense, saw what people liked," he said

Diamond also worked hard on public relations. He nurtured a documentary, a history and a play, *Schwartz's: The Musical* , which ran at Centaur Theatre last year and was so popular that its run was extended and it was reprised in the summer.

There were articles published everywhere, even in upscale *Gourmet* magazine, and Tourism Montreal made Schwartz's a regular stop for visiting journalists.

He also linked Schwartz's with a number of charities, including his favourite cause: ovarian cancer research and education, in memory of his wife, Doris.

The Montreal Hebrew Delicatessen was founded by Romanian-Jewish immigrant Reuben Schwartz a few doors away from the current site. The canopy over the entrance says that it was founded in 1930, but the most widely accepted date now is 1928.

Eiran Harris, archivist emeritus of the Jewish Public Library, who has eaten at Schwartz's for 50 years and wrote a history of smoked meat in Montreal, wants to set the record straight.

"The delicatessen – it was not called Schwartz's then – opened Saturday, Dec. 31, 1927, after sundown, 5-1/2 hours before midnight, to be precise," he said.

The deli was kosher for its first few years, and stopped being so during the Depression, apparently to cut costs.

As devoted as he is to Schwartz's fare, Harris contends it has not been a Jewish deli for at least 25 years, ever since Jews ceased to be the majority of its clients.

The turning point, he believes, was when medical warnings about the dangers of eating fat and cholesterol started getting louder and louder. "Jews were prime candidates for cardiovascular disease, and they were greatly influenced by that advice."

One thing he hopes Angélil et al do not remove is the shmutz that begrimes the smoke room, which, as anyone who saw the musical knows, is Schwartz's dirty little secret. Harris attributes the deli's staying power and international reputation to the food, the colourful waiters, the cosy (read cramped) ambience, and "word of mouth."

"Water may have dripped on my head from the ceiling, but I never had a bad food experience there," he said.

"I'll give the owners the benefit of the doubt for now, but when there are several partners, and all are looking at the bank balance and how to recoup their investment quickly, you can never be certain what they will do."

And if anyone thinks they would be foolhardy to tamper with a winning formula, Harris only has to mention the fiasco of New Coke.

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Vancouver's Lavan struggles against boycott

Lauren Kramer
Pacific Correspondent

VANCOUVER — All Shanie Bar-Oz wants to do is sell her line of personal care products made with Dead Sea minerals.

The 33-year-old entrepreneur opened Lavan, her shop in downtown Vancouver, two years ago, and she's the first to admit it's been tough going. Her clients love the products, but it's the picketing outside her store by a group calling itself the Boycott Israel Apartheid Campaign (BIAC) that's making business a struggle.

Shanie Bar-Oz

"It's been devastating," she told *The CJN*. "I'm under a boycott from a group that's spreading false information about my company, saying that Lavan is taking advantage of Palestinian rights and preventing their access to the Dead Sea, and that we have apartheid values. Basically they are calling us Nazis, claiming we come from a dark place that downgrades people because of their race."

This is the third boycott Bar-Oz has experienced since November 2011, when the Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver notified her that she should expect picketing outside her store.

"I was hysterical," she recalled of that first incident. "I couldn't sleep for a few days before they started, and we were afraid the demonstrators would get violent."

Her worst fears didn't materialize, and many members of the Jewish community and supporters of Israel came to the store to buy products and show their solidarity.

With the two demonstrations that followed, though, it was more difficult to find that support, particularly because the picketers would show up at unpredictable times. Still, her inbox is filled with well-wishers, with e-mails proclaiming "Am Yisrael Chai," and she has many "likes" on her Facebook page.

"I really appreciate every phone call and show of support, but it doesn't solve my problem," Bar-Oz said.

"We're significantly down in sales compared to last year, but aside from that, this has hurt my reputation. It has been so hard to get Lavan to the place where it is right now, and I've worked so hard to build this business. Today, if you search for Lavan on YouTube or Google, BIAC's material comes first, not my material, and that hurts the brand."

"Lavan can't solve the conflict – it's a skin care brand," she said. "I can have a political agenda, but the brand cannot, and the problem is it's not me that's under attack, it's the business."

During the group's protest on Feb. 12, Bar-Oz called the police to the scene, but when they arrived they said there was nothing illegal about the boycott and there was nothing they could do to help her.

The latest demonstrations against Israel were part of the annual "Israeli Apartheid Week" on campuses around the world, and Bar-Oz, her staff and her customers had to wade past more than 25 picketers standing on the sidewalk and handing out leaflets.

In response, as it has in the past, Buycott Israel, an initiative of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, issued calls to supporters of Israel to patronize the shop on Feb. 19 and 26. And on Feb. 22, federal Citizenship Minister Jason Kenney visited the store and made several purchases.

BIAC is part of the international boycott, divestment and sanctions movement. Its website urges Israel to "recognize the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination and fully complies with the precepts of international law."

Charlotte Kates, a spokesperson for BIAC, didn't respond to requests for comment by *The CJN*'s deadline. But in an article in the Huffington Post, she argued that hurting the Lavan brand and its business is precisely the point.

"We're part of an ongoing campaign to boycott Israeli goods until it complies with international law," she said. "Israel has no right to exist. No state has a right to exist as a racist state. Israel exists through the continuing dispossession of Palestinian land. Seven million Palestinians are prohibited from returning to their homes, because it is said they will disrupt the demographic majority in Israel. Israel denies other people its rights. We think the conversation needs to be less about the claimed rights of governments and more about human rights."

In recent years, BIAC has also boycotted Chapters-Indigo, Zim Integrated Shipping and the Mountain Equipment Co-Op.

But for a small business owner like Bar-Oz, the economic effects of the boycott have been terrible. "I want to have Lavan product on every shelf some day, just like Ahava," she says. "But right now, Lavan is not Ahava. I don't have investors – it's just me and my business partner in Israel at the factory, and the boycott has been devastating."

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JUMPING ROPE: Students at Netivot HaTorah Day School raised funds for the Heart and Stroke Foundation during their annual "Jump Rope for Heart" event. Pictured are Grade 1 students Elnatan and Benjamin having fun skipping while parent volunteers Cantor Alex Stein and Lisa Jesin turn rope and Hannah and Shoshana eagerly await their turn to jump.

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APP TIME: Grade 6 students at Leo Baeck Day School's south campus, in Holy Blossom Temple, met their Grade 1 buddies for their monthly activity/get-together. The buddies worked excitedly on different apps on their iPad. The groups put together a short animation movie and played math and word games. From left, Zachary K., Braden W. and Sam B.

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שישאר בינינו

גידי קורן וחברים

גורמים שונים מצפים שנשיא סוריה יפנה את מקומו, יצא לגלות, יתנהג כמו "בן אדם", כפי שקרה במצרים, תוניסיה ותימן. כל מי שיש לו רעיונות בכוון הזה- מחמיץ פרט קטן אבל חשוב מאין כמוהו: בכל המקומות האחרים הביאה נפילתו של הדיקטאטור לחיסול קבוצה קטנה של אנשים שהיו סביבו. במקרה של אסד- הפסד פירושו שחיטה מסיבית של שני מליון עלאווים ששולטים בצבא ובשלטון, שמדאגים ושוחטים מזה כחמישים שנה את הרוב הסוני בסוריה. ברגע שהצבא הסוני ייכנע למתנגדיו- תתחיל שחיטה מאסיבית, גדולה בהרבה בהיקפה ממה שקורה עכשיו. ועל כן "כללי המזרח התיכון החדש" לא יפעלו כאן. עברה במוחי מחשבה שיתכן אפילו שאסד, רופא העיניים, כבר מת לצאת מסוריה בעצמו- אך אנשי העדה שלו לא יאפשרו לו את הלוקסוס הזה, כי בכך יחתמו על גזר דין מוות לעצמם.

העובדה שבניגוד ללוב- אין נאטו מתכננת התערבות צבאית בסוריה, אומרת הרבה: נאטו מעריך שכוחו של אסד עדיף בהרבה מזה של המורדים, ושכל התערבות צבאית שם תביא לסיכון גדול לחיילי נאטו.

אבל שישאר בינינו.

השופט שלא שר את "התקווה"

מצלמות הטלביזיה הראו את טקס החלפת נשיאת בית המשפט העליון, ובו, רחמנא לצלן, השופט הלא יהודי סאלים ג'ובראן שותק בזמן שירת התקווה. תוך דקות- פורצת מהומה בביצה, וחברי כנסת מהימין הקיצוני "דורשים" לנזוף בו ולהעניש. כמות הסירחון שיוצאת לאחרונה מקבוצה קטנה זו של חברי כנסת פאשיסטים בשם הלאומנות היהדית, איננה יודעת גבול. מה הם מצפים, שאיש דרוזי או ערבי ישירו "כל עוד בלבב פנימה נפש יהודי הומיה"?

הרי ההימנון הישראלי, מטבע הטקסט והסנטימנט היהודי הברור שבו, מוציא כל מי שאיננו יהודי מן הקונסנסוס שהימנון אמור להביא איתו. היה מי שהציע בשעתו את שירו של טשרניחובסקי "שחקי שחקי על החלומות" שמביא את העקרון של להיות בנאדם, ללא הבדל דת או כת. אבל לצפות מערבי או דרוזי לשיר את התקווה- מזכיר לי קלגסים שמאלצים יהודים לרקוד בצל הרובים שלהם בגטו. איך יתכן שחברי כנסת יהודיים, בנים ונכדים של אנשים שהושפלו על ידי גויים ונדרשו להראות אהבה והזדהות למדינות ששנאו אותם- יכולים להיות כל כך סתומים וגסים!

מה לעשות- כך מתנהגים לאומנים פאשיסטים בכל העולם, וישראל איננה שונה. כמו שניבא הרצל: במדינה נורמאלית יש זונות ויש פאשיסטים לאומנים.

מזל שהשר יעלון הזכיר לכולם שקציני צבא דרוזיים - איש איננו מצפה מהם לשיר את התקווה.

עלונדון

ענת קורן, אדם יקר, היא היוזמת ובעלת העיתון הישראלי של לונדון, אנגליה, עלונדון שמו. הכתיבה צעירה, קולחת עכשווית, הקצב מדליק והקריאה בכיף. תענוג לראות שעיתון ישראלי בנכר יכול לצאת ברמה כל כך מכובדת.

הנה הקישור למהדורה שיצאה זה עתה:

http://dmaq.col.org.il/pub/alondon/index.html

PURIM PLAY: The junior kindergarten class at Torah Tots geared up for Purim by acting out the story in their classroom drama centre. Pictured are Madison Hirshhorn, left, and Chaya Bruskal.

PURIM BAKERS: Yossi Baker, left, and Eli Pearl get right into making hamentashen at Beth Isaiah Congregation in Guelph. They were two of many children and adults who helped prepare for Purim. *(Howard Portnoy photo)*

PURIM FUNDRAISERS: Menorah Nursery School raised funds for Beit Halochem (Aid to Disabled Israeli Veterans and victims of terrorism) by selling colourful "hamentashen" with kids' names on them. Pictured in front of the hamentashen, standing from left, are Nathan Hulbert, Esther Wolgelerenter, and Benny Dubins, and seated from left, Bobbi Hirshorn and Benjamin Rosenstein.

Mazel Tov
מזל טוב

Marc & Jamie Seawell (née Hanet) are thrilled to announce the arrival of Isabella Mackenzie. Grandma Shirley and Bubie Cesia are very proud.

Mazel tov to Jason on his 16th birthday from parents Roberto Miranda & Julia Gray and godparents Sholom Wargon & Erminia Tonelli.

Mazel tov Helen Tizel on your 100th Birthday. Wishing you good health and happiness. Frank, Janie, Adam, Marian, Josh Eliana, Jacob, Bria and Zoey.

Mazel tov to Fay Malemud on her 90th birthday celebration. Love from all her grandchildren.

Parents Danielle & Heath Applebaum announce arrival of adorable Ethan Benjamin, Feb. 13. Proud grandparents are Ruth Devor, Michael & Janet Ryval, Martin & Vivienne Applebaum.

Happy third birthday Shayna from your sister Marissa, parents Helen & Ken Rubin, grandparents, Esther & Schaul Leiba, and uncles Yosi and Aaron!

Email your digital photos to cblackman@thecjn.ca or go online to www.CJNews.com and click the "Family Moments"

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What's New

By LILA SARICK

Social Networking @ The Canadian Jewish News
for the :-) generation

Deadline reminder: March 19 is the deadline for the issue of March 29. March 26 is the deadline for the issue of April 5. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; e-mail whatsnewcjn@gmail.com, or fax 416-391-0829.

Thursday, March 15

PIZZA AND A MOVIE

The movie *Against the Tide* will be shown at Temple Har Zion, followed by discussion led by **Rabbi Cory Weiss**, 6:30 p.m.

ISRAEL-U.S. RELATIONS

Nathan Guttman, Washington bureau chief for the *Jewish Daily Forward*, discusses "Israel-U.S. Relations: The View From Washington," Beth David Synagogue, 7:30 p.m.

THE FOUR QUESTIONS

JTS professor **Robbie Harris** and local rabbis lead sessions on "Can You Answer the Four Questions," Adath Israel Synagogue, 7:30 p.m. Register at 416-667-1717 or beroth@jtsa.edu.

Saturday, March 17

TORAH CLASS

Allan Cooper teaches the Torah class at Beth Tikvah Synagogue, 9:45 a.m.

Sunday, March 18

WOMEN'S DAY OF LEARNING

Esther Friedman, **Channa Sargon** and **Devora Weisswasser** speak at Kehillat Shaarei Torah's annual women's day of learning. Registration 9:30 a.m. $25 in advance, $30 at the door. 416-229-2600, ext. 5, or womenslearning2012@gmail.com.

PESACH COOKING

Margo Grosbein, **Ran Goel** and **Abra Snider** demonstrate healthy Pesach recipes, 10 a.m., Beth Emeth Synagogue. Register by March 15. 416-633-3838.

WINE TASTING

Na'amat Club Aviva is holding its pre-Passover wine-tasting brunch, Borochov Centre. Tickets $25 in advance, $36 at the door. 416-636-5425.

CAVALCADE OF STARS

Klezkonnection Klezmer Band, Shul of Rock, **Gord Lindsay** and **Yehezkel Lipinsky** perform at Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue, 6:30 p.m. at a benefit for Jews for Judaism. For information, e-mail toronto@jewsforjudaism.ca.

DANI GALA

Piano prodigy **Ethan Bortnick**, singer-songwriter **Baruch Levine** and **Judge Dan Butler** appear at DANI's gala dinner, Terrace Banquet Centre. For tickets, gala@dani-toronto.com or 905-731-6606.

VENDORS MARKET

Uptown Chabad holds a vendors market and silent auction 11 a.m.-4 p.m., 15 Hove St. **Sandy**, 416-631-8261.

Monday, March 19

MEDICAL HALACHAH

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner discusses "The Jewish Doctor: Minyan vs. Medicine," 8 p.m., Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue. info@torontotorah.com or 416-781-1777.

Continued on page 29

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Continued from page 28

FOREIGN BODIES

Harriet Morris reviews the book *Foreign Bodies* by **Cynthia Ozick**, 1 p.m., Beth Tzedec Synagogue. 416-781-3514, ext. 225.

Tuesday, March 20

IN A BETTER WORLD

Heather Kassel reviews the film *In a Better World*. Adath Israel Synagogue, 8 p.m. Call 416-449-6920 or 416-493-3626.

EATING FOR VITALITY

Janet Nezon discusses "Eating for Vitality at Any Age," Temple Har Zion. Bring your own dairy lunch at noon, program begins at 12:30 p.m.

HAGGADAH ANALYSIS I

Rabbi Moshe Stern analyzes the Pesach Haggadah tonight and March 27, Shaarei Tefilah Synagogue, 8 p.m. 416-787-1631.

HAGGADAH ANALYSIS II

Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon, Rabbi of Alon Shvut South, looks at the structure of the Haggadah, 8 p.m., Bnai Torah Congregation, 465 Patricia Ave. 416-633-5770 or www.torahinmotion.org.

Wednesday, March 21

POMEGRANATE GUILD

Line Dufour discusses her woven tapestries, fabric and fibre at the Pomegranate Guild of Judaic Textiles, Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue, 8 p.m. Visitors welcome. $5.

IBERIAN JEWS

Rabbi Wayne Allan gives 4 illustrated lectures about the history of the Jews of the Iberian Peninsula. Tonight, "The Tarnished Golden Age," 7:30 p.m., Beth David Synagogue. $15.

Thursday, March 22

PRE-PESACH CONCERT

Cantor David Edwards and **Klara Bagley** present a Pre-Pesach Nash and Drash Concert, Beth Emeth Synagogue, noon. Tickets $12, advance only. 416-633-3838.

CRYPTO-JEWS

Judith Cohen discusses Crypto-Jews, 7:30 p.m. Lodzer Synagogue. 416-636-6665.

Other News

HAVDALAH ON ICE

Temple Har Zion holds its Havdalah on Ice, March 24, 7:30 p.m., Elvis Stojko Arena. RSVP by March 19, 905-889-2252, ext. 5, or thzskates@gmail.com.

MUSICALE

Club Beersheba, Na'amat Canada presents the annual Musicale with pianists, flutist and vocalist, March 25, 1:30 p.m., Bernard Betel Centre. Entrance, **$18. Call** 416-636-5425 or 416-225-2112, ext. 105.

CANTORS IN CONCERT

The world's greatest cantors perform March 28, 7:30 p.m., Toronto Centre for the Arts. Call **Rivy**, 416-783-6103, ext. 228, or www.greatestcantors.com.

MATZAH BAKERY

Children are invited to learn how to bake matzah at 770 Chabad Gate, Thornhill, March 25, 3 p.m. Call **Elyse Tytel**, 416-621-5675, or etytel@ujafed.org.

RIKUDIYAH

The Israeli Dance Festival for Children will be held March 25, TanenbaumCHAT, Wallenberg Campus. Performances at 11 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. Tickets at www.cjetoronto.com or **Teme Kernerman** 416-638-1881, ext. 4364.

CHOCOLATE SEDER

Shaar Shalom Synagogue holds a chocolate seder, April 1, 1:30 p.m. RSVP by March 26, youth@shaarshalom.ca or 905-889-4975, ext. 62.

HELPING OTHER PARENTS

HOPE (Helping Other Parents Everywhere) is a support group for parents of acting-out youth. The group meets Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m. at Edithvale Community Centre, 131 Finch Ave. W. Call **Bernice**, 905-737-3403.

THE GIFT OF PRAYER

Melton Adult Mini School offers a 9-week class on Prayer: A Gift for Our Lives, taught by **Yehudit Shier Weisberg**. Starting April 18 at Beth Emeth Synagogue. Call 416-789-7400.

SCHWARTZ REISMAN CENTRE

The centre is open for daily tours. Register now for pre-school and daycare. Call 905-303-1821.

JF&CS GROUPS

All programs require pre-registration and are open to all members of the community. To register, call **Shawna Sidney,** 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or www.jfandcs.com. All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst. St., unless otherwise noted.

Mind, Body Connection for Women: An 8-session group for women who want to learn mindfulness and meditation. Topics include stress and anxiety reduction, enhancing your self-esteem. Starts March 27, 7 p.m.

When You're About to Separate, What to Tell the Kids: A workshop for parents in the early stages of separation, March 29, 6:30 p.m.

BEREAVED PARENTS

Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer** at JF & CS, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or bfeffer@jfandcs.com.

FOR SENIORS

Volunteers Needed. Join the BRAVO study linking brain health and volunteering. Participants must be over 55 and not working or volunteering for more than 3 hours a month. Study includes 1 year of volunteering at Baycrest. Visit www.baycrest.org/bravo; call 416-785-2500, ext. 3435.

Association of Jewish Seniors. Tammy, 416-635-2900, ext. 458. March 15, **Jamie Golombek** discusses "Tax and Retirement Tips for Seniors," Shaarei Shomayim, 9:30 a.m. April 7, Passover seder, Bernard Betel Centre, 6 p.m. $20. Reserve by March 26.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park. (60+). **Valerie**, 416-395-7881. Barber/hairdresser March 22, 9 a.m. Casino Rama, April 18. Dance with live music, March 25. Tuesdays, gentle exercise, 10 a.m.; Wednesdays, duplicate bridge, 12:30 p.m.; Thursdays, line dancing, 10 a.m.; social bridge, 12:30 p.m. Non-members welcome.

National Council of Jewish Women, Aviva branch, is looking for women over 70 for their group. Call 416-633-5100.

LZA Seniors Cultural Club meets Tuesdays, 10 a.m., Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell. 416-630-9444.

New Horizons is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club that offers kosher food, card games, casino trips. 416-256-1892.

Adath Israel Congregation. Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub. Refreshments $2. Call **Pearl**, 416-635-6317, or **Sheila**, 416-665-3333.

Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue welcomes new players for mah-jong and Rummikub Monday and Wednesday afternoons. 416-633-3838.

The bridge club at Forest Hill library has reopened and is looking for new members. Call **Lea** (evenings), 416-487-7630.

Bernard Betel Centre 416-225-2112. March 15, **Judy Weiss** discusses "Family Expectations," 1:30 p.m. March 20, **David Lipovitch** discusses "The Archeology of Iron Age Israel," 10 a.m.; March 21, Self-Defence for Seniors, 1 p.m.; March 22, nurse **Angela Merett** discusses "Safe Medication Use," 1:30 p.m.

Seniors Gentle Fitness Club offers Tai Chi Chih classes, Wednesdays, 7 p.m. and Feldenkrais, Mondays, 10:30 a.m., Edithvale Community Centre. 416-665-9050.

Active Seniors, Miles Nadal JCC, 416-924-6211, ext.155. March 22, **Jordan Klapman** presents "The Jewish-Black Music Connection: Louis Armstrong and Beyond," with live piano, 1:30 p.m. Beginner's computer course, 8-week session, starts April 17.

PROSSERMAN JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com.

Enjoy an afternoon of illusion and socializing, March 21. Call ext. 4472.

Register for Shalom Sesame Pesach event, ages 1-5, April 4, 10 a.m. **Monique Shapiro**, ext. 4012.

Shalom Singers are looking for choir members, rehearsals Thursdays 10 a.m.

Tickets for spring/summer theatre trips are on sale now.

Tic Tac Two program will be extended into the summer. Call **Kailah Rubin**, ext. 4351.

MILES NADAL JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org.

The Diary of Anne Frank by Shakespeare in Action runs March 15-31, Al Green Theatre. Ext. 0.

Kevin Courrier discusses "Movies in the George W. Bush era," March 19, 7 p.m.

Night Without a Moon: Jewish Women's Cabaret with **Marcia Beck, Tova Kardonne, Marni Levitt** and **Ilana Newman** 8 p.m., March 24. Ext. 154.

Janusz Makuch, director of the Krakow Jewish Culture Festival, discusses "Jewish Culture in Contemporary Poland," March 25, 2 p.m. Ext. 154.

Toronto Jewish Film Society presents *Divan*, March 25, 4 and 7:30 p.m. with guest filmmaker **Pearl Gluck.** Ext. 606.

The winner of the 2011 Canadian Jewish Playwriting Competition is *Haunted* by **Daniel Karasik.** The play will have a public reading April 10, 8 p.m.

The adult daytime choir meets Tuesdays, 1 p.m. gillians@mnjcc.org.

You Are an Animal, photography by **Azriel Cohen**, on display at the gallery until April 1.

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 32

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BRIDAL REGISTRY

Dealing with mental illness

Rabbi N. Daniel Korobkin

She was frail and emaciated. A feeding tube fed her starving body after she had refused to eat for weeks. Her hands were in restraints to protect her from herself.

This was how I first met Dorothy in a downtown hospital that specialized in patients suffering from anorexia and other eating disorders. This was my first hospital visit after having just moved to Toronto to begin my new rabbinic post, and although I've seen a lot in my years in the rabbinate, Dorothy's plight shook me to the core.

Dorothy was much more than anorexic; for 20 out of her short 30 years, she had endured various physical ailments that left her in constant pain. But the most painful disease of all was the one that could not be detected by any lab test. Dorothy suffered from mental illness, an illness that left her depressed, confused, suicidal at times, and unable to live with and by herself. A pretty young lady with bright blue eyes who should have been in the prime of a happy life with a husband and children was instead languishing in a hospital bed, where her tragic end had already been scripted.

Four months later, Dorothy was dead.

Dorothy's family's efforts were nothing less than heroic in fighting to keep her alive. She was in and out of treatment centres, and no stone was unturned in seeking the best treatment for her. Outstanding doctors and psychiatrists, many of them part of her own community, were administering to her illness and doing the best they could to treat an invisible and elusive disease. But even the best doctors can lose patients. One doctor who specializes in eating disorders spoke at Dorothy's funeral. He expressed a combination of sympathy, profound sadness, and the beleaguered voice of a soldier who's been on the battlefield too long and seen too many friends succumb to the battle.

Mental illness can sometimes be the most difficult disease to deal with, both for the patient and her caregivers. The patient suffers not only through her illness but also the skepticism of others who may think she's "faking" it or can be easily cured if only she'd "grow up" or shake herself back to reality. Her family lives in constant doubt, never knowing if they've done too much or not enough to help her get well.

It is also an extremely lonely illness. When a person displays physical symptoms, the community shows compassion and does its best to take care of the physically handicapped, the cancer patient, and so forth. But when a person is mentally ill, some shy away and may even get a bit "freaked out." It may be because we don't take it seriously, or that the patient's illness causes her to say or do hostile and repelling things. Perhaps we're even frightened when we encounter the mentally ill patient, because we detect a shadow of that very same pathology within ourselves; we're worried that it's contagious and that our own mental state might become "infected" if we stick around too long.

Dorothy was a member of an Orthodox shul. She had attended the finest Jewish day schools and came to shul with her parents on Shabbat. Even after her illness set in, she would have lucid moments when she was a loving and sensitive daughter and sister. Despite the loneliness, confusion and pain, Dorothy courageously persisted in her struggle to achieve the normalcy that she could never have.

Although we have wonderful mental health professionals, we still haven't come completely to terms with mental illness as a community. As embracing and tight-knit a Jewish community can be, Dorothy did not find complete acceptance in her religious surroundings, partially because she was misunderstood by people who were simply uneducated in matters of mental illness.

At around the age of 10, she began displaying symptoms of the mental illness that would eventually claim her life. Some of her teachers, unequipped to deal with this kind of problem, tried their best to counsel her parents and provide whatever help they could. Sometimes, their "advice" was based on a distorted worldview that assumed that religion had all the answers to one's mental and emotional problems. One particularly insensitive teacher told her parents that the reason Dorothy was acting out such strange behaviour was because her parents were contributing to her anxiety by allowing this intelligent girl to ask too many questions. All she needed to do was learn to place her faith in God, and that would allay her turbulent outbursts.

We cannot afford to ignore mental illness within the Jewish community. Too many of our friends and neighbours suffer in silence, embarrassed by the stigma to themselves and their families. Some are embarrassed to acknowledge such a problem within themselves or their family, out of a fear that it might adversely affect the family reputation and the ability for the other children to find a good shidduch. But this only speaks to the urgency for the rest of us to react with greater sensitivity and awareness.

If you know someone in your synagogue or community who is depressed or displaying signs of mental illness, reach out. Make sure they're getting the proper medical attention and that they aren't isolated from the rest of the world. The Torah tells us that we must not stand by idly as our brother's or sister's blood is being spilled. Don't hide behind your own fears or out of a concern of being overly intrusive. Don't assume the family has everything under control. You may make the difference between life and death. If you're not sure how to proceed, seek out your rabbi, Jewish family services or a mental health professional who can guide you.

For those who pretended Dorothy wasn't there, they don't need to pretend anymore. May her memory serve as a blessing and inspiration for all of us.

Rabbi N. Daniel Korobkin is the spiritual leader of Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation. The name of the deceased has been changed.

OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Gidon, Charles	Feb. 24/12	7440 Bathurst St
Hartsman, Ruth	Feb. 25/12	80 Antibes Dr
Spektor, Gitalia	Feb. 27/12	Private
Bobrik, Sosia	Feb. 27/12	175 Cummer Ave G
Goodman, Evelyn	Feb. 27/12	525 Lawrence Ave W
Ambrose, Murray	Feb. 27/12	9 Eglinton St
Altman, Norma	Feb. 28/12	10 Albion Close
Wierzchowski, Stanislaw	Feb. 28/12	Private
Reshina, Malka	Feb. 29/12	Private
Davis, Evelyn	March 1/12	80 Antibes Dr
Greenberg Goldie (Gertrude)	March 1/12	20 Hashbury Place
Anisman, Hyman	March 2/12	1131 Steeles Ave. W
Molnar, Mariann	March 4/12	88 Promenade Circle
Warner, Alexander	March 6/12	
Pielcarz, Mendel	March 5/12	135 Combe Ave

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Belle Siskind	Feb 25/12	2121 Bathurst Street
Mary Hastings Nee Maibau	Feb 26/12	25 The Esplanade
Leslie Kenedi	Feb 27/12	35 Wynford Heights Cres.
Joseph Estrin	Feb 27/12	81 Lowe Blvd.
Mary Goldbach	Feb 27/12	65 Skymark Drive
Michael Sossin	Feb 27/12	100 Observatory Lane
David Selwyn	Feb 27/12	329 Burroughs Hall Blvd.
Michael Siegal	Feb 20/12	Derbyshire, United Kingdom
Norm Bensky	Feb 29/12	400 Walmer Rd.
Enia Bershtein	Mar 1/12	24 Shallmar Blvd.
Rolly Malette	Mar 1/12	25 Broadway Avenue
Donna Berman	Mar 1/12	17 Rollingwood Drive
Estelle Waxer	Mar 2/12	4001 Bayview Avenue
Lee Schwenk	Mar 2/12	77 Clarendon Avenue
Bernie Abramovitz	Mar 3/12	111 Westbury Court

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DAFFODIL DRIVE: Grade 8 students at Associated Hebrew Schools' Danilack Middle School sold daffodils to raise money for cancer research and dedicated their efforts to the memory of the brother of Omrit Aharoni, one of their teachers. The students also created signs and made announcements with personal connections to their loved ones who have survived or been lost to cancer. The project was part of the school's Hineni (I am here) initiative that promotes tikkun olam and social activism.

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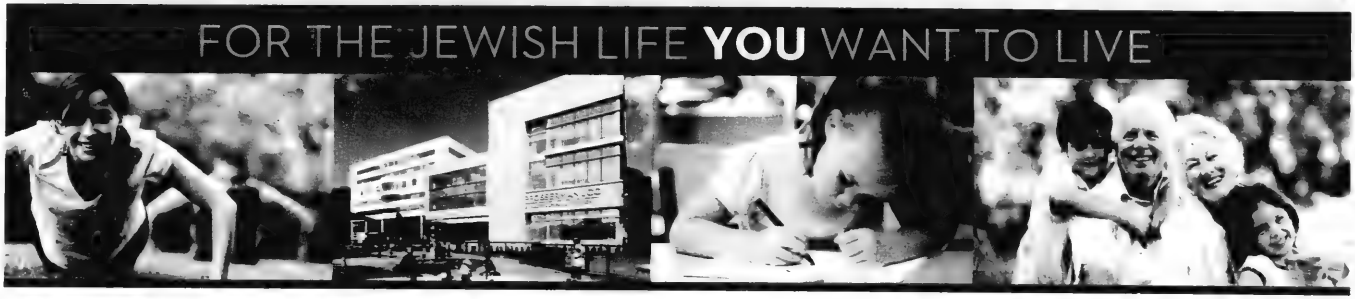

NEW SPRING/SUMMMER PROGRAMS

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Challah Making!
Sunday May 6, 1-3pm

Mystic Drumz
Thursdays May 3 - 24
10 - 10:45am

TEEN PROGRAMS

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Tuesdays April 17 - June 5
5:30 - 6:30pm

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for Beginners
Saturdays April 21 - June 9
10 - 11:30am

XBox and PC Video Game Programming
Saturdays April 21 - June 9
10 - 11:30am

Red Cross Babysitting Course
Sunday June 3 or Sunday August 19
9am - 5pm

Social Media Computer Class
Tuesdays April 17 - May 22
2:15 - 3:30pm

MOVIE LECTURES WITH KEVIN COURRIER

Woody Allen: Past and Present
Wednesdays April 18 - May 16, 1-3pm

An Offer You Can't Refuse: The Enduring Popularity of Gangster Films
Wednesdays May 23 - June 20, 1-3pm

Jewish Words:
Weapons of Mass Destruction
Saturdays April 21 - June 9
10 - 11:30am

Democracy In Our Time
Tuesdays June 5 - 26
10:30am - 12pm

THEATRE & DAY TRIPS

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Conference to examine Shoah in Soviet Union

Sheri Shefa
Staff Reporter

University of Toronto Yiddish professor Anna Shternshis hopes a three-day conference on Soviet Jewry during the Holocaust will shed some light on a subject that, until recently, was virtually inaccessible.

Anna Shternshis

The Moscow-born Shternshis – one of the organizers of the March 24-26 conference, to be held at U of T, titled "Jewish Life and Death in the Soviet Union during World War II" – explained that the Soviet Union never fully acknowledged Jewish suffering during the war.

"Twenty seven million Soviet people died during World War II, and they didn't feel that separating the Jewish experience was worth it," Shternshis said.

She added that 2.8 million Soviet Jews died in the Holocaust, but unlike Polish Jews, they weren't sent to concentration camps.

"Instead, they were killed where they lived, in their villages and towns. Many were shot, many were killed by neighbours, many were killed by the Einsatzgruppen [Nazi death squads]."

She said while there is an abundance of records about the fate of Polish Jews, because the Nazis were very meticulous in keeping records there, "in the Soviet Union, because so much of it was locally executed... they didn't have such records of what happened."

This is coupled with the fact that the role of local collaboration is a highly contested topic in Russia today. As for archival materials that do exist, until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, they were virtually inaccessible.

"In the '40s, Soviet Jewish writers and journalists were trying to put together a book about the testimonies from locals and Jews who survived called the *Black Book of Soviet Jewry*... What was allowed to be published was very selected parts of the testimony," Shternshis said.

"There were government documents, special commissions that were sent to the villages and towns in the Ukraine and Belarus, that documented exactly what happened in 1943 and 1944. The results of those commissions were also not made public."

She said that the conference will give the public an opportunity to hear from a number of Russian scholars who have since had access to these "secret documents and will talk about what the Soviet Union knew about the Holocaust, what they chose to share with the general public and what they chose to keep secret."

Co-sponsored by U of T's Centre for Jewish Studies, the conference will also present academics from Germany, the Netherlands, Israel, United States and Canada.

The keynote speaker, author, professor and co-founder of the Russian Research and Educational Holocaust Centre Ilya Altman, who will give a lecture titled, "The Holocaust in the Soviet Union: Unknown Pages," was the first person in 1989 in the Soviet Union to speak publicly about the Holocaust from an academic perspective.

"That took a lot of bravery for him to do that, and even now, the discussion of the Holocaust in the [former] Soviet Union, is a very controversial issue," Shternshis said.

In addition to lectures, there will also be a screening of Russian filmmaker Mikhail Kalik's *Goodbye, Boys!*, which will be held March 24 at U of T.

The film, produced in 1964, follows three teenage boys, one of whom is openly Jewish, in the late 1930s.

"In the movie we see images of people wearing striped robes and behind the barbed wire. That was the first time the subject of the Holocaust was brought up in Soviet cinema," Shternshis said.

Because of the references to the Holocaust, the film had a limited release and was rarely shown until the early 1990s. This screening is a Canadian premiere.

A photo exhibit from the Blavatnik Archive Foundation in New York called "Lives of the Great Patriotic War: The Untold Stories of Soviet Jewish Soldiers in the Red Army during World War II," will conclude the conference, but will continue from March 27 to April 4 at Congregation Darchei Noam.

Through wartime memoirs, photographs, and interviews with Red Army veterans – 82 of whom are Russian-Canadians – the exhibit presents the story of the 500,000 Jewish soldiers who fought in the war.

Following the conference, on April 1 at Darchei Noam, Shternshis will take part in a panel discussion titled "Defending Communism or Saving Global Jewry: Legacy of Soviet Jewish Veterans of World War II," which will examine the place of Soviet Jewish veterans, many of whom live in Toronto, in the Canadian Jewish community.

She suspects the panel discussion might "get a little controversial, because it might get away from the historical significance and go into the turbulent waters of modern Jewish politics."

Among the panelists will be Darchei Noam Rabbi Tina Grimberg, World War II veteran Alex Levin and UJA Federation of Greater Toronto president Ted Sokolsky.

For more details on the conference, visit cjs.utoronto.ca/jewishlifeanddeath.

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McGill club forced to change name of pro-Israel event

David Lazarus
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — The group McGill Friends of Israel (MFI) had to change the name of its "Israel A-Party" event last week because the university's student union said it constituted "a mockery and/or trivialization of various oppressions some people of the world are subject to on a day-to-day basis."

MFI grudgingly altered the original moniker of its Israel Peace Week event – meant as a play on the term "Israel apartheid" – to "A Party for Israel."

MFI vice-president Russell Sitrit-Leibovich said MFI risked losing its official club status, its funding and its right to organize events on campus if it didn't accede to the demand from the Student Society of McGill University (SSMU).

"It is so hypocritical," Sitrit-Leibovich told *The CJN*. "You can accuse Israel of apartheid all over campus, but an [SSMU] committee says that we are violating equity policy, that we are being offensive and inflammatory.

"It is absurd. We never disrupt their events."

Israeli Peace Week was organized to counter Israel Apartheid Week (IAW), which is is now held on 75 North American campuses.

The controversy about the "Israel A-Party" name arose after an anonymous complaint was registered with the SSMU's equity committee about the event, which was only publicized on Facebook.

SSMU vice-president Carol Ellen Fraser told MFI president Eliana Schwartz in a pre-event e-mail exchange that while there is nothing wrong with Israel's supporters expressing their opposition to Israel being characterized as an apartheid state, "this does not give them the right to mock and trivialize the term itself, and furthermore imply that Palestinian people are not suffering as a result of injustices in Israel...

"We feel that the title 'Israel A-Party' makes too much light of the convictions and experiences of students such as the claimant of this complaint.

"It is our job to ensure a safer place on campus."

McGill, as it happens, had an "apartheid wall" situated prominently on campus – near the Roddick Gates – during IAW.

Sitrit-Leibovich, a 21-year-old political science student, was also riled because MFI was notified only a few days before the pro-Israel party about the complaint to the SSMU by someone who was unidentified, giving his group little time to respond to or deal with the situation properly.

Schwartz told the SSMU that MFI would change the name of the event "in the interest of the hard work we have put into the event and our desire to maintain good relations with all members of the McGill community, [but] we have serious concerns about the complaint."

MFI, Schwartz wrote, has been treated "inequitably," and "we were not given a chance to make an official response to the complaint before the committee."

She said that the student union "would find it difficult to substantiate a complaint that the event's title oppresses any member of the McGill community in a manner that violates the SSMU equity policy."

As well, she said, there were "no defined complainants," the event was intended as a fundraiser for a charity and it was "supposed to be festive, not overtly political."

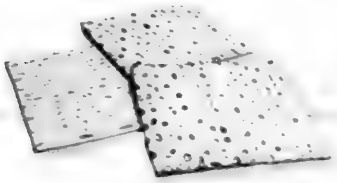
She added: "We find it difficult to comprehend the claims of oppression stemming out of an Israel Peace Week event by an organization that actively works toward a just solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict...

"The fact that this complaint has been passed through the SSMU implicitly recognized and affirms the misinformed notion that Israel is an apartheid state."

Sitrit-Leibovich told *The CJN* that his group was "left with no choice [but to change the event's title]. It is such hypocrisy."

On cjnews.com

MONTREAL — Pro-Israel students received conflicting messages on what they should be doing on campus to promote the state from Israeli Consul General Joel Lion and *National Post* columnist Barbara Kay. Lion and Kay were guest speakers at an event sponsored by McGill Friends of Israel, as part of its Israel Peace Week programming, which overlapped with Israeli Apartheid Week.



Passover Food Ideas

New and traditional ideas for meals

As Dry Bones puts it so well (see comic on this page), the big crunch is coming. Yet, preparing for Passover means a lot more than buying matzah.

As we begin to think about Passover, the celebration of ancient Hebrews' liberation from slavery more than 3,000 years ago, our first thought often turns to what we cannot eat during the eight-day festival.

Instead of thinking about what we can't eat, however, our food supplements in the next couple of weeks, should give you a number of suggestions about what we can.

The Passover seder is a time for family traditions, and many cooks are adamant that their families and friends want to eat exactly what they ate last year and the year before, and the year before that. There is always room, though, for fresh ideas, so we've included some of our writers' favourite foods, and perhaps these will become new favourites at your seder table.

We also haven't forgotten that many people search for new lunch and dinner ideas for the entire week. To that end, we offer some lunch recipes, mid-week treat ideas and delicious alternatives to a "typical" meat meal.

The ingredients in all our recipes are acceptable for Passover use, and can be purchased kosher for Passover in most large Jewish communities.

From all of us at *The CJN*, enjoy your Passover meals, and we wish you a Chag Kasher v'Samayach.

–CB

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Seder suggestions

Sue Epstein
Special to The CJN

I am sure that many Jews, if asked what their favourite Jewish holiday is, would immediately answer Passover, and if asked about their favourite holiday meal, the answer would be the seder.

People's lives are demanding and hectic today, and the Passover seder may be one of the few or only times of the year when all the generations sit down together. Sitting at the seder table with family, friends and guests, we relive the story of our exodus from Egypt. We read the Haggadah, discuss, ask questions and sing somewhat silly songs, and we continue the traditions of our forefathers and make new traditions for our children.

Preparing for Passover need not be difficult. Each year, more and more new kosher for Passover products become available. There are many different types of matzah, the store-bought cakes are delicious, new dairy products including low-fat and no-fat are in the supermarkets, and blueberry muffin mixes and pancake mixes are available. Preparing for Passover has never been so easy.

BAKED SALMON WITH BASIL OIL

This dish can easily be doubled or tripled and can be served as a first course for the seder or a main course dinner during the rest of Passover.

4 6-oz. salmon fillets, skin on
1/3 cup olive oil
oil for baking dish
1 cup fresh basil leaves
kosher salt and fresh ground pepper
4 sprigs of basil for garnish

Preheat oven to 250. Season the salmon with a few drops of the olive oil and put the fillets on an oil-coated baking dish. Wash and drain the basil leaves and dry them thoroughly. Make a basil oil by pureeing the leaves in a blender with the remaining olive oil until smooth. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Bake the salmon for 10 minutes. If the skin peels away easily and the salmon flesh flakes when tested with a fork, it is done enough, even though it may not look it. If you prefer it well done, return it to the oven for another 3 minutes. Sprinkle the salmon with salt and pepper. Sprinkle the basil oil lightly over the salmon and serve. Makes 4 servings.

MAIDA HEATTER'S CHOCOLATE WALNUT TORTE

I have never tasted a recipe from Maida Heatter that I didn't love. This rich chocolate sponge nut cake is wonderful! Although the recipe states that it serves 6 to 8, I find that as a seder dessert, after the large meal, it will serve more.

12 large eggs, separated
1 cup sugar
8 oz. semisweet chocolate, melted
8 oz. walnuts, finely ground
pinch of salt
powdered sugar for decoration, optional
melted semisweet chocolate for decoration, optional

Preheat oven to 350. In a bowl of an electric mixer at high speed, beat the egg yolks with 1/2 cup sugar until well blended, about 2 minutes. Beat in the chocolate and fold in half the nuts. Set aside.

In another bowl, beat the egg whites with the salt until very softly peaked, then gradually beat in the remaining sugar and continue beating until the egg whites hold firm peaks but are not dry. Stir a little of the egg whites into the chocolate mixture, then gently fold in about half the remaining egg whites. Finally, fold in the remaining nuts and the rest of the egg whites. Spoon the mixture into an ungreased 10-in. tube pan. Bake 75 minutes.

Remove the cake from the oven and turn upside down on a rack or suspend, upside down over the neck of a bottle, until completely cooled. Use a knife with a thin, stiff blade to loosen the cake from the pan by running the knife carefully and closely along the sides of the pan. Invert the cake onto a serving plate. It may be dusted with powdered sugar or drizzled with a lacework of melted chocolate. Makes 6-8 servings.

This Passover, ask a 5th question:
Why cook when you can cater?
COMPLETE SEDER DINNER INCLUDES:
Seder plate
Matzo
Old fashioned dill pickles
Tzimmes with fresh prunes, yams & carrots
Gefilte fish with white fish & salmon
CHOOSE ONE
Cabbage borscht with tender beef flanken
OR
Homemade matzo ball soup
CHOOSE ONE
Farm fresh baby spinach salad with red onions, toasted almonds, mandarin oranges, topped with a citrus vinaigrette
OR
Traditional coleslaw
CHOOSE TWO
Brisket served with gravy au jus
OR
Pickle Barrel famous B.B.Q. chicken
OR
Baked salmon with an orange miso glaze
OR
Grilled salmon with a sweet teriyaki glaze
CHOOSE ONE
Garlic infused mashed potatoes with caramelized onions
OR
Farfel with sautéed button & shiitake mushrooms
OR
Roasted mini red potatoes with fresh herbs & Kosher salt
CHOOSE ONE
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OR
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Memories and pickled herring

Beverly Levitt
Special to The CJN

Monty Hall spent 27 years making outrageous deals with anxious contestants on his television game show, *Let's Make A Deal*. But the sweetest deal he ever made with his family was for a plate of pickled herring if they'd join him for Passover seder.

Such a deal! The odds were all in Monty's favour.

Which of Monty and Marilyn Hall's – she co-compiled *The Celebrity Kosher Cookbook: A Sentimental Journey with Food, Mothers and Memories* – three children wouldn't want to gather around the large stone dining table to eat and retell the Passover story of the Jewish People's journey from slavery to freedom? Even the real deal-makers of the family – the Halls' five grandchildren – get to put in their two cents.

The youngest child will ask the Four Questions. Hall will set out his silver chalice filled with sweet, kosher wine for Elijah, and everyone will get a taste of the ceremonial foods: bitter herbs to recall the sorrow of slavery, matzah to awaken memories of deprivation, honeyed charoset to taste the sweetness of freedom.

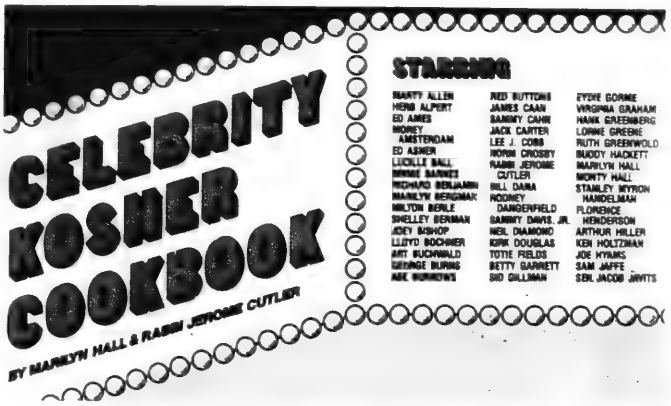
Hall greets visitors in his gracious home, where his Order of Canada medallion bumps up against three honorary doctorates, Israeli artist Reuven Rubin's suite of lithographs titled *The Prophets*, and a plethora of plaques honouring his charitable works.

Hall picks up the antique chalice that has become Elijah's wine goblet.

When asked which flavour of the sugary sweet wine is his favourite, Hall grins. "After the third cup, I don't care.

"Passover is a time to ask questions. We stop halfway through the service, discuss a topic of interest and everyone joins in. Sometimes it gets heated – about politics, about Israel. The only subject two Jews agree on is what the third person should give to charity," he says wryly.

"We stop the service at different sections: we eat gefilte fish, sweet and sour



herring; we read some more; we stop, we eat chicken soup, matzah balls; we sing. The happening goes on for four hours. Our seders are wonderful. I'm big daddy. I am what my grandfather was.

"Every year we host the seder, invite close friends, cousins – there are usually 35 of us. We take in lots of strangers, people who don't have anyplace to go. It's a mitzvah. I can do this," he beams.

Passover memories are precious to Hall, especially now that he's the patriarch. But a very special Passover, when he was only six and his beloved grandfather, David, was the patriarch, is never far from his heart.

Hall grew up in Winnipeg in his grandfather's house. He lived with four generations of family – aunts, uncles, cousins, his grandparents and two sets of great-grandparents.

"It wasn't a big house, and we used every conceivable square inch – four people in one bedroom, three in another," Hall reminisces. "My mother's three young brothers – my uncles – and I slept in the same room. With all those people, we had only one bathroom. That's where you learn patience. I also learned to wait in line." He laughs at the memory.

"More importantly, when you grow up in a house like that, you learn about respect," he adds. "One of the most beautiful sights I remember is sitting at the dining table, watching my aged great-grandfather feeding his wife, who had gone blind," Monty says, still touched.

Hall's grandfather, David Rusen, had arrived in Winnipeg in 1901 from the Pavelich shtetl in Ukraine. He started out with a push-cart, selling fruit and vegetables on the street. He subsequently bought a truck, and then started a wholesale produce company.

By 1906, he had earned enough to bring over his wife and children, his wife's parents and two sets of grandparents (Monty's great-grandparents).

Grandpa David ultimately sponsored not only the rest of their family – aunts, uncles and cousins – but 100 impoverished Jews from their shtetl who wanted a respite from their life in Czarist Russia.

On one particular Pesach, the family was in the middle of the service when the phone rang. It was the stationmaster from the Canadian Pacific Railroad.

"I have this family – they gave me a piece of paper with your number. What do I do with them?" he urgently asked. "Put them in a taxi," Rusen said. And tell the driver to make it quick."

The "family" were cousins who had set foot on the shores of Canada from Ukraine on the first night of Passover, Hall says. "They were sponsored by my grandfather."

"Grandma ordered us all to stop eating. 'We have six more mouths to feed,' she told us.

"There were tears, but they were for joy, as my grandmother began babbling in Ukrainian to these cousins she hadn't seen in 21 years."

Continued on page 36

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Celebrities share favourite Pesach recipes

Continued from page 35

Fifty years later, Hall was speaking in at a large Hadassah fundraiser. He was retelling the story of how a poor Russian family walked into his grandfather's seder and changed the way he looked at the world.

"After I finished speaking, people began gathering around me," Hall remembers. "One very pretty woman whispered, 'That story sounds familiar. My name is Miriam Margulies. Could we be related?'

"I felt the hair stand up on the back of my neck," said Monty.

"Miriam, didn't you hear the story? There were four children – Kieva, Aaron, Numa and Miriam. Your family crashed our Passover seder.

"We both cried," Hall says, tearing up.

That seder sticks in Hall's mind as one of the defining moments of his life, one where he learned about charity, philanthropy and the line from *Fiddler on the Roof* – "We all know who we are and what God expects of us."

"That was my grandfather's creed, and mine. My grandfather was like Tevye the Milkman. I guess in my own way, I am too."

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MONTY HALL'S SWEET AND SOUR HERRING

Hall learned how to make this recipe from a friend who taught him to filet the fresh fish. As years went by and time became scarce, Hall would make the recipe from matjes herring he would buy in a tin, which was already filleted. This sweet and sour appetizer developed quite a following, as it was the perfect hors d'oeuvres for Passover. One year, he and Alan Alda went to a second-night seder.

"I brought two jars of the herring. We passed the first jar around and – it disappeared," Hall said. "So, apparently, had the second jar. We looked high and low for it. Then I walked into the kitchen and there was Alan, devouring the herring, a guilty look on his face. I've never let him forget it," Hall laughed.

Matjes herring takes one hour to soak. Salt herring might take longer, so talk to the fish man about it.

4 fresh matjes or salt herrings, filleted, or 1 jar of matjes herring, which is what I used
1 large white onion, peeled and thinly sliced
1 cup white wine or apple cider vinegar
1 cup sugar
3 cloves
8 black peppercorns
2 bay leaves
8 juniper berries
1 tbsp. mace leaves
piece of cheesecloth

Soak herring for one hour in cold water. Drain on a few layers of paper towel. Cut into bite-size pieces. In a wide-mouth glass jar, place a layer of herring and a layer of onions. Alternate until you have reached the top. Place spices in a piece of cheesecloth, making sure to secure the ends to make a sack. Place in pan with vinegar, sugar and water to taste and bring to boil. Let it cool. Pour the liquid over the herring. Refrigerate for 2 days before eating. It will stay fresh in the refrigerator for 2 weeks. Serves 6 to 8.

MORLEY AMSTERDAM'S MATZAH SHALET

From *Celebrity Kosher Cookbook.*

Best-known for his role as a wisecracking television writer on *The Dick Van Dyke Show,* Amsterdam talks about his mother's penchant for "international delicacies" such as calf brains and eggs, which she loved making for his father's breakfast. One day, Amsterdam overheard her placing an order with the butcher. "Hello, have you got any brains…" She stopped and corrected herself. "I mean, have you got any brains at all?" Amsterdam fell off the couch laughing. His mother couldn't face the butcher for weeks.

This sweet, fruity side dish can be scrambled with eggs for a delicious variation of matzah brie.

2 matzahs, broken into pieces
2 tbsp. oil
1 tbsp. sugar or to taste
1/4 tsp. salt
2 tbsp. raisins
2 tbsp. currants
2 tbsp. almonds, finely chopped
1/4 tsp. cinnamon
1 large apple, peeled and diced
3 egg yolks
3 egg whites, beaten until stiff

Preheat oven to 350. Soak matzahs in cold water to cover. When soft, squeeze dry. Add oil, sugar, salt, raisins, currants, almonds, cinnamon, apples and egg yolks. Stir to combine. Fold in beaten egg whites. Bake in greased 6-in. pudding dish for 45 minutes. Top should be golden brown. Serves 6 to 8.

Cookbook features recipes from grassroots contributors

Sybil Kaplan
Special to The CJN

For the more than 40 years that I've been involved with food as a writer, cookbook author and cookbook reviewer, I have maintained that cookbooks created with contributions by individuals were the best cookbooks. Grassroots contributors are creative, resourceful, original, imaginative and inventive.

Many of these books were produced as fundraisers for organizations, as is the case with a cookbook by a 40-year old Chicago Hadassah chapter, *B'te Avon III Tasteful Treasures from North Boundary*.

Having served as president of the Hadassah region adjacent to the big Chicago chapter, I had the opportunity to know and work with 10 of the women who worked on the book plus one recent new member from Kansas.

It was a great joy to peruse the pages and make notes of recipes I want to try. The three-ring notebook format is functional and user friendly, and the enormous collection makes it an extremely practical book.

This kosher cookbook has an indication next to each recipe of whether it is dairy, meat or pareve. You can order it from bigchapter.chicago@Hadassah.org or from North Boundary Hadassah, 4711 Golf Road, Skokie, IL, 50076.

The following are two Passover recipes.

APPLE SOUFFLÉ

6 large eggs, separated
1 cup sugar
4 tbsp. vegetable oil
juice of 1 lemon
1/2 cup cake meal
6 peeled and sliced apples

Preheat oven to 375. Cream yolks and sugar. Add oil and lemon juice. Add cake meal and apples.

In another bowl, beat egg whites until stiff and fold into apple mixture. Pour into greased soufflé dish or ovenproof baking pan and bake for 45 minutes. Serves 10.

VEGETABLE KUGEL

1/4 cup diced green peppers
1/2 cup diced celery
1 cup diced onions
1 cup grated carrots
6 tbsp. oil
1 package thawed and drained chopped spinach
3 beaten eggs
1/8 tsp. pepper
1/2 tsp. salt
3/4 cup matzah meal

Preheat oven to 350. Sauté the peppers, celery, onions and carrots in oil for 10 minutes. Add and mix by hand the spinach, eggs, pepper, salt and matzah meal. Pour into a greased 8x8-in. pan and bake for 45 minutes until firm, or bake in 12 greased muffin tins for 30 minutes until cooked through. Cool for 10 minutes before removing from tins.

Variation: use a pie pan and cut into wedges.

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Kosher for Passover Menu

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(1lb serves approx. 4 people)

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Mushroom and Spinach Crepes	$5.00 per piece
Homemade Meatballs	$15.00 per lb
Chicken Soup	$5.00 per 500 ml
Matzah Balls	$1.75 per piece
Butternut Squash and Pear Soup	$4.00 per 500 ml
Cajun Roasted Vegetable Soup	$4.00 per 500 ml

Entrée Items

Chicken Dishes

Matzah Breaded Chicken Duxelle	$18.00 per piece
Ballotine of Chicken	$16.00 per piece
Seared Chicken Supreme	$15.00 per piece
Chicken Fingers	$20.00 per lb
Buffalo Chicken Wings	$16.00 per lb
Fried Chicken Drums	$15.00 per lb
Roasted Whole Chicken	$38.00
Carved Turkey Whole	$140.00

Beef Dishes

Roast Brisket of Beef	$15.00 per 6 oz
Slow Roasted Ribeye	$16.50 per 6 oz

Fish Dishes

Matzo Meal-Crusted Atlantic Salmon	$15.00 per 6 oz
Pan Seared Halibut	$19.50 per 6 oz

Side Dish Selection
(1lb serves approx. 4 people)

Oven Roasted Herbed Potatoes	$20.00 per lb
Roasted Herbed Yams	$20.00 per lb
Vegetable Sauté	$30.00 per lb
Honey Balsamic Root Vegetables	$25.00 per lb
Egg Noodles	$12.00 per lb

Salad Selection
(1lb serves approx. 4 people)

Spinach & Arugula Salad	$4.50 per person
French Country	$4.50 per person
Cucumber Salad	$8.00 per lb
Creamy Coleslaw Salad	$8.00 per lb
Red Cabbage Slaw	$8.00 per lb
New Potato Salad	$7.00 per lb
Creole Salad	$10.00 per lb

Extras

Caesar Dressing	$7.50 per 500 ml
Balsamic Oregano Dressing	$7.50 per 500 ml
Red Wine Tarragon Vinaigrette	$7.50 per 500 ml
Gravy	$10.00 per litre
Seder Plate	$8.00 per person
Charoset	$6.00 per 1/2 lb
Potato Kugel	$30.00 per pan
Apple Kugel	$31.00 per pan

Dessert Options
(Each cake serves 8 to 10)

Apple Matzah Cake	$50.00 per cake
Frozen Lemon Meringue Torte	$55.00 per cake
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Coffee & Chocolate Cake	$50.00 per cake
Fresh Fruit Salad	$5.00 per 6 oz

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Golden Recipes inspire daughter

Carolyn Blackman
Staff Reporter

Naomi Reiter Bruni, 43, is on a cooking mission.

She is trying to cook every recipe in a precious, handwritten cookbook owned previously by her mother, Carol Joy Reiter, who, in her late 60s, has Alzheimer's disease and lives in long-term care.

A law clerk who runs the office of her father, Moishe Reiter, Bruni is married and has two daughters ages 15 and 10.

She discovered the gold-coloured book – she calls it *My Golden Recipes* – in her mother's kitchen when her mother got sick. "That was in 2009, but I wasn't ready to take the book home until 2011. I had to come to terms with what I call my 'new normal.'"

It's not really a book, she said. "It contains recipes written on recipe cards and scraps of paper, butchers' bills, and lots and lots of side notes.

"I got so excited. I found recipes from my Bubbie Gertie, written in the early 1900s. These are all recipes I thought had been lost with my mother."

When she tries a recipe, she said, she connects with her family. "Someone told me I'm cooking with my mother's hand on my shoulder, and that is exactly it. One recipe has a note from my mother that says, 'Don't worry. It will be delicious'."

Bruni said she was inspired by the book to start a blog called My Mother's Treasure: A Daughter's Journey of Discovery (mymotherstreasures.blogspot.com), which includes recipes, pictures of the food and family photos to show whose recipe it was.

"It started as a Facebook note, and friends reacted so positively, I've turned it into the blog."

Carol Joy Reiter

Bruni said she is preparing her Passover cooking for the seder and throughout the week, with help from her family's book. "My mom always believed that no one should be alone for the holidays, and the seder was always a big deal. She cooked for weeks.

"I'm cooking 'in the box.' I'm sticking with my mother's recipes, and I read her notes as I cook – 'do this, make it this way.'"

BABA ETHEL'S ROASTED POTATOES

10 medium potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-in. pieces
2-3 cooking onions, peeled and cut into 1-in. pieces
1 tsp. garlic powder
1 tsp. onion powder
1 tsp. kosher or sea salt
1 tsp. black pepper
2 tsp. paprika
3 tbsp. oil

Preheat oven to 350. Toss potato and onion pieces with oil and seasonings. Place mixture in parchment-lined roasting pan. Cook, uncovered, for 90 to 120 minutes (depending on how crispy you like your potatoes).

CAROL'S TERRIFIC TSIMMES

8 medium sweet potatoes (peeled, boiled, mashed)
1 package of pitted prunes, halved
1 (19-oz.) can of crushed pineapple in juice
6-8 thin carrots, (cut in rounds)
4 tbsp. brown sugar
1/2 tsp. ginger powder
1/4 tsp. white pepper

In large mixing bowl, combine all ingredients. Place mixture in two 2-litre casseroles, cover and refrigerate. It will keep this way for 48 hours. Bake, covered, for 1 hour at 350 degrees. Then uncover and bake for an additional 30 minutes. Once it is baked, it will keep for 3 to 4 days in the fridge.

CAROL'S CHICKEN SOUP

I hope you enjoy Mom's recipe, as dictated to me some 13 years ago, as much as we do.

2 plump chicken breasts (with bone and skin)
6 cooking onions, whole and peeled (to start)
6 thick carrots, cut into chunks or rounds (whatever you prefer)
4 long celery stalks, cut into chunks
3-4 celery leaves
2 1/2 tbsp. salt (or to taste)

Fill stock pot 2/3 full with cold water. Add cleaned chicken breasts. Cook, covered on high heat until boiling, then reduce to medium-high heat. Skim fat after 15 minutes, and every 3 to 4 minutes thereafter. Wipe down inside edge of stockpot with moistened paper towel. Once water boils clean, add salt, onions, carrots and celery pieces and leaves. Let simmer for 3 hours. Remove the breasts. De-bone and remove skin. Cut the chicken meat "bailik" into smaller pieces and return to soup. Let the soup cool and remove any schmaltz (fatty residue) before reheating. The soup can be kept in the fridge for a week – it gets better with each passing day, or can be frozen.

CAROL'S SPECTACULAR STANDING RIB ROAST

1 standing rib roast (whatever size fits your family)
garlic powder
onion powder
kosher or sea salt
pepper

Twenty-four hours before you plan on cooking the roast, rinse and pat dry. Place on "x" of plastic wrap. Rub all seasonings into a layer on all sides of the roast, and then tightly wrap with plastic wrap. Refrigerate for 24 hours.

Preheat oven to 350, and place in roasting pan. Cook, uncovered, for 30 minutes per pound. Remove when finished and tent with aluminum foil until ready to slice.

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Gaza rockets strike 40 km south of Tel Aviv

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JERUSALEM — Palestinians in Gaza fired more than 40 rockets at Israel on Monday as the heavy cross-border barrage continued into its fourth day. Two of the rockets exploded near Gedera, just 40 kilometres south of Tel Aviv, and another struck inside the southern city of Ashdod.

One woman sustained minor shrapnel wounds as a result of the strike in Ashdod, and was evacuated to Rehovot's Kaplan Hospital. Store buildings and cars were also damaged in the city.

Most of the rockets fired Monday were either intercepted by Israel's Iron Dome anti-missile system or exploded in open areas.

One rocket exploded in the Eshkol Regional Council and caused minor damage to a building. On Monday afternoon, an IDF spokesperson announced that 37 rockets had exploded in Israeli territory over the course of the day, with seven Iron Dome interceptions since the morning.

The rockets from Gaza were in retaliation for the targeted killing last Friday by Israel of Zuhir al-Qaisi, the leader of Popular Resistance Committee (PRC). He was said to be planning a terror attack on Israel's southern border and was also the mastermind behind the attack last year near Eilat that killed eight Israelis.

On Sunday, a total of 23 missiles were fired at Israel from Gaza, following the 47 fired on Saturday.

Overnight Sunday, the IDF carried out a strike in Gaza that killed two Islamic Jihad militants. Several Palestinians were wounded. One child was killed.

In a separate strike, the IAF killed another Palestinian militant who was launching a rocket toward Israel. The IAF also reported targeting a weapons storage site and five rocket-launching sites in Gaza.

The Home Front Command decided to cancel classes in most Israeli towns near Gaza on Monday, for a second day.

Two Grad-type Katyusha rockets struck Be'er Sheva on Sunday, after the Iron Dome battery that had been protecting it suffered a technical malfunction. One rocket hit an empty school, and the other hit a parked car. Fifteen people were treated for shock, though there were no other casualties.

The rockets and the ball bearings that they ejected hundreds of metres caused heavy damage to buildings and vehicles. Another rocket hit a chicken coop in Moshav Carmia in the Ashkelon Coast Regional Council, causing heavy damage.

Since Friday, at least 110 rockets were fired toward Israel, 43 of which were intercepted by the Iron Dome defence systems. The IAF carried out 23 strikes in the Gaza Strip.

The Iron Dome system in operation *[Israel Sun photo]*

Defence Minister Ehud Barak warned on Sunday that "the current escalation is liable to be lengthy." He said that he plans to have the Iron Dome anti-rocket defense system declared a "national emergency project" in order to expedite the manufacture and deployment of additional batteries. A fourth Iron Dome battery is being prepared for deployment and is expected to be operational within weeks.

Shimon Fogel, CEO of Canada's Centre for Israel and Jewish Advocacy (CIJA), said he was "encouraged" by the efficacy of the Iron Dome defence apparatus.

Given that it's intended to target and prioritize missiles that threaten populated areas, Iron Dome "seems to have worked exceptionally well. That's encouraging... as there's potential for another escalation [of rocket attacks]," he said.

Fogel said the latest attacks from Gaza need to be considered in the wider context of the situation in the Middle East. He said the "Iran dimension" to this current barrage on Israel also ought to be recognized.

"There has been a pattern that any time Iran contemplated engaging the international community, [attacks on Israel] follow like clockwork," he said referring to Iran's recent agreement to restart talks with the international community, led by the United States, on its nuclear program.

"So it's difficult to think there isn't either some kind of co-ordination or an attempt on the part of groups in Gaza to exploit the international community's attention on the Iran file so they can advance their own positions. So much of this is about jockeying for position and support within Gaza itself," he said.

CIJA said it discussed the situation with federal officials over the weekend and was told Ottawa is monitoring events in Israel.

Reached by *The CJN* on Monday morning, the prime minister's office had no comment on the situation.

Queries to the department of foreign affairs were not returned by deadline.

With files from Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf

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Former Mossad chief opposes Israeli strike on Iran

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JERUSALEM — Former Mossad chief Meir Dagan said that an Israeli strike on Iran would lead to a missile attack on Israel that would have a "devastating impact" on the country, in an interview that aired Sunday on CBS's *60 Minutes*.

According to Dagan, an attack would start a regional war. "And wars, you know how they start. You never know how you are ending it," he said.

"I think that Israel will be in a very serious situation for quite a time," he told *60 Minutes* reporter Lesley Stahl, when asked about a possible Iranian response to an Israeli attack on Iran's nuclear program.

Dagan also expressed skepticism over the effectiveness of an Israeli attack on Iran's nuclear program to deny Iran nuclear weapons. Unlike what has been reported, according to Dagan, there aren't four

Meir Dagan

Iranian nuclear sites but "dozens."

He said that no military attack could halt the Iranian nuclear project, rather an attack could only serve to delay it.

In his first interview to an American media outlet, Dagan said he did not believe now is the time to attack Iran's nuclear program.

He said the regime in Iran is a rational one. When asked whether Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was rational, Dagan responded that he was.

"Not exactly our rational, but I think he is rational," Dagan said.

Adding that the Iranians' rationality was different from the western way of thinking, he said, "They are considering all the implications of their actions... They will have to pay dearly... and I think the Iranians at this point in time are... very careful on the project," Dagan said. "They are not running..."

Dagan believes that instead of military action the West should concentrate on instigating regime change in Iran. "It's our duty to help anyone who likes to present an open opposition against their regime in Iran," he says.

When asked by *60 Minutes* whether Israel had supported the youth groups that held protests across Iran after the last round of Iranian elections, Dagan refused to answer.

He said he trusted the United States and President Barack Obama's resolve to stop the Iranian nuclear program. Obama said, "'The military option is on the table' and he is not going to let Iran become a nuclear state, and from my experience, I usually trust the president of the U.S.

"The issue of Iran armed with a nuclear capability is not an Israeli problem – it's an international problem."

During the interview, Stahl suggested that it seemed he was advocating Israel wait and have the U.S. attack Iran's nuclear sites. Dagan replied: "If I prefer that someone will do it, I always prefer that Americans will do it."

U.S. and Jordan plead with Abbas

Continued from page 1

From drafts of the letter leaked to the Palestinian media last weekend, it's believed that Abbas will emphasize that the Palestinian Authority was established as a means to move from occupation to an independent Palestinian state. Abbas is expected to blame Netanyahu for depriving the Palestinian Authority of all power.

One draft contains an ultimatum stating that if Israel does not renege on all of its decisions regarding the Palestinian issue since 2000, stop settlement building, release prisoners and recognize two states on the basis of 1967 borders, the Palestinian Authority will demand that international law be fully applied to the West Bank.

This would mean the step-by-step dismantling of the Palestinian Authority and the return of all authority back to Israel. The Palestinians' threat is that Israel would then have to bear the cost of the occupation, including not only the financial cost, but also the political, security and image-related aspects of the occupation.

The letter worries Washington, Amman and Jerusalem.

Jordan's Foreign Minister Nasser Joudah visited Washington earlier this month and met with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Joudah is also in regular telephone contact with Netanyahu's adviser Isaac Molho on the issue.

On his return from Washington, Joudah immediately travelled to Ramallah, where he passed along a letter from King Abdullah II. According to Israeli officials and western diplomats, both the Jordanians and the Americans are putting heavy pressure on Abbas to shelve the letter, or, at the very least, to soften its tone.

For instance, the Americans and the Jordanians asked Abbas to take out all explicit threats regarding Palestinian steps at the United Nations and even the dismantling of the Palestinian Authority and the transferring of responsibility for the West Bank back to Israel.

Washington and Amman are worried that if the letter is sent, and especially if its harsh tone remains unchanged, it would spell the end of peace negotiations for the near future and increase the likelihood that the Palestinians will take further steps at the UN. The Palestinians are already planning to turn to the Security Council to get a resolution to condemn Israel for its settlements.

Washington fears that delivery of the letter will increase the tension between Jerusalem and Ramallah and will lead to internal Israeli pressure that would cause Netanyahu to take punitive measures, such as withholding tax funds to the Palestinian Authority. Such a scenario could potentially lead to a third intifadah in the West Bank. Netanyahu, for his part, is interested in preventing any possible diplomatic confrontation with the Palestinians so that the international focus does not shift from Iran.

The UN Security Council was to hold its monthly discussion on the Middle East at UN headquarters in New York on Monday, where the situation in Syria and the escalation in Gaza were likely to be major topics. The first meeting of the foreign ministers of the Mideast Quartet – the United States, European Union, United Nations and Russia – in six months was set to take place at the end of the Security Council discussion. The meeting was planned at Russia's request and despite American reservations. It was expected that Abbas' threat to send his letter would take centre stage at the meeting.

Earthquake in north

A minor earthquake shook northern Israel. The quake was felt in Metullah, in Kiryat Shmonah and Safed. No injuries or damage were reported. The earthquake, which had a magnitude of 3.7, was reported to be centred in southern Lebanon. In January, an earthquake measuring 3.1 rattled the area around the Sea of Galilee. A month earlier, a quake measuring 4.2 was centred in northern Israel and was felt in Jerusalem. Parts of Israel and the West Bank are on the Syrian-African fault line.

Christians endangered

Israel's ambassador to the United States, Michael Oren, wrote an op-ed for the *Wall Street Journal* last week in which he wrote that Israel is the only country in the Middle East that is safe for Christians. Oren compared the suppression of Christian communities in Arab states to the 20th-century expulsion of Jews from these same countries. In his article, Oren cited the continuing violence against Egypt's Coptic Christians, the burning of Iraqi churches, a Saudi ban on Christian worship and the desecration of the Church of the Nativity in the West Bank as instances indicating a threat to Christianity in the Muslim world. He also pointed out that conversion "to Christianity is a capital offence in Iran, where last month Pastor Yousef Nadarkhani was sentenced to death." Oren concludes that the only place in the Middle East where Christians aren't endangered, but are actually flourishing, is in Israel.

Surrogacy

An Israeli court set a legal precedent with its ruling that a woman whose baby was conceived using her eggs in a surrogate mother does not have to adopt her own child. The Tel Aviv Family Court's ruling states that DNA testing can be used to prove maternity. Previously, women had to officially adopt their children from the surrogate. The surrogate birth of twins in the current case was undertaken outside of Israel. Both parents were recognized as the babies' biological parents on the birth certificate issued in the Republic of Georgia, where the surrogate lives. Under Israeli law, the birth mother is the only person considered the mother of a baby, not the egg donor.

– With files from JTA and Ha'aretz

Magen David Adom's policy questioned

Paul Lungen
Staff Reporter

Canadian Magen David Adom for Israel (CMDA) has not experienced any reductions in contributions from supporters concerned about the reported removal of the red Star of David from some ambulances operating in the West Bank, the organization's national executive-director says.

Contrary to a report in Arutz Sheva, an Israeli news service, "Canadian Jews" are not pulling their donations or even calling his office to question MDA's policy, national executive-director Arnold Rosner said.

Rosner was responding to *CJN* queries following publication last week of an article in Arutz Sheva that reported a group of Toronto Jews said they would no longer donate to MDA. The group said it was protesting MDA's agreement to remove the organization's Star of David symbol from ambulances it operates in Judea and Samaria.

Arutz Sheva reported that MDA agreed to do so as a condition of joining the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

Under a 2005 memorandum of understanding (MoU) between MDA and the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS), MDA recognized the Palestinian organization as "the authorized national society in the Palestinian territory." It agreed that neither organization would operate "within the jurisdiction of the other society" unless consent was given. MDA also agreed it will have "no chapters outside the internationally recognized borders of the State of Israel" and that both societies would protect their emblems against misuse.

National Union member of Knesset Aryeh Eldad criticized the agreement. He called it a "cowardly capitulation to Arab demands, backed by the International Red Cross." He urged contributors to pull their donations from the MDA and instead support blood banks, hospitals and rescue organizations in Judea and Samaria.

Paul Rotenberg, the Toronto businessman cited in the recent Arutz Sheva article, said that while he applauds the work of CMDA, he questioned why MDA in Israel entered the agreement. The memorandum of understanding restricts its operations in Judea and Samaria and puts its residents in a bind. Israeli police had stopped MDA ambulances on the way to emergencies, telling them they are not entitled to be there, he said. "If you're a pregnant woman in Judea and Samaria and you have to call an ambulance, you have to call the PRCS." Rotenberg said there are documented instances when Palestinian ambulances "were not used for ambulance purposes.

"I myself am not going to donate to MDA and I know other people who won't give donations to MDA," he said. "My suggestion is that MDA should do what it is charged with doing, being the first responder to all Israelis."

Rosner said following publication of the most recent Arutz Sheva article, he had been in contact with head office in Israel and updated on the situation there. MDA had sold ambulances to remote communities in the territories because they were better able to serve local needs. As the ambulances no longer belonged to MDA, the Stars of David were removed, he said.

MDA maintains some ambulances with the traditional red Star of David across the Green Line – the pre-1967 Israeli border – and in recent weeks, these vehicles had responded, along with Red Crescent emergency vehicles, to road accidents, he said.

Following adoption of the memorandum, the International Committee of the Red Cross appointed an official, Par Stenback, to monitor its implementation. In a January 2011 report, Stenback stated, "It is obvious and beyond interpretation that, when signing the MoU, MDA committed itself to cease running ambulances in the occupied Palestinian territory." Stenback acknowledged, however, that interpretation was not shared by MDA.

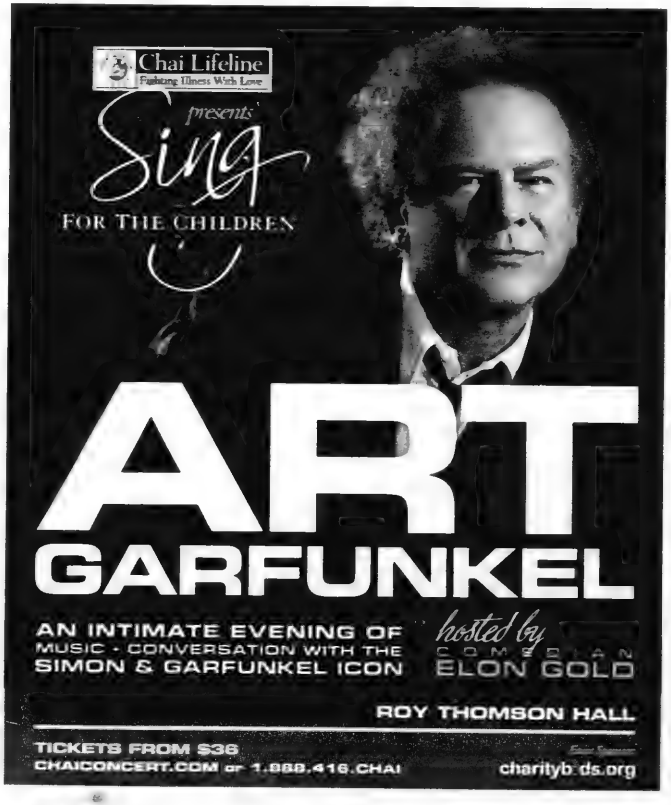
Contacted in Israel, MDA spokesperson Yonatan Yagodovsky said the first aid organization operates 124 stations, 14 of them in Judea and Samaria. The ambulances there, unlike others operated by local councils and communities, are run by MDA and carry the MDA symbol.

MDA provides "equal service to people in Judea and Samaria" as well as those within Israel's pre-1967 borders, he said.

In a video interview with Arutz Sheva, MDA director-general Eli Bin said the organization had finally joined the International Red Cross after trying to do so for 60 years. Negotiations were conducted with the participation of Israel's ministries of health and foreign affairs and with the advice of their legal departments, he said.

Part of the agreement under which MDA joined the Red Cross relates to use of national symbols. Member organizations can use their national symbols only within their own borders, not inside other states, Bin said.

Determining territorial borders is not something MDA is qualified to do. However, Bin added, "MDA continues to operate 14 stations inside Judea and Samaria and will continue to do so forever, with or without an agreement. Period."



Russian opposition gain 'more self-confidence'

Uriel Heilman
JTA

NEW YORK — With Vladimir Putin's re-election as president of Russia pretty much a foregone conclusion, the question facing Russia was never what would result from the election but what would happen after the vote.

Thousands of protesters turned out on March 5 in a Moscow saturated with police and soldiers to protest an election that European observers criticized as unfair due to the Kremlin's domination of Russian media outlets and voter intimidation.

The demonstration was yet another sign that Putin, who took 64 per cent of the March 4 vote, is returning to the helm of a different Russia than the one he left in the hands of his hand-picked successor, Dmitry Medvedev, in 2008. The two swapped roles in what essentially amounted to a power-sharing arrangement between the president and prime minister.

The key turn came in December, when protests against Russian parliamentary elections that month coalesced into a mass movement. Unlike previous attempts at challenging the regime, these protests were not snuffed out immediately by the Kremlin, and their staying power has captured international attention.

They also have divided Russian Jews.

"On the one hand, I have young people coming to me and asking me why aren't you taking part," Moscow Chief Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt told JTA. "On the other hand, I have older-generation Russian Jews coming to me and saying, 'Speak to our children that they should not join the demonstrations.'"

The divide is generational and demographic – between younger, more liberal, freedom-hungry urban Jews who came of age after the fall of the Soviet Union, and older, more conservative Jews from smaller cities and towns who are wary of trading the stability that Putin has brought for a more uncertain future.

Vladimir Putin

In the 12 years since Putin first ascended to power, public antisemitism has been all but silenced in Russia. Jews have not found themselves special targets of the regime and the Jewish community has built strong ties to the Kremlin. While many Jews remain concerned about Putin's Middle East policies – Russia has been more of a hindrance than a help on Iran sanctions and has been supportive of a Syrian regime that has used deadly force to put down protests – they are generally satisfied with how Putin has treated the Jewish community at home.

"Jews lived in Russia by czar, by Stalin, by all situations," said Yuri Kanner, head of the Russian Jewish Congress. "This situation that we have today is the best situation today in Russia in the past 200 to 300 years."

Of course, public criticism of the Kremlin is ill advised in Putin's Russia, and no Jewish community leader interviewed by JTA was willing to go on the record criticizing the regime. But many young Jews were among those turning out in Moscow to protest Putin's re-election.

"We deal with a number of young people who were actually participating in the demonstrations," said Mark Levin, the executive director of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, a Washington-based organization that advocates for the welfare of Jews in the former Soviet Union. "They want a different future. They want a more open and free society. They want greater opportunities. They're much like their counterparts in other countries."

Jewish opposition to Putin is centred more on what his re-election means for Russia than what it might mean for Israel or Jews in particular.

"Every [Jewish] voter has Jewish interests and Russian interests," said Michael Chlenov, secretary general of the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress. "For the Russian interests, there are many complaints, not specifically Jewish – eradication of democracy, anti-Americanism, etc."

The question for Russia going forward is whether Putin will crack down on the demonstrations or whether this newly empowered opposition will be able to wring some concessions from their old-new president.

"There's no map for this. The protesters don't know how he's going to react," said one Jewish observer who lives in Russia and insisted on anonymity.

"There's no question that December was a game changer," the observer said. "This term will be different than previous terms. There's more accountability, people know how to organize, there's more self-confidence in an opposition community whose voice has been heard."

What the opposition lacks is a clear political leader. While analysts said most of the Jewish votes against Putin were cast for independent Mikhail Prokhorov, the billionaire owner of the NBA's New Jersey Nets who has Jewish roots, none of the opposition candidates – including Gennady Zyuganov of the Communist party, Vladimir Zhirinovsky of the nationalist Liberal Democratic party and Sergey Mironov of the Just Russia party – were considered serious threats to Putin.

During the campaign, "the Jewish issue," as Russian Jews call it, hardly emerged at all, welcome news for a community that remains concerned about its safety in a society with a long history of antisemitism and xenophobia. In the end, Zyuganov finished second with 17 per cent of the vote, Prokhorov captured eight per cent and Zhirinovsky had six per cent.

While election monitors highlighted voter irregularities in various parts of the country, their primary criticism wasn't about how the votes were tallied but the inability of opposition candidates to gain any traction because of the Kremlin's near-total control over the Russian media. In addition, Russian voters reported being compelled by their employers to cast votes for Putin.

"The basic question now is – who are going to be the key people in the government?" Goldschmidt said. "People are going to decide how they feel based on these choices."

Experts believe technology will solve world's problems

Asaf Shtull-Trauring
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JAFFA — A team of American high-tech experts arrived in Jaffa on Sunday to discuss their belief that the world is on the threshold of an unprecedented technology revolution that will radically alter our way of life.

Dozens of high-tech professionals and scientists gathered on Sunday at the Peres Center for Peace for the start of a two-day course by Singularity University.

The university is a three-year-old institution based at the Ames Research Center of NASA, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, in California's Silicon Valley. SU has become a place where high-tech capital meets the so-called futurist movement that was an outgrowth of several decades of work on artificial intelligence. The university team was flown in from the American West Coast to present its technological vision to an Israeli audience. One attendee also flew in from Singapore for the course. From the glass facade of the centre's lecture hall, with the breaking waves of the Mediterranean as a backdrop, the team of American futurists, joined by their Israeli counterparts, discussed the future of humanity with an audience of about 40 people.

Singularity can be defined in various ways, but it is first and foremost a concept describing that time in the not-too-distant future – Singularitarians say as early as the middle of this century – when artificial intelligence will supposedly overtake human intelligence and entirely transform the development of the human species. Futurists are promising, for example, that our life spans will be extended by decades or even centuries, that the human brain will be dramatically enhanced with the help of drugs and computers, that computers will make a whole host of decisions for us, and that we will also have an inexhaustible supply of energy. In short, it will be a completely new world.

Peres Center for Peace in Jaffa

Yanki Margalit, who initiated the conference in Jaffa, founded Aladdin Knowledge Systems, a company he sold in 2009. Margalit is an Israeli stalwart of the singularity movement, including belief in the exponential potential of solar energy.

For his part, Salim Ismail, SU's founding executive director, said technology has been the main engine for human progress over recent millennia. Thinking about history, he admitted, was not a major part of the institution.

"In accelerating technology we trust" – this motto, included in Ismail's presentation on Sunday, aptly sums up the university's outlook of technological salvation: a belief in the power of technology's accelerating development to solve the major problems facing humanity, regardless of the way in which society organizes itself or decides to deploy the tools that it has developed.

Web services company puts you in the picture

Paul Lungen
Staff Reporter

WALL-E, the lovable childlike robot from the movie of the same name, has a cousin in Toronto. His name is Percy.

Percy is innocent, cute and fully tuned in to the high-tech world of downloadable apps and scientific whiz-bangery. Unlike his more famous Hollywood cyber kin, however, Percy is not a movie star, though he does have a connection to the entertainment industry.

Percy is the front "man" – make that front automaton – for Percy3D, a startup company that bridges the world of Hollywood fantasy and corporate marketing. Founded by Julie Steiner, Percy3D offers consumers and retailers the opportunity to "put yourself in the picture" through personalized 3-D visual effects to send a fun message. "Percy," in fact, is a short form for "personalized."

The company's "video personalization platform" is a downloadable app that permits the user to append a message to a scene from some of Hollywood's most popular films. The clips are only 10 to 12 seconds long, at the end of which you can type in a text message for friends, colleague or business associates.

It's not unlike the flat 2-D video greetings that have been available for years, but Percy3D takes the process one or two steps further by employing real scenes from Hollywood blockbusters licensed from Universal and Paramount studios.

You can have John Belushi, of *Animal House* vintage, spit out a message on your behalf, or tack on a greeting to a scene from *Back to the Future*. Other new and classic films that get the three-dimensional treatment include *Kong, Hop, Forrest Gump* and *Despicable Me*. Percy3D permits users to create "vanity videos" while adding its own audio to complete the effect.

Percy 3D brings together all of company founder Julie Steiner's interests.

PercyFX, the downloadable and saveable app, is an important component of the company's business, Steiner said. Available at Blackberry App World and the App Store, it features a real 3-D look that's as far from simple 2-D cartoons as today's video games are from Pong.

So far, in only a few months of operation, the company has recorded more than 50,000 downloads to a variety of devices, such as iPads and BlackBerrys. Coming soon are downloads for Android devices and Windows phones.

The app itself is free but customers pay for movie clips – $2.99 for 10 or $4.99 for 20. Once downloaded to your device, "you take possession of the file," Steiner said.

Steiner believes Percy3D is just beginning to gather steam as retailers and film studios see it as another way of monetizing their assets. The business concept brings together social media, movies and technology, items that appeal to today's tech-savvy population. "People like to personalize things," Steiner said. Even when she was a kid, "I got personal licence plates for my bike."

Retailers like it because it's a marketing tool that spreads their brand around while providing a fun application to their customers.

There's lots of potential to further monetize the product by working with retailers to continue developing the items to make it even more attractive to customers, perhaps by adding personalized photo files, she said.

"We're in the beginning stages of pulling different revenue levers," she said.

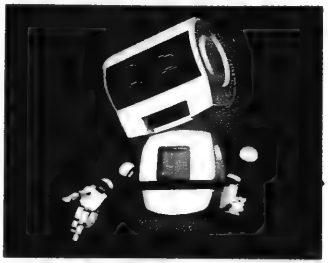
Steiner came up with the idea for the product in 2008. "It's all about me," she said. "This company brings together all my interests."

Prior to founding Percy3D, Steiner worked as director of strategic accounts for Side Effects Software. Before that she was in sales for the Deluxe Entertainment Services Group, and she's worked in post-production at Sullivan Entertainment, a multimedia company.

When she started pulling together the components of Percy3D in 2008, during the worst part of the economic downturn, she found that raising money was not easy. She did succeed in finding a group of "angel investors" who came through with funds to get the company going. The angels took a piece of the company, and she took the other piece.

"I'm fortunate in that I've got very patient investors," she said.

Looking ahead, Steiner believes she can grow the company by improving PercyFX's profile in the Apple Store. It doesn't take much to get a product placed in the store, but to be on the website's opening page, which everyone sees – that's like hitting a marketing home run. Or, as WALL-E might appreciate, like seeing a green bud sprout from a mass of clutter.



Percy

Male haredi employment rises

Hila Weisberg
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

TEL AVIV — Employment among haredi men has increased by seven per cent in the past two years, according to the Bank of Israel.

In 2011, 45 per cent of haredi men had jobs, compared with 38 per cent in 2009, according to the central bank's research department, which processed raw data from the Central Bureau of Statistics.

The figures will appear in the Bank of Israel's annual report, to be published at the end of March. In the meantime the central bank has released excerpts.

Most of the increase occurred in private-sector jobs, mainly in trade and industry. Employment among haredi men in the private sector rose from 18 per cent of all haredi men in 2009 to 24.5 per cent in 2011.

Employment among haredi women hasn't changed much in the past two years – it's stayed at about 60 per cent. The government's target for the proportion of haredi women working by the year 2020 is 63 per cent.

But the report nips any buds of enthusiasm. The 45 per cent employment rate among haredi men has been achieved before, in the 1990s, after which employment among haredi men decreased. By the year 2020, the government aims for 63 per cent of haredi men to work, but unlike the women, they're not even near that goal.

One reason for the increase could be a surge in hiring during the past two years. Another is that donations to yeshivas may have declined in that time, the central bank suggested.

Choosing your signature scent

Anita Szabadi-Gottesman
Special to The CJN

The punctuation mark topping off any outfit is a hint of perfume or cologne. Whether you are heading to the gym or rushing to a dinner date, choosing the right perfume is the finishing touch.

But at an upscale department store, a neighbourhood pharmacy, or a big-box store, the selections at the perfume counters are at once intoxicating and overwhelming. An emotional purchase, perfume not only provides a welcome pick-me-up, it is truly an expression of oneself.

Romantic, sensual and magical are some of the ways to describe the alluring characteristics of perfume, although all scents are formulations of aromatic compounds and scented oils mixed with top-quality alcohol.

Perfumes are the most concentrated forms with a 15 to 30 per cent formulation, providing the strongest fragrance, which lasts up to six hours. Eau de parfum is somewhat lighter with an eight to 15 per cent concentration lasting three to five hours, and the most popular, eau de toilette, has a concentration of four to eight per cent and lasts up to four hours.

In addition, the higher the concentration, the more expensive the product. Standard sizes range from 50 ml, and generally increase in increments of 25 ml to 125 ml.

Divided into several categories, perfumes can be floral based, reflecting classic, romantic overtones, as is the case with the ever-popular Chanel No 5; or fruity with a large proportion of citrus flavouring, as seen in Marc Jacobs Splash.

The green category reflects the freshness of grass and herbs that surround us in Sung by Alfred Sung. The oceanic category takes us closer to the ocean spray, with a clean feel reflected in Davidoff Cool Water Women. Finally, there are the more exotic oriental and spicy categories rooted in musk and the spices of the world such as cinnamon and cardamom.

Choosing the right perfume reflects your style and personality. *[Anita Szabadi-Gottesman photo]*

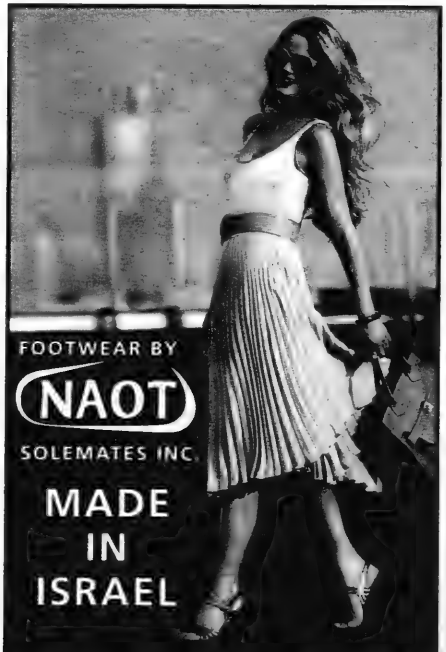
A classic oriental choice is Yves Saint Laurent Opium and the just-right spice of BCBG Girl. Celebrities including Jennifer Lopez, Britney Spears and Canada's Avril Lavigne, to name just a few, have also joined the mix creating their own signature scents, as have popular retailers such as Gap and Zara.

You need to follow a process to find the right scent. The accepted rule-of-thumb is to try no more than three different scents at a time so as not to overwhelm the olfactory glands. Use the blotter cards available at the counter. Spray a sampling on the card and leave it to settle for about 10 minutes. Then repeat the process with two other choices and re-visit the cards after 10 minutes. The scent will now have the bouquet it was meant to have.

If you prefer to try the scent on your body, apply it from a distance of about five or six inches to pulse points such as behind the ears, the inside of the wrists or the nape of the neck, once again waiting five to 10 minutes before re-visiting the scent. It is important not to apply too much. Take care not to cover one scent with another, and don't apply more than three different scents at a time.

Many of us will settle on one signature scent. However, some women prefer to have at least one option for daytime and one for evening, allowing for a more daring, sultrier choice after nightfall.

Perfumes and eaux de toilette will stay fresh for many years if stored correctly. Make sure to secure caps and keep the perfume out of direct sunlight.



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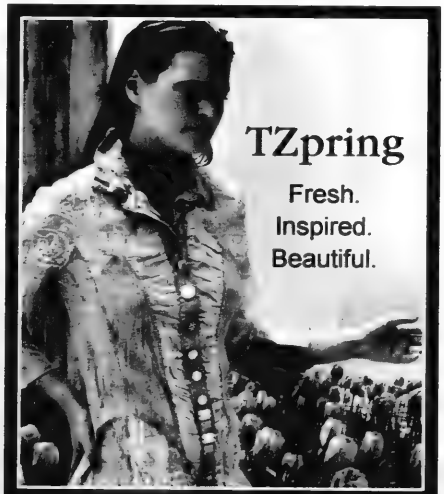

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New Collection

Designer trench coats in over a dozen vibrant colours for spring have just arrived.

Lightweight, water resistant, packable, washable, reversible jackets in every colour and size, perfect for travel or any season.

Quilted jackets (reversible) in 8 colours, sizes 4 to 24 are now in.

A huge selection of warm cashmere, down and microfibre coats in every size is now on sale.

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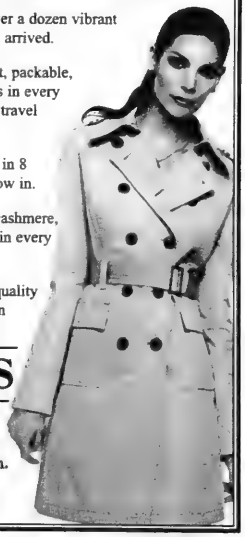

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'A wonderful place to relax and rejuvenate'

The WaterSpa at Sir Sam's Inn. *[Kathryn Kates photos]*

The spa offers hydrotherapy along with many other services.

The WaterSpa at Sir Sam's Inn, on Eagle Lake, sits in the Haliburton Highlands in the heart of Ontario's cottage country.

With three Jewish camps in the vicinity, the resort has been popular with visiting parents for decades.

The current innkeeper, James Orr, has operated the year-round resort and country inn since 1979. He opened the state-of-the-art WaterSpa in December 2005.

"The spa at Sir Sam's Inn is an accompaniment to the rooms. It is not necessarily a spa destination, but a wonderful place to relax and rejuvenate," says Janice Dahms, front-office manager at Sir Sam's Inn & WaterSpa.

There are two full-time wellness therapists at the spa and two on call. In addition to the WaterSpa pool, there is a lounge area overlooking the pool with comfy beds to unwind on, three treatment rooms, a relaxing reception area, an exercise studio and a sauna. Dahms says the spa reflects nature with its blue, green and earth tones.

Male guests are increasing each year.

The therapists use a Hungarian product line called Eminence. All the products are 100 per cent certified organic and all natural. "We always tell our guests that there are no preservative or additives, so you can actually eat the products," she says.

The spa caters to 70 per cent women, with the number of male guests growing each year. The most-requested treatment is the Couples Massage, followed by a choice of body-care treatments, including the Cranberry Pomegranate Sugar Scrub, Champagne Mimosa Sugar Scrub, and the Coconut Sugar Scrub and customized facials.

Spa Life

By Kathryn Kates

Healing stone massage, aromatherapy and other relaxing massages are offered. Also available are body wraps, all with delicious-sounding names – Pear and Green Apple, Cucumber Mint and Mango – hand and foot treatments and reflexology.

"Our WaterSpa pool offers hydrotherapy, mineral water heated to body temperature, so unlike a hot tub, you can spend a lengthy amount of time in it without overheating. Within the pool itself, there is a whole circuit of jets that massage different parts of your body as you travel around the pool circuit," Dahms says.

The circuit includes the Large Bench with two jet formations, one concentrating on the neck and lower back, while the other is a wave of motion the length of the back. The Centre Island ministers to the feet and calves, while the Deck Fountains cascade over the back and neck. The Air Lounge surrounds you with light bubbles. The experience culminates with the Champagne Grotto, which surrounds you with tiny invigorating bubbles.

The inn has 25 intimate lake-view rooms. Eight of them are in the inn, and the rest of the accommodations are on the waterfront. Most feature queen-size beds and wood-burning fireplaces, and some rooms boast of ThermoMasseur baths – air-jet tubs – and walk-out patios.

The main inn, a stone and timber mansion, houses the Twin Fires dining room and wine cellar, a pub, a parlour and recreational space.

"Each season brings its own line of activities, which are all-inclusive when you stay at the inn," Dahms says. "Anything we have on site is included with your guest stay.

"For example, in the summertime, along the waterfront our guests have the use of canoes, kayaks and paddleboats. There's windsurfing, waterskiing, mountain biking, as well as a beautiful beach and outdoor swimming pool. Come wintertime, we offer cross-country skiing and snowmobiling."

The resort will also book activities on behalf of their guests at neighbouring attractions, including dogsledding and skiing at a hill adjacent to the resort.

For more information about Sir Sam's Inn & WaterSpa, visit www.sirsamsinn.com or call 1-800-361-2188.

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Publisher has an ideological mission

Bill Gladstone
Special to The CJN

Nearly a decade after he founded a publishing company with a strong ideological mission, Howard Rotberg may take his place among that small and proud group of Canadians who operate successful small publishing houses.

Although Mantua Books started off slowly, he says it now publishes one new title each month, and some of its books have sold tens of thousands of copies. Rotberg, a non-practising lawyer who was born in Brantford 60 years ago, named the firm after the city in Italy where his maternal Rappoport ancestors came from.

Howard Rotberg

He says he founded the company to disseminate important ideas meant to save the West, Israel and the Jewish people from ideological and physical assault perpetrated by the many international dictators, terrorists and propagandists in league with fundamentalist Islam.

One popular title — *Those That Bless You I Will Bless: Christian Zionism in Historical Perspective*, by Canadian history professor Paul Merkley — has been selling like the proverbial hotcakes since it came off the press, Rotberg says.

Another — *Delectable Lie*, by southern Ontario author Salim Mansur — is a "liberal repudiation of multiculturalism" that combats the morally relative notion that Westerners can't or shouldn't judge other cultures as inferior.

"Mansur came from Bangladesh, from a culture that he found abhorrent, and he loves the culture of liberal democracy that developed in the West," Rotberg says. "He doesn't like to hear people say that it's just one culture that's equal among many."

Iran, with its impetus to develop a nuclear arsenal, is chief among various global forces that seek to destroy Israel and the Jews, he warns. In *The Second Catastrophe*, a novel he wrote and published in 2003, he raised the possibility that the incessant international clamour against Israel could spark a second Holocaust against the Jews.

Other Mantua titles — such as *Hear, O Israel!*, David Solway's study of modern anti-Israelism and antisemitism — hammer home similar messages. Leftists and the mainstream liberal-left media may dismiss Mantua as alarmist and "right-wing," but Rotberg asserts the firm is an upholder of traditional Western values at a time when such values have come increasingly under attack.

Many commercial publishers, university presses and media outlets have been caught in the paralyzing grip of post-modernism, political correctness and moral and cultural relativism, he contends. Rotberg established Mantua as a home for writers who, for ideological reasons, were being shunned by mainstream publishing houses. Consequently, the house has attracted a large assortment of writers from many countries.

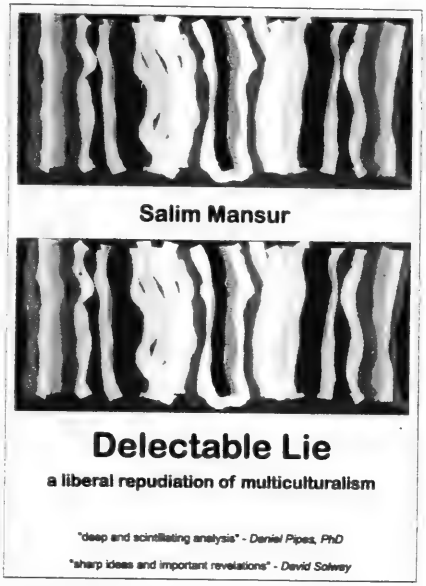
Rotberg grew up in a house where the Holocaust cast a palpable shadow. His father was a Lodz-born survivor of Auschwitz, his mother part of a large family that came to Canada before the war. He earned degrees in history and law from the University of Toronto but returned both in protest after the university allowed Israel Apartheid Week to come into existence. He faults the university for failing to take a moral stand against the "annual anti-Israel hatefest" and notes that it has since spread to campuses worldwide.

After practising law in Kitchener-Waterloo for 20 years, Rotberg sold his practice so he could focus more directly on "tikkun olam," repairing the world, he says. He does this not only by publishing books. The bulk of his time is taken up with converting heritage buildings into affordable rental housing for low-income earners. Each of his projects — book or building — must satisfy a "double bottom-line" criterion, he says; it must turn a profit and improve the world in some way.

These days he maintains residences in British Columbia and Southern Ontario, and divides his time between both locations — which proved handy when he accompanied Israeli author Pamela Peled to speaking engagements in both Vancouver and Toronto last month. A former South African, Peled is the author of *For the Love of God and Virgins*, a novel that portrays Israel in a positive light. It was published under the Mantua imprint, Miriam's Legacy Publishing.

"It's just a beautiful novel," he enthuses, adding that it conveys a much more wholesome image of Israel than, say, works by "semi-self-hating Israeli" novelists like Amos Oz and David Grossman. "Part of our mandate is to bring out nice novels about Israel like this one. It's a very well written book about the life of a woman living under terrorism."

Jamie Glazov, a Canadian writer living in Los Angeles, has also joined the Mantua family with his recent book, *Showdown with Evil: Our Struggle Against Tyranny and Terror*. The press is also preparing a work by feminist Phyllis Chesler on the abuse of women in the Arab world. "There's nothing in Islam as a religion that demands the kind of conduct towards women that we're seeing in fundamentalist Islamic nations. We believe it's never politically incorrect to support freedom and understanding. The Torah says 'Justice, justice, thou shalt pursue.' It does not say, 'Tolerance, tolerance, thou shalt pursue.'"


Salim Mansur
Delectable Lie
a liberal repudiation of multiculturalism
"deep and scintillating analysis" - Daniel Pipes, PhD
"sharp ideas and important revelations" - David Solway

Besides his novel, Rotberg is the author of *Tolerism: The Ideology Revealed*, which complains that the West is much too tolerant of radical Islamist regimes and other cultures that are themselves intolerant. Another Rotberg work is *Exploring Vancouverism: The Political Culture of Canada's Lotus Land*, an ethical screed that paints Vancouverites as self-centred adherents of an "inauthentic progressivism" that neglects issues of morality and social justice.

It is as an Internet blogger, however, that he has found the greatest number of readers. In a 2011 satirical blog that he wrote for Pyjamas Media, he prognosticated that President Obama will put a hijab on the Statue of Liberty and rename it the Statue of Tolerance. The piece struck a nerve and went viral. "It had the single largest readership of any article I've ever written," he says with a laugh.

As a writer, he's also known the hurt of being targeted at a public reading. Several years ago someone hurled an ugly racial epithet at him at a bookstore reading after wrongly concluding he had painted all Muslims as terrorists. A brief shouting match ensued. Ultimately the store blamed Rotberg, pulled his books from the shelves, and banned any future appearances.

The experience only made him more determined to get Mantua's books out into the world, he says. "You can tell I'm committed to this and that it's a major mission of mine. We're living in potentially tragic times and we have to get out books that can explain to people what, in this age of political correctness, they're no longer being taught in high school."

'KOSHER' LABEL IN ADVERTISING

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency Guide to Food Labelling and Advertising reads as follows:

"In the labelling, packaging and advertising of a food, the Food and Drug Regulations prohibits the use of the word kosher or any letter of the Hebrew alphabet, or any other word, expression, depiction, sign, symbol, mark, device or other representation that indicates or that is likely to create an impression that the food is kosher, if the food does not meet the requirements of the Kashruth applicable to it.

The terms "kosher style" and "kind of kosher" are not allowed, unless they meet the requirements of the Kashruth. "Jewish-style food" or "Jewish cuisine" are not objected to, although the foods may not necessarily meet the requirements of the Kashruth.

Rationale: "Kosher style" is considered to create the impression that the food is kosher, and therefore the food must meet the requirements of the Kashruth. "Jewish style" food may not necessarily create this impression."

The CJN makes no representation as to the kashruth of food products in advertisements.

Judaic artist to speak at Beth Tzedec

Frances Kraft
Staff Reporter

Jerusalem-based artist David Moss is described on the Yale University library website as "arguably the finest living Judaic artist."

He is known for resurrecting the ketubah as an art form, for the limited-edition "Tree of Life" *shtender* he created with woodworker Noah Greenberg, and for his eponymous "Moss Haggadah," a book originally created as a one-off commissioned work of art.

The Haggadah is now available in three versions, one of which is a limited-edition replica of the original, replete with symbolism, illuminated drawings, gold leaf, moving parts, and intricate paper cuts.

Moss will speak at Beth Tzedec Congregation on March 26 at 7:30 p.m. at a pre-Pesach event titled "Roth and Moss: Old Forms, New Expressions: Ketubah and Haggadah."

"Roth" refers to historian Cecil Roth, who edited many haggadot and also assembled the collection of ketubot at the shul's Reuben and Helene Dennis Museum.

Moss, who has no formal art training, traces the beginning of his career to an interest in Hebrew calligraphy that he pursued after graduating from university in the late 1960s, he said in a phone interview from Jerusalem. A friend of his who was a sofer wrote out the aleph bet for him, and he "started copying the letters, and everything grew from that."

A native of Dayton, Ohio, who was born into "a very committed Reform family" in 1946, Moss, in his online resumé, also credits his father – inventor, musician, writer and businessman Jack Moss – for "creative tutelage" from 1946 to 1975.

In addition to his art projects, Moss teaches creativity and "creative problem solving."

A father of four and grandfather of 10, he believes that anyone can learn to be creative. "The proof is that all children are creative. Human beings start by being creative, and school squelches that. It can be revived, or helped along."

David Moss

His daughter, Toronto-based Ariella Moss Peterseil, is assistant director of Camp Ramah in Canada, where he began working in 1999 on special programs. Another daughter, Elyssa Moss Rabinowitz, was one of the three co-founders at Kol HaOt, which runs programs incorporating art and Jewish texts and ideas.

Moss' mission to revive the art of the ketubah began with what he terms a naive question about historic illuminated ketubot.

"I started asking people, 'Who's doing that now?'" He was told the art form – which, he explains, reflects the joy and beauty associated with a wedding – had died out about a century earlier, and that the illuminated manuscripts had been replaced by printed forms that often end up in a drawer.

"It seemed to me a shame that that tradition had died out. I started doing them for friends, and people saw me doing them, and asked me to do their own."

Moss' Judaic background, following the acquisition of a BA in liberal arts, includes three years at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Jewish Theological Seminary, where he was enrolled in the rabbinic program in the late 1960s, although he had no intention of becoming a rabbi.

"I wanted to continue my Jewish education," he said.

After his year in Israel in 1968-1969, he remained mostly in the United States, including a 1974-1977 stint in Berkeley, Calif., where he was artist-in-residence at the Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life.

In addition to his evening presentations at Beth Tzedec – one on the revival of the hand-done ketubah and one on the haggadah – Moss will meet with young students at Robbins Hebrew Academy, which has a branch at Beth Tzedec. He said he asked to meet with small groups "so I can sit on the floor and engage them in the artistic process."

There is no charge for the evening presentation, which includes a dessert reception, but attendees are requested to RSVP to Avital at 416-781-3511.

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Woody Allen to play pimp

JTA

NEW YORK — Woody Allen will play a pimp who arouses the suspicions of his chassidic neighbors in a movie directed by John Turturro.

Allen is set to co-star in the *Fading Gigolo* along with Turturro and Sharon Stone, *Variety* reported.

Turturro and Allen will play friends who spark the suspicions of their chassidic neighbors when they launch a gigolo business. In the film, Allen serves as Turturro's pimp.

Allen, who recently won an Academy Award for screenwriting for *Midnight in Paris*, rarely appears in other directors' movies. According to *Variety*, he last appeared in another filmmaker's movie in 2000 with a role in the comedy *Picking Up the Pieces* and an uncredited cameo in *Company Man*.

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EYE ON ARTS

By BILL GLADSTONE

YOUNG THORNHILL PLAYWRIGHT WINS 2011 CANADIAN JEWISH PLAYWRITING COMPETITION

Daniel Karasik

Toronto playwright **Daniel Karasik** has been named winner of the 2011 Canadian Jewish Playwriting Competition for his play *Haunted*.

Karasik, a 25-year-old native of Thornhill who had his first play produced when he was only 16, won out over 19 other submissions from five provinces. Karasik receives a $1,000 prize and his play receives a "Between Stages" public reading at the Miles Nadal JCC on Tuesday, April 10, 8 p.m.

The reading is to be directed by **Alisa Palmer** and will feature **Sascha Cole**, **Sarah English** and **Jordan Pettle**. The competition is hosted by the Miles Nadal JCC.

Haunted is about a university professor who loses her husband and afterwards becomes romantically involved with her synagogue's young rabbi. Meanwhile, her daughter begins to see her father's ghost. The play, according to a JCC press release, "is about family, desire and spiritual hunger."

Karasik is clearly a rising new talent. His 2010 play *The Innocents*, which premiered at the Summerworks Theatre Festival, was a mixture of legal thriller and dark comedy.

In Full Light, an earlier piece that he produced for Summerworks, was based on his experience working at a cultural centre in Ghana. It won a prize for outstanding new play, was published in an anthology, and has been translated and performed in Germany. Karasik has also had plays produced in the Rhubarb and Paprika theatre festivals.

Remarkably, Karasik was also named last week as one of 10 finalists for the CBC's short story prize, for a story called *Mine*. More than 3,750 stories were submitted for consideration. (www.cbc.ca/canadawrites)

The deadline for submissions to the 2012 Playwriting Competition is Tuesday, July 3. 416-924-6211, ext. 606, esthera@mnjcc.org

* * *

Filmmaker to Attend Screenings: The Toronto Jewish Film Society presents *Divan*, a 2003 American-Hungarian-Ukrainian coproduction by New York director **Pearl Gluck**, who will be present for the screenings. A bittersweet documentary, the film chronicles Gluck's search for a sofa once owned by her great-great-grandfather in Hungary, a quest that unearths more than she bargained for and tackles the big questions of faith, morality and the meaning of family.

Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre, Sunday, March 25, 4 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Individual seats on sale 15 minutes before each screening. $15, $10. 416-924-6211, ext. 606, esthera@mnjcc.org

* * *

Music Notes

• **Judith** and **Tamar Cohen** make a presentation on Sephardic Music, for the Canadian Institute of Mediterranean Studies, St. Michael's College, 100 St. Joseph St., Carr Hall. Admission free. Thursday, March 15, 7 p.m.

• Musician and music historian **Jordan Klapman** presents "The Jewish Black Music Connection: From Louis Armstrong and Beyond," a program focusing on the fascination that Jews and black artists had for each other's music, and how each influenced the other: Louis Armstrong's early scat recording *Heebie Jeebies* was said to have been inspired by Jewish prayers. Miles Nadal JCC, Active Seniors; $3 includes refreshments. Thursday, March 22, 1:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 155.

* * *

***Footnote* opens in theatres on March 23.**

Arts in Brief

• The theatre company Shakespeare in Action, the Miles Nadal JCC and the Al Green Theatre present *The Diary of Anne Frank*, the stage drama based on Frank's diary written while hiding from the Nazis with her family in a secret annex in wartime Amsterdam. Al Green Theatre, Thursday, March 15 to Saturday March 31. 416-924-6211, ext. 0, www.algreentheatre.ca

• Author-critic **Kevin Courrier** presents the latest in his series of talks with film clips on American movies. The topic is "The G.W. Bush Era." Films include *We Were Soldiers*, *Tears of the Sun*, *Team America: World Police* and more. Miles Nadal JCC, Monday, March 19, 7 to 9 p.m. $12 drop-in at the door; students $6. 416-924-6211, ext. 606, film@mnjcc.org

• *Footnote*, the Academy Award-nominated film by Israeli writer-director **Joseph Cedar**, opens March 23 in theatres in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal. The film uses wry humour and a key plot twist to tell the story of a father-son rivalry. When he was six, the New York-born Cedar immigrated with his family to Israel, where he studied philosophy and theatre history. He is also an NYU film school graduate.

* * *

At the Galleries

• *Icons of Loss: The Art of Samuel Bak*, a series of paintings exploring, among other subjects, a famous 1943 photograph taken during the liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto. The exhibition, presented by the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, is at the Columbus Centre's Joseph D. Carrier Art Gallery, 901 Lawrence Ave. W., until April 30.

• Israeli artist **David Moss** presents "Roth and Moss: Old Forms, New Expressions, Ketubah & Haggadah," a talk about his acclaimed ketubot and Haggadah, with reference to the visual legacy of the Cecil Roth Collection housed at the Beth Tzedec Reuben & Helene Dennis Museum. Introduced by Rabbi Adam Cutler. Free. Beth Tzedec Museum, Monday, March 26, 7:30 p.m. RSVP to Avital, 416-781-3511.

• *Silk Stones*, works by Toronto artist **Rochelle Rubinstein**, are on view at Yeshiva University Museum, The Center for Jewish History, 15 W. 16th St., New York, until May 6. www.yumuseum.org

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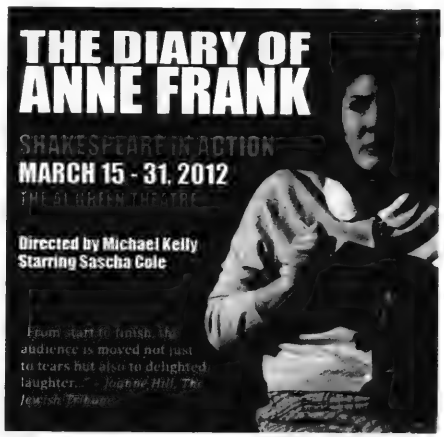
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Dentist cum sculptor 'connects' with the Segal

Janice Arnold
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Harry Rosen long ago secured his legacy as one of Montreal's leading dental practitioners and teachers.

In his "emeritus" days, the prosthodontist and McGill University professor is ensuring that he will also be remembered as a public artist – the creator of large-scale stone sculptures that adorn institutions around the city.

The 82-year-old Rosen's *The Connection*, two larger-than-life interlocked human figures, has been installed near the entrance of the Segal Centre for Performing Arts.

Intended to convey our dependence on one another, *The Connection* is the third sculpture Rosen has donated for permanent viewing. In 2010, *The Ascent* went up outside the Jewish General Hospital's Lady Davis Institute for Medical Research.

The year before Rosen gave his *Little Hercules*, a child-like figure hoisting a barbell triumphantly over its head, to the Montreal Children's Hospital.

Rosen hopes *The Connection* will be equally inspirational. "The message is we need each other. We are social animals – we don't live alone."

The faceless, asexual figures lean slightly inward, as they hold onto each other's shoulders for support.

Interdependence is true of the arts, of which he and wife, Delores, are patrons, as much as any other human endeavour, Rosen said. Artists not only need an audience, but feed off each other as they perform, he said. What's more, the Segal has set itself a mission of bridging communities and cultures through the arts.

"It's a natural fit for us at the Segal," agreed CEO Manon Gauthier. "We talk about the power of communities, of the great things that can happen when people get together... We do, indeed, need one another."

Gauthier added it is an honour for the Segal to receive this gift and for her to meet a man of such vision, yet humility.

Rosen is, in fact, a bit of a lone wolf. He made *The Connection* last year, working through all seasons, for "thousands, not hundreds, of hours."

The work is not carved from a block, but rather composed of hundreds of flat stones. His "atelier" is in Vaudreuil, in a field behind a welder's shop. His only protection against the elements was a makeshift plastic structure.

After working in stone for decades at his country home in the Laurentians, this has proven to be an ideal arrangement. This is dusty, noisy work, and, in Vaudreuil, there are no neighbours to bother.

The open-ended tent provides the essential ventilation, and the welder was always nearby to solder, piece by piece, the metal armature that provides the frame for the stone duo.

Rosen began working in stone as a hobby 50 years ago, as a break from the reconstruction he performed on a miniature scale in his dental practice. He collected and posed boulders found near his Laurentian getaway with winches and pulleys he devised himself. He built walls and patios, until he started to envision his heavyweight medium's artistic potential.

Today, Rosen has abandoned his clinical white coat for labourer's overalls, goggles and respirator to create sculpture that he describes as melding art and engineering.

It is hard work. *The Connection*, like the earlier two works, is made from sedimentary rock quarried in Hemmingford that naturally breaks into plate-like pieces. The bigger ones can weigh 40 to 50 pounds. Rosen claims he was never cold, even through the winter.

A robust octogenarian, he hoisted these by hand, grinding them to the desired contours, drilling a hole in each and then lifting them onto the metal frame. Although Rosen says the stones are shaped and balanced to hold together by gravity, he did mortar them together for safety.

The Connection weighs about three tons and is nine feet tall at its highest point.

Harry Rosen with *The Connection*

The sculpture was trucked to the Segal, encased in a custom-made cage. It arrived around 6 a.m. to minimize disturbance to the area. (That block of Côte Ste. Catherine Road was closed to traffic.)

The caged sculpture was lifted into place by a crane with a 30-foot boom. The siting was not haphazard. Architect George Elbaz was consulted, and the work was lined up in such a way as to complement the strong verticality of the centre's Mies van der Rohe-influenced design.

The Connection is on the terrace to the right of the entrance steps, opposite the stone horned animal's head on the other side, whose provenance seems to be a mystery today.

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New doc examines *The Age of Anxiety*

Joseph Serge
Arts Editor

Everyone it seems is either afflicted with anxiety or knows someone who is. By age 32, 50 per cent of us can qualify for a diagnosis of anxiety disorder based on the criteria used today.

What has changed? Why such a rise in the diagnosis of anxiety? And has it always been with us?

These are some of the questions examined in *The Age of Anxiety*, a new film from Emmy Award-winning producer Ric Esther Bienstock and Associated Producers.

It is, of course, normal to be anxious. But when that fear is disassociated from any real or lasting danger, it becomes a sometimes crippling disorder.

The documentary interviews eight people, mostly Torontonians, aged between 12 and 50, who suffer from various degrees of the mental illness. It also seeks expert and differing opinions from six doctors, academics and authors.

The Age of Anxiety suggests that there are two main culprits responsible for the rise in anxiety diagnosis: the pharmaceutical companies and the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (*DSM*), the "bible" for psychiatrists.

When most doctors, especially busy general practitioners, treat any symptom of anxiety with medication, the pharmaceutical companies obviously stand to gain the most.

The documentary shows how one such company hired a PR firm to blitz the media with alarming "news reports" about the increasing stresses in everyday life.

Diagnosing anxiety disorder is not as easy as doing blood tests and it is very subjective. Today, experts believe, anxiety is being over-diagnosed. It is not uncommon now for someone grieving the loss of a loved one for more than two weeks to be diagnosed with anxiety, when the normal grieving period used to be a year.

Ric Esther Bienstock

"The way things are headed, getting an anti-anxiety prescription will be easier than getting a driver's licence," producer Bienstock says. "That's crazy! I'm getting anxious just thinking about it. Doesn't mean I should get a prescription."

Some experts blame the *DSM*, now undergoing a revision, which keeps adding definitions for anxiety disorders. Will the broadened criteria for anxiety, prescription happy GPs and a hectic society turn us all into mental health patients?

The Age of Anxiety is an informative and balanced look at what is being called the disease of the 21st century. It has its world premiere on CBC Television's *Doc Zone* on March 15 at 9 p.m.

Are pharmacetutical companies responsible for large anxiety disorder diagnoses?

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Sports celebrities headline Maccabi fundraising event

Paul Lungen
Staff Reporter

Some of Canada's best-known sportscasters, radio and television personalities gathered on behalf of Maccabi Canada last week in a Sports Unplugged fundraising event.

Hosted by Dan Shulman, ESPN's play-by-play commentator for Major League Baseball and the NBA, Sports Unplugged included Michael Landsberg (TSN), Elliotte Friedman (CBC), Steve Simmons (*Toronto Sun*), Mike Wilner (Blue Jays radio broadcaster), Shi Davidi (Rogers Sportsnet), Gord Kirke (sports lawyer) and Nelson Millman (executive producer for radio at the 2012 Olympics).

The commentators were divided into groups of four and faced off against each other in debates on sports issues – a format similar to TSN's *Off the Record*, which Landsberg hosts. They discussed the New Orleans Saints' bounty-hunting scandal, the Blue Jays' chances in 2012 and the role of the media in the firing of Maple Leafs coach Ron Wilson.

The highly opinionated personalities presented their views on the issues, but the central message conveyed to the 350 onlookers was that Maccabi Canada is an organization worthy of their support.

Maccabi Canada president Tom Bacher, himself a former softball player at the Maccabiah Games, said that "events like this get our name out there in the community and create the reputation [of Maccabi] as an organization that does things first class."

Spectators paid $200 each for the privilege of attending the event, held at Le Parc in Markham. Altogether, as much as $80,000 was raised, with funds earmarked for Maccabi Canada's "adopt an athlete" program. The money will go to help underwrite the cost of bringing athletes to the 2013 Maccabiah Games in Israel. Funds will help at least 50 athletes attend the competition, Bacher said.

Sports Unplugged is one of several programs on the Maccabi calendar and is slated to become an annual event, Bacher said.

In June, Maccabi Canada will host a picnic and sports challenge at Camp Robin Hood. Other events include a bridge tournament and participation in the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon on Oct. 14.

In introducing his fellow panelists, Shulman described his participation in the Pan American Maccabi Games, held over the winter holidays in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

The Pan Am Maccabi attracted athletes from Canada, Brazil, the United States, Australia, Israel, South Africa, Argentina, Venezuela, Chile, Panama and other countries.

Shulman was part of the masters basketball team that won a bronze medal while upsetting the highly favoured Brazilian team on their home court. He raved about his experience at the Games, and in particular, the game versus Brazil, when other Canadian athletes and delegation members crowded into a Brazilian gym to cheer on the Canadians.

"It's a moment that will stay with us for the rest of our lives," he said.

Some of Canada's best known sports personalities headlined Maccabi Canada's "Sports Unplugged" event last week. Seen here, from left, Gord Kirke, Nelson Millman, Elliotte Friedman, Mike Wilner, Steve Simmonds, Maccabi Canada President Tom Bacher, Dan Shulman, Shi Davidi and Michael Landsberg. *[Ben Katan photograph]*

Jean Béliveau recuperating

David Lazarus
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Hockey icon Jean Béliveau, although still tired and weak, is getting better after his Feb. 27 stroke and "has his old sense of humour back," reports a close friend of the hockey legend.

"He is definitely recuperating," said Gary Ulrich, a former Maccabi Canada president. Béliveau led the Canadian team into Ramat Gan stadium as honourary chef de mission at the 1985 Maccabiah Games.

"[His wife] Élise called me last night. The good news is that he has his sense of humour back and there is no paralysis. She told me he's been very, very funny.

"But he's been through a lot. He's lost 30 pounds over the last while and he is, after all, 80.

Ulrich said he has been serving as a "clearing house" for callers and well-wishers who want to send Béliveau get well soon messages.

"He will probably be in the hospital for awhile," Ulrich said.

Béliveau had been admitted to the hospital for the treatment of a serious nosebleed that took days to get under control. Shortly after being discharged, he suffered the stroke. He is being treated at the Montreal General Hospital.

Béliveau has a special place in the hearts of those in the Maccabi movement and the Jewish community in general.

Besides being a stalwart supporter of Maccabiah – he also went in 1997 – Béliveau has been an integral part of Maccabi Canada's fundraising efforts.

In 1996, the organization honoured him with a gala dinner, and in 2008, Béliveau became the first non-Jew inducted into the YM-YWHA Alex Dworkin Montreal Jewish Sports Hall of Fame. Two years earlier, Béliveau had also attended the Hall's inaugural event.

Béliveau came to the Yaldei Developmental Centre in Notre Dame de Grace several years ago to unveil a bus donated through the Montreal Canadiens Children's Foundation, which he helped found.

"There is still only one Jean Béliveau, and if there is a more popular person alive, I do not know who that is," Ulrich said.

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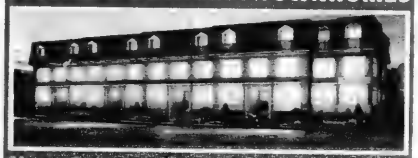

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Filmmaker aims to make audience *'sick and scared'*

Sheri Shefa
Staff Reporter

Zach Green may produce horror films, but that doesn't mean he likes fear. In fact, he says he generally avoids watching frightening movies.

"I don't like to be scared," he says. "I like scaring *people*."

But the Toronto native spends his time producing and editing horror films written by Richard Powell. Together, they run Fatal Pictures Inc., which has produced three short films.

The newest one is called *Familiar*, and it premièred at the Projection Booth cinema in Toronto on March 2, ahead of the screening of the Japanese gore-filled thriller *Battle Royale*.

Green says the theatre was packed, and there were even some people who came specifically to see *Familiar*, which he describes as the story of a middle-aged man who suspects the negative impulses plaguing his mind may not be his own.

Although it is a scary movie, Green says it's completely different watching it from behind the camera.

"There's nothing horror about it. I'm watching Richard say 'cut' and everyone laughs," he says. "We're making you think it's real, but really it's the fakest thing ever."

However, the people sitting in the dark cinema shouldn't let their guard down.

"When I [screen] my movies and the person watching it is feeling sick and scared, that's the best thing in the world," he explains – a feat he says he accomplished at the latest première, with audience members gasping at all the right parts.

Green met the second half of Fatal Pictures, Powell, at a private film school in Toronto. Green was studying post-production and Powell focused on production. When Powell was searching for an editor for one of his films, Green applied for the job.

They built such a good rapport in the editing suite that they decided they would continue to work together after they graduated in 2002, he says, adding that they incorporated in 2007.

Green says most people who create short films use the medium as a stepping-stone to eventually make feature films, and he is no exception.

"No one makes short films to continue making short films," he says, explaining that there's no money to be made in that part of the industry.

In 2010, the two men released a movie called *Worm*, which gives a 20-minute glimpse into the life of a misanthropic high school teacher with a "fragile and increasingly terrifying mental state."

Zach Green

Since its release, Green says they have written a script that expands this peek into a 90-minute real-time feature film following the same character from *Worm*, creating new situations for him.

Using an established character gives the company a leg-up in terms of finding investments because they can demonstrate previous success acclamations, Green says.

He is passionate about film, and he emphasizes his love of traditional methods. Despite technological advances, he says he prefers shooting on 16-millimetre film, which is an economical alternative to the non-digital theatrical film that an established director like Steven Spielberg might use.

In particular, he says he appreciates that film separates the amateurs from the professionals.

"You aren't going to see a guy who doesn't know how to shoot movies shooting on film," he says, explaining that it costs money for every second the camera is rolling, and thus it takes a lot more expertise.

Although high-definition cameras certainly create a comparable film experience for the average viewers, Green says a good director should be able to know the difference visually. He calls 16-millimetre film gritty and grimy, creating an effect that "can't be matched."

Despite his education and his confidence in his work, he seems rather disillusioned with the Canadian film industry. He says he knows his films are very well done, but blames their lack of widespread success on Canada's lack of involvement in the film industry.

"I get no love from Canada," he says. "Movies aren't made and sold in Canada."

He acknowledges Canadian filmmakers like David Cronenberg, but points out that the Canadians who have found success making movies have had to move to the United States to find funding and investments.

"No one takes risks in Canada, and film is a risky business," he says. "I'll never give up my Canadian passport, but I'd rather be American so I can make money."

He said one of the most crucial aspects of the film-industry game is to get screened at film festivals to generate publicity.

It's especially important because a movie's success comes down to its promotion, he explains, suggesting that a movie should put half its total budget toward advertising.

"If you don't promote, you may as well use your movie as a coaster for your coffee," he says.

Through the experience of working on a number of scary movies, Green says he has come to appreciate the horror genre, even if it hasn't turned him into a fan of fear. In the end, it's all about connecting with the audience.

"If emotions are getting drawn out, whether you're happy, sad, throwing up, whatever," he says, "I created something... and you're getting scared from what I made. I love it."

More news for young Jews on heebonics.ca

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Tackle problems together

Dear Ella,

Michelle and I have been together for a long time. We've discussed marriage and at this point, we just assume we will always be together, but I can't bring myself to pop the question just yet.

Michelle is very close to her family as I am with mine, but there is a big difference: she shares everything with them. Last week, her mom approached me to discuss an intimate, private problem that should have stayed between us. This was very personal, and my girlfriend metaphorically brought her mother into our bed.

I have spoken to Michelle at great length about her unhealthy dependence on her parents and how it's time for her to distance herself from them if she wants to move on with a new family of her own. She disagrees with me and feels I don't understand because I don't come from a close family. She says you can't have too much love. In fact, I do come from a close family. It's just that we don't speak to or see each other every day, and I choose to solve my problems without my parents' intervention.

As far as I'm concerned, the relationship she has with her family is unhealthy, and last week it became embarrassing. Do I give her an ultimatum to choose them or me? I don't know what to do.

Cut the Cord

Dear Cut the Cord,

It's very important to feel loved and to have a close bond with family. However, at some point, there needs to be a natural break. It's not unusual for a child of over-protective parents to have a difficult time separating. It's possible that Michelle is having a hard time letting go because her parents have always helped solve her problems. The fact that her mother approached you about something so private between the two of you is proof of that. She should have advised her daughter to work it out with you, rather than take over and try to fix things for her little girl.

You have to make Michelle feel secure enough to trust that together you can solve your own problems. Right now, you're like the outsider trying to break in to a sealed bond that has had a lifetime to strengthen. It's up to you to turn the tables. For a relationship to be healthy, there needs to be trust, communication and boundaries.

Did you discuss the inappropriateness of her approaching her mother with such a personal problem? Did you communicate to her how it made you feel? You need to teach Michelle to trust that together you can work out your issues. As her husband-to-be, you're entitled to verbalize your expectations and set boundaries. She needs to know that your loyalty to, and privacy with, each other must take priority. It's the basic foundation for respecting the sanctity of your relationship.

Michelle has to know that she stepped over the line, but at the same time, you have to be patient while she works through this complicated relationship she has with her parents. You both have some serious work ahead, and you may benefit from some professional couples counselling. Only you can decide if you love her enough to help her through this.

Ask Ella

By Ella Burakowski

Readers may submit their questions to Ella at The CJN, *e-mail. ellacjn@gmail.com. But Ella is not a professional counsellor. She brings to the questions posed by readers her unique brand of earthy wisdom. Her advice is not a replacement for medical, legal or any other advice. For serious problems, consult a professional.*

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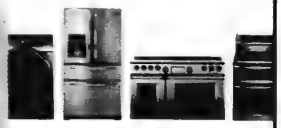

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The CJN's French-language reporter in Montreal, Elias Levy, writes about:

Nathalie Myara, who serves as a resource for schoolchildren with special needs, talks about the difficulties that arise for these children, especially in Jewish schools.

Radio Shalom's new board of directors which is chaired by **Charles Barchechath**, right. The station is planning a fund-raising evening May 16 at the Théâtre l'Olympia de Montréal.

Exclusive to cjnews.com

The CJN's Hebrew-language columnist, Yosef Tastassa, writes about Israel's security dilemma which was discussed in Washington.

Web columnist Masada Siegel writes about encountering hatred around the world and how it can be turned into harmony.

Web columnist Lauren Aginsky writes about the bitter-sweet decision of moving her daughter from Jewish day school to public school.

After almost 18 months of regular anti-Israeli demonstrations on their block, some shopkeepers St. Denis Street in Montreal say their business is suffering and they are weary, even unnerved, by a situation that has no end in sight.

Coffee-shop chat

I was doing one of the things I love to do when I visit Israel, sit in a coffee shop and either read a newspaper or work on my laptop

The café was part of a well-known Israeli chain, Aroma, but could have been one of many other lovely cafés that serve my favourite beverage, *café afuch*, which loosely means "upside down." It is a cross between cappuccino and latte, but tastes better than anything I have been able to get in North American coffee shops.

I was typing away, sipping my *afuch*, when I noticed that next to my table was a larger table where a half a dozen elderly women were having a lively and animated conversation. I could tell from their accents that they were of eastern European origin and could discern the occasional word in Polish or Yiddish. They seemed to be having a grand time and periodically were joined by other friends for a few minutes to exchange personal updates.

As I finished my work and was closing my laptop, one of the women leaned over and said she hoped that their talking had not, using a colloquial phrase, "shook up my brain."

I replied, "Not at all. It sounded like you were having a good and lively visit." I said this in my Hebrew, with its very distinctive American accent.

Senior Side of Life

Michael Gordon

The woman's face lit up as she asked me in strongly eastern-European-accented Hebrew, "And where are you from?"

I answered Toronto, which interested one of the other women at the table.

"I have family in Thornhill. Do you know it?" she asked, naming the family. "You know that they have an Israeli coffee shop of the same company where we are drinking our coffee right now?" she asked, to which I answered "yes."

Another woman asked, "From where do you know Hebrew?" to which I gave a short summary of my life, starting with my youth in New York, studies in Scotland, move to Canada, immigration to Israel where I lived for four years and then return to Canada.

Each of the women commented on some part of my historical journey with an "I used to live there" or "I have a family member there."

The woman who started the conversation asked me, "And where do your parents or grandparents come from?" I answered Lithuania, stating the name of the shtetl, to which she said, "I was from Vilna, so we are *landsman*," with a big smile on her face.

Others in the group named parts of eastern Europe from where they came and related their place of origin to its proximity to or some other relationship to my ancestral home. The primary enquirer was clearly satisfied as she now determined that we had a "connection," something that seems especially powerful to Israeli and Jewish culture.

The quest for human connectivity is universal, and this recent small experience was a repeat of similar interactions I have witnessed over the years on my many trips to Israel the need for people to prove how closely we are all connected, especially among those in their later years.

This is especially the case with those who have experienced the Holocaust, with its goal of dismembering our collective Jewish identity and our common origins, family ties and relationships. I left the coffee shop smiling, with a warm feeling in my heart.

Dr. Michael Gordon is medical program director of palliative care at Baycrest and co-author with Bart Mindszenthy of Parenting Your Parents (Dundurn Press). His latest book, Moments that Matter: Cases in Ethical Eldercare, follows his previous book, Brooklyn Beginnings: A Geriatrician's Odyssey. All can be researched at his website: http://www.drmichaelgordon.com.

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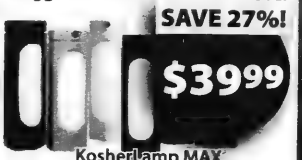

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National

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Toulouse murders condemned

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TOULOUSE, France — Israel and the French Jewish community expressed shock Monday over the attack on a Toulouse Jewish school that killed four people and left one seriously wounded.

French prosecutor Michel Valet said Monday that those killed were Jewish studies teacher Jonathan Sandler, 30, and his three-year-old and six-year-old sons. Valet said another child, between eight and 10 years old, was also killed, and a 17-year-old was seriously wounded.

A spokesperson for Israel's foreign ministry, Yigal Palmor, expressed outrage at the killings, which took place on Monday at about 8 a.m. near a synagogue on the campus of the Ozar Hatorah school. "We are following with great shock reports coming from Toulouse, and we trust the French authorities will solve this crime and bring those responsible to justice."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Monday that the shooting at the Jewish school is a "despicable murder" and that he's certain French President Nicolas Sarkozy and his government "will do everything in their power to find the murderer, and I promise that Israel will help France in this task."

French Chief Rabbi Gilles Bernheim said he was "horrified" by the attack.

Jonathan Sandler

CRIF, the umbrella Representative Council of French Jewish Institutions, expressed shock over the Toulouse shooting and called on the public to act "with responsibility and restraint" in light of the events.

"We have no doubt that the attack was antisemitic. It is certain. Killing children from close range just because they are Jewish is an unimaginable horror. These are innocent children," said CRIF deputy chairman Meir Habib,.

The Conference of European Rabbis called on the French government to increase security at Jewish institutions.

"We call on the French authorities to take all possible steps to make sure the assailant will be brought to justice," said president Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt.

Continued on page 51

Israel's chief of staff visits Ottawa

Israel's chief of staff, Lieut.-Gen. Benny Gantz, left, accepts a gift from his Canadian counterpart, Gen. Walt Natynczyk, in Ottawa on March 16 at the end of Gantz's two-day visit to Canada, during which they discussed global security concerns. The Canadian chief of defence staff thanked his Israeli guest for the visit, saying the level of co-operation between the two countries in matters of security is very important, the Israel Defence Forces said in a statement. Please see story on page 17. *[IDF photo]*

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EU disconnects Iranian banks from transfer system – see page 49

CANADA

Aliyah Mega Event

TORONTO — The aliyah-promotion organization Nefesh B'Nefesh, in partnership with Israel's Ministry of Immigrant Absorption and the Jewish Agency, took its message to potential olim in Montreal and Toronto earlier this week. It was part of the "Aliyah Mega Event" series that aims to give "comprehensive aliyah information, guidance and inspiration to potential olim," Nefesh B'Nefesh said. The five-city tour, which included stops in Baltimore, South Florida and New York, featured seminars on topics such as careers in Israel, financial planning, Israeli health care and education, the aliyah process, and aliyah rights and benefits. Nefesh B'Nefesh has helped more than 30,000 Jews move to Israel.

WORLD

Wax Anne Unveiled

BERLIN — Madame Tussauds in Berlin unveiled a wax figure of Anne Frank sitting at her desk, pen in hand, smiling dreamily. The unveiling took place last week amid criticism about including a Holocaust victim at such an unserious location, to *Bild Zeitung*, Germany's most popular daily, reported. Others say it's appropriate, if information about her life and death is included. The director of the Anne Frank Center in Berlin was at the unveiling and praised the idea of bringing visitors closer to history with such displays.

Suspects Arrested

BAKU — Twenty-two people were arrested in Azerbaijan on suspicion of planning to attack American, Israeli and Jewish targets. The arrests were reportedly announced by the national security ministry, which said the attacks were to be undertaken on behalf of Iran. Among the targeted sites were the U.S. and Israeli embassies, a Jewish Agency facility and an American fast-food eatery. Last month, suspected terrorists with links to Iran and Hezbollah were arrested in Azerbaijan and accused of planning attacks against foreigners in Baku, the capital. In January, at least two men were arrested after planning an attack on two Israeli teachers who were Chabad emissaries at a Jewish school in Baku.

Surgeon Probed

MIAMI — A Jewish plastic surgeon in Miami is under an ethics investigation after commissioning a Jewish punk rock band to write a song about a Jewish teen with a big nose. Dr. Michael Salzhauer, 40, hired the Groggers to write the song and make a music video that encourages plastic surgery in a bid to connect to a younger audience. The American Society of Plastic Surgeons called the promotion "offensive and inappropriate."

'America's Rabbi' Declares Candidacy

Rabbi Shmuley Boteach

NEW YORK — Rabbi Shmuley Boteach, author and media personality, announced his candidacy for a U.S. congressional seat in New Jersey.

Rabbi Boteach announced March 14 that he'll be seeking the Republican nomination in northern New Jersey's 9th congressional district. He had said he was considering a run in the Democratic-leaning district, site of a fierce redistricting-induced Democratic primary battle between two incumbents.

Rabbi Boteach's platform includes support for school vouchers, a flat tax and making marital counselling tax deductible in order to lower the divorce rate. He has criticized what he sees as an excessive Republican focus on sexual issues such as gay marriage.

The rabbi, who was once affiliated with the Chabad movement, calls himself "America's Rabbi." He hosted a show on TLC called *Shalom in the Home* and is the author of several books, including *Kosher Sex, Kosher Adultery, The Kosher Sutra* and, most recently, *Kosher Jesus*.

The latter was condemned as heretical by Rabbi Immanuel Schochet, a Chabad Lubavitch rabbi in Toronto, who said it's "forbidden" for anyone to buy or read it.

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Rabbi Yisroel Miller

Sheri Shefa
Staff Reporter

While many Jewish families understand the benefits of sending their kids to Hebrew day school, some simply can't afford, or come to terms with, the hefty price tag.

With annual tuition fees averaging more than $13,000 at Toronto schools, parents who choose a Jewish education for their children are often forced to make financial sacrifices.

Rabbi Yisroel Miller, leader of the House of Jacob Mikveh Israel, an Orthodox congregation in Calgary, understands this challenge and has come up with an offer that some might find hard to refuse.

Jewish families who decide to move to Calgary are entitled to three years of free tuition at his congregation's day school. The program was launched last year with recurring ads in *The CJN*.

The Boston-born Rabbi Miller sees it as a win-win offer.

"We know what rising tuitions are like in larger cities, so we've made an offer that if someone would like to move to Calgary, it's worth it for us to subsidize the tuition for the first three years in order to give them a chance to see if we're for them," he said.

Rabbi Miller, who was spiritual leader of Pittsburgh's Congregation Poale Zedeck for 24 years before joining House of Jacob Mikveh Israel in 2009, explained that since Calgary is Canada's fastest-growing city, he saw an opportunity to increase its Jewish population as well.

Calgary is home to a Jewish community of about 8,500.

The community is served by a Chabad congregation, his own Orthodox shul, a Conservative synagogue, and one Reform temple.

There are also Jewish social service organizations, a Jewish community centre and two Jewish day schools, one of which is housed in the House of Jacob.

The shul's day school serves students from preschool to Grade 9, and tuition runs about $8,000 per year.

Continued on page 28

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Inspired by a song

From the editor's desk...

In the moving 1958 film, *Me and the Colonel*, Danny Kaye plays the role of S.L. Jacobowsky, a refined, elegant, proper Jew fleeing from the Nazis in the company of an aristocratic, unabashedly antisemitic colonel in the Polish army, played by Curt Jurgens. The two men are reluctant travel companions, thrown together by the cruelty and chaos of the times. The film thoughtfully depicts the evolution of the two men's relationship against the backdrop of their nerve-wracking, harrowing effort to escape capture.

The colonel (Jurgens) is visibly bothered by Jacobowsky's presence. But he becomes especially irritated when his Jewish travel partner hums a certain tune, which, of course, Jacobowsky does constantly throughout the film as a way of relieving the gut-wrenching tension of their predicament.

That tune – *Anu banu artza livnot u'lihibanot ba* – was one of the rallying cries of the early pioneers who settled in Eretz Yisrael, then British-ruled, mandatory Palestine.

Like most rallying cries, its words were as important as the familiar minor key melody, sung by Jacobowsky in low, comforting tones.

"*Anu banu artza* (We have come to the Land), *livnot* (to build) *u'lihibanot ba* (and be ourselves built as well in the process)." (My unpoetic translation)

The alliteration works well in the original Hebrew, though not too well in English. But the key message was the duality of the benefits of the endeavour: building the land and also building up the strength, character, resolve, of the labourers, and thus the community to which they belong and the new nation they were creating.

While perhaps originally intended as a song of inspiration for the new generation of Jewish farmers tilling the soil, bending their backs under the hot sun, clearing the land of rocks and stumps, draining swamps, planting, sowing and harvesting, the poem's central message clearly also applied to each and every person contributing to the difficult, mundane and exciting, day-to-day travail of creating a new society.

As is the case with all dreams, some of the details of the actual, new society do not quite fit with the details dreamed through the gauze-like filter on the lens of aspiration and hope. The Jewish state is imperfect. But given the military siege under which that new society has developed from the very first days the pioneers sang that song, one can be very proud of what they did build and what their inheritors continue to build.

The young, tiny Jewish state is a work in progress, to be sure. Yet, even so, just six decades after its establishment, the people of Israel are helping change the world for the better in every sphere of human endeavour and challenge, helping enhance the lives of human beings all around the globe.

Take for example, the area of agriculture, which of course harkens conveniently back to the song that the pioneering Jewish farmers sang and that S.L. Jacobowsky hummed to himself, too.

In 1956, then-foreign minister Golda Meir created Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation, known by its acronym, MASHAV. Since 1957, merely nine years after the declaration of the state, Israel – through MASHAV – has been sharing its agricultural and technological know-how with Third World countries. According to the website, MASHAV has trained close to 270,000 individuals from approximately 132 countries in Israel and abroad.

Between May 15 and 17, Israel will host its 18th international agricultural exhibition. Agritech Israel 2012 will take place in the convention grounds of Tel Aviv. As Israeli reporter Avigayil Kadesh has written, more than 7,000 visitors from some 115 countries are expected to attend the three-day gathering.

Kadesh notes that Agritech is "the go-to event" for representatives from 200 companies and countless prospective customers from North America, South America, Europe, Africa and Asia.

"Out of sheer necessity because of its location in one of the world's most arid regions," Kadesh observes, "Israel's agriculture sector has turned out one advanced solution after another, revolutionizing concepts in irrigation, recycling, crop storage, drought and disease resistance, biological pest control, and purification and reuse of wastewater for the thirsty needs of agriculture."

Most of the rest of the world, therefore, comes to Israel to see, discuss, experience, discover, learn from and possibly buy the latest inventions, discoveries, approaches and ideas for coping with agricultural issues in their own respective locales.

The one part of the world from which very few, if any, participants and onlookers come to Agritech, is the area that might most benefit by doing so: the Middle East. Most of Israel's Mideast neighbours prefer to avert their eyes from the advancements wrought by "the Zionist entity." They might one day change their mind.

First, however, they must change the song they sing from one of destroying their neighbour to building their own society.

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WAVING THE FLAG

Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat waves a mini Israeli flag while running in the second International Jerusalem Marathon last Friday.
(Flash90 photo)

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IsraAID helps out where others fear to tread

NGO supports rebuilding efforts in Japan, South Sudan

Sheri Shefa
Staff Reporter

IsraAID continues to support the Japanese rebuilding effort after the earthquake and tsunami that last year devastated the country's northeast coast and claimed nearly 16,000 lives.

"We're one of the only foreign NGOs still active and hands-on on the ground. Most other aid agencies have left. They're still providing funding to local Japanese NGOs, but there are barely any western NGOs that are operating like us on the ground," said Shachar Zahavi, the founder and director of IsraAID, an umbrella organization made up of Jewish and Israeli relief groups that provide aid worldwide.

Having returned to Israel from a trip to Japan earlier this month, Shachar said he was encouraged by the progress that has been made since the March 11 disaster.

IsraAID arrived in Japan within four days of the earthquake and tsunami to help clean up damaged homes and buildings, open child safety centres and distribute emergency aid to survivors and displaced people living in shelters.

Zahavi recalled that when the Israeli relief teams first arrived in Japan, the locals were reluctant to trust and accept help from foreigners.

"We learned that with them you really need to build trust," Zahavi said, adding that once one community accepted them, others came around.

Looking beyond the clean-up effort, IsraAID has shifted its focus to helping the countless sufferers of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a condition brought on by the disaster.

Israeli therapists are stationed in cities, including Natori, Iwanuma, Watari, Yamamoto and Shinchi, to help survivors cope with PTSD and other anxiety issues.

"It's amazing because we've been working in eight towns, and we've had more communities and NGOS and government officials asking us to expand our work into other areas," he said.

"Just this week we got five national Japanese media outlets covering what we're doing. They were amazed that we were still there."

Not content to rest on his laurels, Zahavi said there are plans to expand even further and develop youth leadership programs.

"We'll provide training to youth under 18 in the northern region and provide them with tools to make them social activists in the community and grant them access into the temporary shelters, which is something that is not common," he said.

Israeli therapists train South Sudanese social workers, pictured together, on how to deal with gender-based violence.

Zahavi added that as much as Japan is benefiting from Israeli expertise, the exposure on the world stage is also good for Israel's image.

"It's great for everyone – for them, for Israel, for the Jewish people."

In other news, IsraAID partner organizations are working with the government in the newest African nation, South Sudan, to cope with the high incidence of gender-based violence.

Zahavi explained that since South Sudan declared its independence in July 2011, Israel immediately sought to establish diplomatic ties with the country.

Meanwhile, IsraAID sent a team to distribute relief items to the people living in the outskirts of Juba, the country's capital, who were fleeing the violence in the northern part of the new state.

"There's chaos now because of the war with the Sudanese. It's still not a safe place. There is still chaos. They've got their country, but there's conflict around the oil that is on the border between North and South Sudan. There's violence," Zahavi said.

Despite the instability in the region, IsraAID and its partner organizations such as FIRST (Fast Israeli Rescue & Search Team) and Operation Blessing Israel have moved into the "capacity-building phase" and are currently working with Confident Children Out of Conflict (CCC), a local NGO based in Juba, to facilitate a gender-based violence training program for 30 social workers in the South Sudan.

Rape and violence against Southern Sudanese women is fuelled by decades of conflict and war, as well as cultural practices that undermine women's rights.

Polygamy, wife-beating, minors forced into marriage, abduction of girls and the culture of silence and stigma related to sexual violence is common.

Zahavi said that despite the fact that CCC staff are introduced to new rape cases each day, they simply aren't trained and equipped to help the girls and women who seek support.

The IsraAID initiative began with a 10-day workshop led by three highly skilled and experienced Israeli therapists.

Continued on page 34

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Banking sanction shows stiffer resolve

The conjecture and speculations the past few weeks, some of it rather harrowing and hair-raising, regarding the state of Iran's nuclear weapons industry and possible pre-emptive attacks against it may have had a galvanizing effect on the governments of Europe.

As of last Saturday, the world's largest financial messaging system severed all monetary transactions with Iranian banks that have been targeted by European Union sanctions. As reported by *Ha'aretz*, "the move is an unprecedented measure that will effectively prevent Iranian institutions from electronically transferring global funds."

The Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT) announced March 15 that the Iranian financial institutions subject to EU sanctions would be removed from the international network as of Saturday, March 17. In effect, the society gave Tehran two days notice to reconsider the implications of its brazen flouting of the international community's concerns over the country's race to build nuclear weapons.

"The new European Council decision, as confirmed by the Belgian Treasury, prohibits companies such as SWIFT to continue to provide specialized financial messaging services to EU-sanctioned Iranian banks," SWIFT announced last week.

White House spokesperson Jay Carney described the decision as being "part of the process of isolating Iran and making clear to the Iranian leadership that there is a price to pay for their intransigence, their refusal to abide by their international obligations, their refusal to adequately reassure the international community that its nuclear intentions are peaceful and non-weapon-related."

Prior to the weekly cabinet meeting in Jerusalem on Sunday, Israeli Finance Minister Yuval Steinitz assessed the impact of SWIFT's decision in strong, unambiguous terms. "It is a tough blow to Iran's economy and makes the import and export of oil very difficult," he told reporters. "This thing can cause the collapse of the Iranian economy. Is it enough? I don't know. Is it significant and will it affect their endurance? Without a doubt it is a very dramatic step," he added.

It was reported in Israel that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had raised the issue of disconnecting the Iranian banks from the SWIFT system with U.S. President Barack Obama and Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper during his visits to Washington and Ottawa two weeks ago.

To the extent that the SWIFT decision owes to the intervention of Obama and Harper as well as to rising worldwide nervousness, we commend and thank the two western leaders for their actions.

25 years ago in *The CJN*

Amid opposition concerns of delay, Ottawa said it would act promptly to change the Criminal Code to enable prosecutions of Nazi war criminals. Tory justice minister Ray Hnatyshyn had recently tabled the Deschenes Commisssion report on war criminals living in Canada. He didn't set a deadline for the changes.

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'International incident' not Israel's fault

I was surprised to see *The CJN* blame the Israeli navy for causing "an international incident" when Israeli forces interdicted the Gaza-bound flotilla ship the Mavi Marmara in 2010 to enforce the naval blockade of Gaza ("Netanyahu, Harper bask in friendship," March 8). To recall, when Israeli forces tried to peacefully board the Marmara, extremists surrounded the soldiers and beat them with metal poles, rods, and chairs, stabbing them with knives, and throwing firebombs, stun grenades, and even one Israeli soldier was thrown over the side of the ship. Some of the radicals grabbed pistols from the Israel Defence Forces soldiers and opened fire. As a result, seven IDF soldiers were injured, and nine of the anti-Israel passengers were killed. The "activists" had premeditated violent intentions as evidenced by the dangerous cargo they brought on the ship including: Molotov cocktails, slingshots, and other makeshift items that were fashioned for use as weaponry in a planned attack against Israeli forces. It should also be noted that the blockade is internationally recognized as a necessary and legal method to prevent the smuggling of deadly rockets and weapons to Palestinian terrorists. That this reference appeared in a front-page article about the historic visit by Israel's prime minister to Canada was most unfortunate. As an avid reader of *The CJN*'s stellar news coverage and informative commentary pages, I expected more from Canada's Jewish paper of record.

Mike Fegelman
Executive Director
HonestReporting Canada

* * *

Bialik's technology program

Two stories about special projects in a number of schools were published in *The CJN*'s Live & Learn supplement (March 8), and neither article mentioned Bialik Hebrew Day School. Many innovative programs take place at Bialik. Our students are regularly engaged in environmental activities and causes, and are aware of the power they have in positively affecting environmental change. Students are currently participating in an international collaborative project for which they planted tulip and daffodil bulbs, tracked their growth and reported on environmental changes and their effects on the flowers. They then shared their findings in a teacher-supervised chat room with their peers at HaShalom Yitzchak Rabin School in Jerusalem. Students there studied the growth of their own flowers and shared their experiences with our students. The project teaches students about global environmental issues, while exposing them in a safe environment to mediums that allow them to communicate online with students around the world.

This project exemplifies Bialik's technology program, which seeks to put 21st-century technology directly into the hands of students in a way that enhances their regular learning. In addition to SmartBoards in each classroom, Bialik students have access to two iPad carts, two laptop carts, two computer labs and, beginning in September, a one-to-one laptop program that will be implemented throughout our senior division (grades 6 to 8) by the start of the 2014 school year. Bialik students are encouraged to use video cameras and smartphones, in controlled and appropriate settings, as part of a unit on screenplays and digital literacy.

Cayla Solomon
Marketing and Communications Manager
Bialik Hebrew Day School
Toronto

LET THEM GO...

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz

* * *

His duty was to referee

I was a referee at an Israel Football League game at Kraft Stadium in Jerusalem on March 11, when the Be'er Sheva Black Swarm played against the Jerusalem Kings. IFL games usually start at 8 p.m. This one began at 10 p.m. The game was originally scheduled to be hosted by Be'er Sheva but was cancelled, as the IFL did not want to include incoming rocket activity as part of the half-time intermission. When we are at war, all civilians must do their duty – mine was to help make sure that this game had the requisite five officials. It was a hard-fought match, and the Jerusalem Kings won 20-14. I was pleased to have been part of a solution that allowed the Be'er Sheva team to play one of Israel's favourite sports in a secure situation.

Howie Osterer
Jerusalem

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What a war with Iran would mean

Barry Rubin

Israel's civil defence forces recently held a rescue-and-evacuation exercise at Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem to prepare for a mass attack with unconventional weaponry. ***[Flash90 photo]***

It is quite right to be worried and hesitant about entering into a war with Iran. War, as recent events in Iraq and Afghanistan show, is a dangerous, bloody and often dirty mess in which things go wrong, civilians are killed inadvertently, your own side loses people, and goals are not necessarily achieved.

Sometimes war is necessary. That was clearly true in Afghanistan in 2001, but less clear regarding Iraq in 2003. What are the goals? How are they to be gained? In what way can a war be brought to an end? How is victory defined? These are all serious issues.

Regarding a war with Iran, all of the above are especially true. Iran is a large country with almost 80 million people. A sizeable portion of that population – the ones with the guns – is ideologically fanatical. The idea that a few planes will drop bombs and return home, and victory can be declared, is naive.

Once begun, such a conflict will go on for many years and take unexpected turns. Iran's regime would become desperate, vengeful and – concluding that it had nothing to lose – all the more determined to obtain nuclear weapons and far more likely to use them. Understanding that factor might not deter an attack completely, but it should be very much taken into consideration in assessing what to do.

At any rate, while war with Iran might be eventually inevitable and necessary, that's not true at this moment, when Iran is far from being able to build nuclear weapons, much less deliver them on missiles. And such an operation genuinely does pose serious problems for Israel, and also, even if it does not participate directly in any way, for the United States.

On the positive side, not a single Arab state would lift a finger to help Iran. The moderates would be happy that Israel bombed Iranian nuclear facilities, hope it succeeded, and demand that the United States keep them out of any fighting. The radical Sunni Islamists would worry about the precedent and spread some propaganda, but they view the Iranian regime as a rival, not a brother. The Turkish regime would foam at the mouth, but do nothing, while the Syrian regime, which is allied with Iran, is too preoccupied by a civil war and fears a confrontation with Israel.

Hamas is happy to take Iran's money, but is now pretty much a client of Egypt. It might want to start its own war with Israel, but it doesn't want to risk everything to defend Iran. But the Palestinian Resistance Committees and Palestinian Islamic Jihad will fire rockets at Israel while trying to attack in other ways. Up to a point, Hamas will stand aside and let them do so.

The most serious organized force on which Iran could depend would be Hezbollah in Lebanon.

It is likely that Hezbollah would fire rockets against Israel and mount some cross-border raids. The question is whether Hezbollah would mount an all-out campaign, as it did in 2006, or merely stick to a symbolic demonstration of loyalty to Iran. There are also Iranian forces in Lebanon that would be more energetic.

The large UNIFIL force that's supposed to block Hezbollah from staging a military build-up in southern Lebanon and attacking Israel will be useless. Yet Israeli defensive operations could end up accidentally killing UNIFIL soldiers.

'Regarding a war with Iran, the idea that a few planes will drop bombs and return home, and victory can be declared, is naive'

Finally, Iranian assets would stage terrorist attacks on Israelis and Jews all over the world. The number of attacks might be limited. The question is whether one or some would succeed in inflicting many casualties.

Still, Hezbollah plus terror attacks is not a price too high for Israel to pay for ending – if that indeed can be accomplished – an Iranian nuclear threat.

The picture on the U.S. side is much more complex and worrisome.

In two ways, the U.S. situation would resemble that of Israel. No country other than Iran would hit at America or Americans. Terrorism would be a problem. The rest of the story would depend on decisions made by Iran's government and also by its local commanders.

Ostensibly, the attack on Iran would come from Israel. But even if the United States does nothing overt, President Barack Obama's recent speech to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee is enough to associate America with the operation.

Iran has some choice. It could decide to try to avoid confrontation with the United States. Still, while Tehran's decision could go either way, the worldview of that country's rulers means they're unlikely to make a calm, cool assessment along those lines. For them, America is the Great Satan, the Islamist revolution's nemesis and Israel's patron. Would Iran's leaders really say, "Yes, let's be smart" and keep the battle confined to Israel, using America's reluctance to fight as a way to keep that superpower out of the war?

Again, that might be how western armchair strategists expect Iran to act, but it's hard to believe that's what would happen. Moreover, local commanders of either military and naval units or terrorist cells, irrationally confident of an Allah-granted victory, would not easily give up a chance to wage the ultimate jihad. Then, too, Iran's inability to hit Israel would set off frustration, leading to attacks on Americans.

U.S. forces and facilities are more accessible than those of Israel. This could include terrorist attacks in Lebanon, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the smaller Gulf Arab states against any available American civilians, institutions, or soldiers. And the biggest front of all might be the Persian Gulf itself. Would small Iranian boats stage suicide operations to hit tankers or try to block traffic?

As happened in the latter phase of the Iran-Iraq war in the late 1980s, the Gulf Arab states would likely ask the United States, European countries, and NATO to convoy their tankers. A shooting war could lead to the dragging of the United States into a military conflict with Iran. Whatever happened on the ground (and water), the price of oil would skyrocket.

These factors also affect Israeli interests, since Israel would be blamed for the resulting carnage and disruptions. Antisemitism would increase, and a lot of people would claim that Israel dragged America into an unnecessary war. Promises of quick, easy victory, the disappearance of any Iranian nuclear capability or threat, and even the fall of the Iranian regime would prove false, stirring bitter controversy.

There are, then, major dangers and real strategic problems in any campaign to attack Iranian nuclear installations that require serious thought and a rejection of recklessness. A war with Iran, if conducted at all, should only happen when it seems otherwise unavoidable. And that is far from true this year.

But that day will come, and people had better be psychologically ready for it.

Barry Rubin is director of the Global Research in International Affairs (GLORIA) Center and editor of the Middle East Review of International Affairs. His book, Israel: An Introduction, *has just been published by Yale University Press.*

Rabbi Plaut's Torah commentary

When I began writing this column some years ago, I was on the same page – literally – as Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut. It was a daunting prospect. Not that I ever met Rabbi Plaut, although I knew of him well from my days at Canadian Jewish Congress. But knowing my contribution would appear next to his column and compared by readers to his words was, to say the least, enough to make one weigh every letter put down on paper.

In the wake of the many obituaries of Rabbi Plaut, what more can we say except that we, Canadians of all religions, have lost a unique individual: one known not just for his scholarship and forceful voice within the Jewish community and within Reform Jewry, but in our nation.

Given the tensions arising today from the need to find a way to live together, we need voices like that of Rabbi Plaut, who not only led his congregations but also took on the task of leading the way in creating a truly multicultural country.

As with thousands of others, our home has his most famous works on our bookshelves. His Torah commentary, as one obit noted, has an entirely different voice than the old and widely used Hertz commentary. Hertz wrote at a particular time in history, one in which antisemitism was rife and the Holocaust on the horizon. While truly scholarly, it is often apologetic. Rabbi Plaut was not apologetic.

As my tribute to this great man, I quote from his introduction to *The Torah: A Modern Commentary*. The words illustrate his scholarship, which encompassed Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform approaches to the Bible, as well as literature and philosophy of many hues. Agree with him or not, his faith in the essentials of Judaism brought into our homes a unique perspective.

Jean M. Gerber

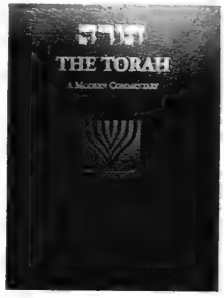
in Vancouver

On myth and legend:

"The contemporary reader familiar with the history and nature of the text will have to remember that a literal understanding of the Torah may lead to grave misconceptions.

"Even the ancient Jewish sages, who believed that the Torah was a divinely authored book, did not take the text literally. They... always looked behind the flat literal meaning. They realized that the Bible... abounded in subtle metaphors and allusions, that it used word plays and other literary devices, that it sometimes spoke satirically, and that its poetry could not be subjected to a simple approach...

"The reader must further understand that the Torah contains a great variety of material: laws, narratives, history, folk tales... and, especially in the early parts of Genesis, myths and legends. By myth, we understand a tale involving human beings and divine powers, a tale which was meant and understood as having happened and which by its existence expressed... important aspects of existence...



"The reader of the Bible should not however, be misled into dismissing myth or legend as irrelevant. What usually passes for history is not an accurate scientific recording of events but an *interpretation* [my italic] of such events – assuming that one knows what the event "really" was. The best of modern historians is an interpreter, selective summarizer, commentator and often philosopher who brings a point of view to the material.... For what people believe their past to mean assumes a dynamic of its own; the experience itself becomes creative.

"[The Torah] may be said to mirror the collective memory of our ancestors, and in the course of centuries this record became a source of truth for the Children of Israel. The reader will therefore do well to keep in mind that the Torah not only speaks of history but has made history by helping to shape human thought."

For example, is the Song of Songs, *Shir HaShirim*, an erotic love poem or an allegory of the love between Israel and God? Surely one does not negate the other, but each enriches our understanding of the many modes of love.

Or can we prove the truth of the Exodus story, the founding story of the Jewish people? Again, the wrong question. Rather, we celebrate the seminal moment that is the foundation of an ethical system that we uphold and cherish today.

His conclusion: "The origins of the Torah are one thing, its life through the centuries another, and its ability to speak to us today yet a third."

Some thoughts on commitment

What does it mean today to commit to a person or a mission?

When a couple gets married, are they supposed to be making an everlasting commitment to each other? I wonder what is in the vows made. I no longer see absolute or even determined pledges in these self-styled vows. Do the individuals even expect a commitment that knows no end?

In fact, is marriage supposed to be this type of "'til death do us part" pledge? How deep and long-lasting is the marriage vow? One could argue that as we have extended our lifespans, it's no longer reasonable to expect marriages to last. Additionally, as long as we practise divorce, marriage is not a terminal sentence. But at what point do we avail ourselves of the emergency exit? If the marriage is intolerable, by all means get out. But if it gets inconvenient, are you going to bail? What level of pledge do we expect from the beginning?

I'm walking down this road not because of any recent divorce events or thoughts, but rather because of the opposite.

People have been remarking on my strength and commitment since my husband's stroke, and I've been shocked by their observations. I see nothing noteworthy in my actions, merely my common commitment to the man I married. Our marital vows included anything that may come our way. We were united together. This was it for both of us. We often wondered about our inability to state why we loved. There was no "because of this or that I love you." The love was unconditional (hence unending). So if good came or bad, if something was removed or a burden added, the love did not end.

This led me to think about the Israelite declaration of "*Na'aseh v'nishmah*" – "We will do and we will listen." Some translate this more smoothly as "we will faithfully obey." But that loses some of the immediacy of the open declaration. We will do! The details of the laws, the intricacies of the contract to which we are obligated we will hear later. But right now, we are committed to this God, to this relationship. Right now, we are here.

Some of the commentators and teachers marvel at this level of commitment. Is this declaration noteworthy or to be expected?

Think of what the Israelites had just gone through – the Exodus. They had just experienced the might of God delivering them out of Egypt and then appearing in amazing awesomeness at Sinai. What could be more compelling? Of course, they will accept God and the words of God. Of course they will commit at that moment to anything. But is that a deep and long-term commitment? Will that be enough to bind Israel for all generations? Is that the marriage contract God desires?

Norma Baumel Joseph

in Montreal

We stand now before Passover, getting ready for one of the most overwhelming holidays of our tradition. It is now that we celebrate that show of God's power and authority. It is here that we see God's redeeming hand. Passover gets us ready to stand at Sinai on Shavuot, to stand under the chupah and say, "We do. *Na'aseh v'nishmah*: We will do and we will listen."

Are we ready to make that commitment? What does it take?

As Jews, it has taken generations of sacrifice and pledges. In numerous and often onerous ways, we have forged identities and commitments to remain as Jews, wedded to an identity in all sorts of conditions. Many look and feel very different, yet somehow have contributed to this vibrant marriage.

On Passover, we state that we were all there, each one of us, being personally redeemed, each one of us personally making that commitment. I will do, and I will listen. I will faithfully obey.

In marriage, both personal and communal, we accept this covenant not because we have no other options, but because we love. This is how I understand that Israelite response, in the context of my own marriage. Their immediate reaction was not one of imposed awe, but of precious awe. They loved, therefore they responded with an outcry of "We are here, we will do. The details can follow."

Out of this level of love and commitment all generations to come are dedicated, and all generations to come are present. That's the natural outcome of a committed, loving relationship.

Russia maintains its alliance with Syria

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

Speaking to a group of six international newspaper editors on the eve of his re-election as Russia's president, Vladimir Putin said, "We don't have a special relationship with Syria."

Putin's claim was, to say the least, disingenuous.

Throughout an increasingly violent uprising in Syria, which erupted a year ago this month, Russia has been one of Syria's staunchest allies. Russia – the world's largest oil producer – has defended President Bashar Assad's dictatorial regime and replenished his armoury, thereby stiffening his resolve to hang on despite repeated calls for his resignation.

But in the spirit of bringing about national reconciliation in Syria, Russia has called for a ceasefire and urged the Syrian government to implement reforms.

Indeed, Russia's outgoing president, Dmitry Medvedev, issued a blunt warning a few months ago, saying the Syrian leadership would "have to go" if it failed to reform the autocratic political system. Beyond this rhetoric, however, Russia has thrown Syria, internationally maligned and isolated, a lifeline.

Having accused anti-Assad western powers of hewing to a double standard, Putin has charged they have pressured Syria to pull back its forces from battle zones without having correspondingly asked rebel fighters to lay down their arms. In addition, Putin has described demands for Assad's ouster as blatant interference in Syria's internal affairs and an unwarranted challenge to its sovereignty.

Turkey's president, Abdullah Gul, whose country once had close bonds with Syria but now openly supports the rebels, recently predicted that Russia would soon grow weary of supporting Syria and join efforts to call for Assad's removal. As Gul put it, "I think in time Russia will see its support has been abused by the Syrian regime. They will recognize this fact when they see the heavy weapons being used against the people in Syria. That is not very tolerable, not even for Russia."

Moscow may already be paying heed to such criticism, having signed a recent UN Security Council statement deploring the humanitarian crisis in the city of Homs, one of whose neighbourhoods was indiscriminately bombarded by the Syrian army.

Yet on the day Russia agreed to sign this statement, it voted against a UN Human Rights Council resolution condemning Syria for committing crimes against humanity. In addition, Russia boycotted a Friends of Syria conference in Tunis critical of the Syrian government. More to the point, Russia, along with China, has vetoed two UN Security Council resolutions concerning Syria.

On Oct. 5, 2011, Russia objected to what would have been the first legally binding resolution since the eruption of the Syrian rebellion, the bloodiest of the Arab Spring.

The final draft, watered down by sponsors Britain and France to avoid a Russian or Chinese veto, was fairly toothless. It condemned "continued grave and systematic human rights violations and the use of force against civilians by the Syrian authorities" and urged all states "to exercise vigilance and restraint" before supplying weapons to Syria."

Nonetheless, Russia's UN ambassador, Vitaly Churkin, found it objectionable, claiming it was based on "a philosophy of confrontation" and contained "an ultimatum of sanctions."

On Feb. 4, Russia scuttled another relatively innocuous Security Council resolution, this one based on an Arab League plan urging Assad to resign and cede power to his vice-president and a unity government.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said Moscow had no alternative but to veto this resolution because it absolved the Syrian opposition of responsibility for the ongoing violence and unrealistically demanded the return of Syrian troops back to their barracks.

On Feb. 17, Russia voted against a non-binding UN General Assembly resolution endorsing the Arab League plan, characterizing it as an attempt "to isolate" Syria and "impose an external formula for a political settlement."

It passed by a margin of 137-12, with 17 abstentions, underscoring Russia's isolation on this issue.

Russia objected to all three resolutions, particularly the first two, claiming they would be misused to foster regime change in Damascus.

Last year, with a civil war raging in Libya, Russia agreed not to veto a UN Security Council resolution calling for a no-fly zone there to protect civilians. When western powers – the United States, France, Britain and Canada – used the resolution to justify air strikes in Libya with the aim of unseating Moammar Gadhafi, a long-standing Russian ally and arms buyer, Russia felt both deceived and betrayed.

"We don't want a repeat of what's happened in Libya," Putin said recently by way of clarifying Russia's stance on Syria.

Vladimir Putin

Having been stung by western prevarications in Libya, Russia insists that the crisis in Syria must be resolved through internal political dialogue and without foreign intervention.

Charging the West is stoking conflict in Syria by arming the rebels, an assertion yet to be verified, Moscow recently issued a tart warning suggesting that western meddling may trigger "a very big war" that could spill beyond the borders of the Middle East.

By supporting Assad, albeit with reservations, Russia hopes to achieve several overlapping objectives: prop up an old friend from Soviet times, contain western influence in Syria and project power in a region fairly close to its southern border.

Although Russia's political and military relationship with Syria remains substantial today, it reached its apex during the Cold War era from the 1960s onward.

On the eve of the Six Day War, the then Soviet Union circulated a false report asserting Israel was massing forces on the Syrian border, prompting Egypt to send troops to the Sinai Peninsula and expel a UN peacekeeping force from Sinai and the Gaza Strip. Soviet fear-mongering heightened tensions and was a contributory cause of the 1967 war, during which Moscow severed diplomatic relations with Israel.

With Syria having been defeated and the Golan Heights having been captured by Israel, Moscow resupplied the Syrian armed forces with a fresh batch of sophisticated weaponry. Soviet support for Syria was just as unwavering during the Yom Kippur War.

Moscow re-established formal ties with Israel before the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, but retained a foothold in Syria. Russia, at present, maintains a naval base in the Syrian port of Tartus, the only one outside its borders, and retains its status as Syria's single most important source of weapons and munitions.

Under Israeli pressure, Moscow in 2009 halted plans to sell MIG-31 fighter jets to Syria. Otherwise, Russia has rejected Israeli overtures to stop the sale of advanced weapon systems – missiles and air-defence batteries – to Syria. With more than two million Russians working in armaments industries, Russia is likely to continue selling weapons to Syria.

Russia's alliance with Syria sometimes produces bizarre results. Recently, Medvedev bestowed the prestigious Pushkin Medal on a Syrian writer/poet who has publicly praised the Arab terrorist attacks on the United States on Sept. 11, 2001, and has voiced antisemitic views, such as comparing Jews with William Shakespeare's villain, Shylock.

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Israeli-Druze diplomat visits Canada

Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf
Staff Reporter

Diversity in Israel's diplomatic corps has come a long way.

So it was no surprise to learn last week that the director of the department for religious affairs in the Foreign Ministry, Bahij Mansour, a Druze, was in Canada beseeching Christian groups to stay strong in their support of Israel.

Mansour, 56, served 16 years in the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) and is the country's former ambassador to Angola. He was in Toronto last week spreading a message of pro-Israel activism to the Canadian churchgoing community. He also is trying to drum up more co-operation between the Vatican and the Holy Land, he said.

"The Christian communities in the Middle East are staying quiet" in the face of tyranny and trying not to make waves, Mansour said, referring to the current strife in Syria and the growing power of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.

"This is a bad tactic, in my opinion. Why? Since 2007, more than two million Christians have fled the region," he said.

That exodus, he said, leaves more room for radical Islamists to overrun and supplant historical Christian sites and neighbourhoods, which weakens the fabric of the region.

Bahij Mansour

Mansour said that as a Druze he sympathizes with both the Jewish and Christian communities because his people have also been "persecuted" by Muslims.

"The Sunni and the Shia both call the Druze traitors, because we believe there were other prophets after Muhammad," a position that is considered heretical according to radical Islam, which considers Muhammad the final prophet.

In his role as director of religious affairs, Mansour said he comes into contact with all religious groups in Israel, and he identifies as an Israeli first and then as a Druze.

Asked how it feels to be a minority in a Jewish state, Mansour was unequivocal in his response.

"We share the country and our lives with all the Jewish people in Israel," he said. "We are aware of the Jewish destiny and many events have happened to put the Druze and the Jews on the same side. We are comfortable living in a Jewish state."

He said while the Druze represent just slightly more than one per cent of the total Israeli population, Mansour said they have "a lot of influence."

Mansour scoffed at the idea that Israel practises apartheid.

"When the Knesset has 14 non-Jewish members, this does not mean there is apartheid. Israel's not perfect, but at least it has the dignity to say that it realizes there are socio-economic gaps between Arab-Israelis and Jewish-Israelis" and that it's working on repairing that, he said.

"It's important for Israel to close the gap between the minority and the majority," Mansour said.

He added that what's good for Israel is good for the Druze – namely, a secure Jewish state that can survive surrounded by its frequently hostile Arab neighbours.

On the topic of Christians in the Middle East, Mansour said he's urging Christians worldwide to move to Israel and cement their hold on their own holy sites.

"Otherwise, they might be overrun by Muslims wishing to wipe out minorities," he said.

This is Mansour's last year in his role with the department of religious affairs. In August, he will once again assume an ambassadorship, this time as Israel's chief envoy to Nigeria.

His parting message to Christian communities in the West is to realize the "new situation" in the Middle East and take appropriate action.

"If you will continue to be silent, it will be too late. There are no second chances in the Middle East," he said.

"If Israel loses one war, it will be the end of the Jewish state and all [non-Muslim] religious holy sites. It will also be the end of minorities… who will be endangered."

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Academic doubts Israel will attack Iran

Paul Lungen
Staff Reporter

When it comes to predicting developments in the Middle East, particularly when they relate to Iran's nuclear ambition and Israel's response to it, Mordechai Kedar is something of a contrarian.

Even though prognosticators, analysts and even the U.S. Secretary of Defence believe Israel will attack Iran in the near future, Kedar, a lecturer in Arabic and Islamic studies at Bar-Ilan University, doubts that's about to happen.

Iran, he said, is a problem for the world, not particularly for Israel. Israel won't do the world's dirty work for it by attempting to take out Iran's nuclear facilities.

Mordechai Kedar

It's a message Kedar has been delivering during a speaking tour of North America. In Toronto, he addressed a lunchtime gathering sponsored by the Speakers Action Group, Canadian Friends of Bar-Ilan University and the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem.

Last week, he was on FoxNews.com, repeating his assertion that Iran's real goal in obtaining nuclear weapons is to first be a regional hegemon and then pursue a much more ambitious goal of world domination. It can do so, he claimed, by controlling the Gulf oil supply, thereby dominating the world economy.

"The Gulf states are shivering from fear from the possibility that Iran will take them. They don't see the world rescuing them from the wrath of the Iranians," he said.

They fear Iran, a Shiite and Persian power, would forcibly convert all of them from their Sunni brand of Islam, he added.

Unlike many Israelis and other observers, Kedar believes Israel's military deterrence protects it – at least for now. Israel and eventually Europe are targets for Iranian domination, he said.

The only way to prevent a relentless march of Iranian hegemony is for world leaders, starting with U.S. President Barack Obama, along with British and French leaders, to deliver a one-week ultimatum demanding that Iran end its nuclear program and load all its materials onto ships leaving the country. Failure to comply should lead to a military campaign that would "flatten" Iran, he said.

Kedar said he is not privy to Israeli military plans, but he doubts the Jewish state is likely to attack Iran.

A colourful and plain-speaking individual, Kedar became a YouTube sensation a few years ago when he went toe to toe with an Al Jazeera host, rejecting Muslim claims to Jerusalem and asserting the Jewish people's right to build apartments in the city. Jerusalem is not mentioned once in the Qur'an, he told the startled interviewer, but it has been the Jews' capital for 3,000 years. Israelis don't need the permission of anyone to build in Jerusalem, he said.

As of last week, the video had received more than 350,000 hits.

Turning to the wider Arab world, Kedar said it is riven by tribal, ethnic and religious differences that make it impossible to create stable nation-states on the western model.

Identity in the region is bound up in one's group, he said. Countries like Libya, Syria, Iraq, Sudan and Yemen are inherently unstable, with factions at each other's throats, with each tribe unwilling to cede power to groups that would dominate them.

All the "isms" that have been tried in the Arab world, including nationalism and socialism, are doomed to failure. They are foreign imports that don't suit Arab societies outside of a small minority of intellectuals, he said.

"Governments of the West don't understand the mentality of the Middle East," he continued. If they did, they'd pursue a policy that would favour the breakup of these states into tribal-based entities.

The only stable Arab countries are in the Gulf, and they're largely one-tribe states. Countries with a multitude of tribes will eventually disintegrate, he predicted.

The same centrifugal forces at work in the wider Arab world are at play among Palestinians. The Palestinians are a tribal society, with various groups dominating West Bank and Gaza cities. Many, with the al-Masri and al-Iraqi names, are originally from Egypt and Iraq, he said.

His solution for the Arab-Israel conflict: eight tribal city-states that Palestinians can call home and that correspond to the fractured nature of the local population.

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Coverage of Gaza dug deeper this time

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

From the perspective of the West, the media coverage of last week's flare-up between Israel and Gaza can be broken down into three phases.

In the first phase, wire services (Associated Press, Canadian Press, Reuters) gave a "tit-for tat" account of what transpired following Israel's March 9 targeted killing in Gaza of Popular Resistance Committee (PRC) leader Zuhir al-Qaisi. According to Israeli intelligence, al-Qaisi was planning to launch another terrorist attack on Israelis from the lawless Sinai, where terror groups have been operating freely in the past year.

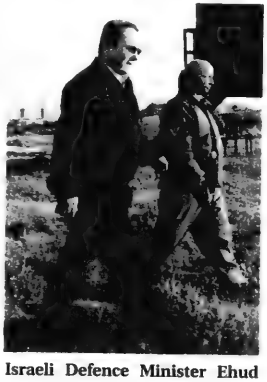
This "tit-for-tat" reporting is the media's basic approach to covering events. How many mortars and rockets were being fired from Gaza in response? How many were intercepted by Israel's "Iran Dome" missile defence system? How many "militants" in Gaza were killed by IDF strikes? How many civilians were wounded in southern Israel, where one million people live within range of missile fire?

This sort of coverage dominated from March 9 to 11, when Islamic Jihad and the PRC fired missile volleys. AP reported that Hamas itself did not fire rockets, but "allowed other smaller militant groups to unleash salvos," implying that Hamas, the governing authority in Gaza, was ultimately responsible, as Israel has long maintained.

Even Patrick Martin's March 12 *Globe and Mail* story dealt with the body count – 18 Palestinians dead ("mostly militants") and hundreds of thousands of Israelis taking shelter, and he described what he claimed was a similar civilian reaction on both sides respectively – "cheers" – to the rocket and counter-rocket ("Iron Dome") firings. Still, Martin noted an important disparity, namely that "While tens of thousands of Israeli school children stayed home in shelters… it was school as usual for the Palestinians in Gaza."

In the second phase, March 12 and 13, western journalists began to notice some of the deeper analyses of the situation by Avi Issacharoff (*Ha'aretz*), Yaakov Katz (*Jerusalem Post*), and David Horovitz (on his new Times of Israel website).

Issacharoff wrote on March 13: "There's no doubt that one reason Islamic Jihad is continuing its rocket fire on southern Israel is its glaring lack of success. After firing more than 200 rockets at the Negev, they still haven't killed any Israelis." The success of Israel's anti-rocket Iron Dome system – a success that exceeded IDF expectations – was the principal source of frustration for Islamic Jihad and the PRC.



Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak visits the site of an Iron Dome battery. ***[Israel Sun photo]***

But this wasn't the only factor to frustrate terror groups. Despite Palestinian expectations, Arab leaders across the region largely failed to condemn Israel. Their attention remained focused on the ongoing massacres in Syria. In fact, Gaza ended up down the list of items in major media outlets, including the Arab satellite news station Al Jazeera.

Israel has warned that Iran and Syria have their own interest in distracting attention from both Assad's atrocities and Iran's nuclear program. Shifting the focus to Israel at this time is clearly in their interest, and yet this effort is largely failing due to structural changes in the region. The ongoing power struggle between the Sunni world (led by Saudi Arabia) and the Shiite world (led by Iran) is surfacing in Gaza through various Palestinian proxies.

In the past, Islamic Jihad and Hamas co-ordinated their efforts. Following the "Arab Spring," with the rise of the (Sunni) Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas is drifting from Iran to Egypt – which is hostile to the Shia. But Islamic Jihad is keeping its ties to Iran, and its leadership remains in Syria (from which Hamas has departed). It's no wonder that most Sunni leaders have refused to voice support for Islamic Jihad and the PRC. This sectarian divide will no doubt continue to affect the internal dynamics of Gaza.

In the third phase of coverage, even wire services reflected some of the deeper (and mainly Israeli) analyses, particularly noting Iran's fingerprints on Gaza. Media also considered how the successful Iron Dome system can benefit western countries. As Iran draws closer to a nuclear weapons capability, Israeli defence technologies will surely interest North American and European countries, which rightly recognize the threat Iran poses beyond the Middle East.

Paul Michaels is director of research and media relations for the Centre for Israel and Public Affairs.

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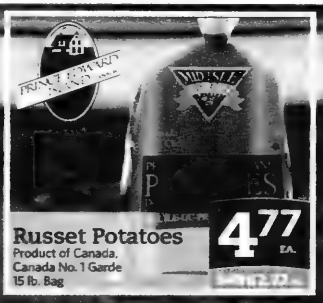

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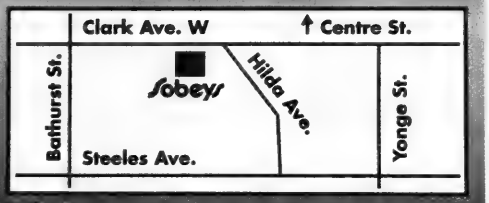

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Hockey tournament raises funds, awareness

Cara Edell
Special to The CJN

More than 240 players participated in a hockey tournament that raised $135,000 for the Joel Schwartz Endowment Fund at the Reena Foundation.

The second annual Joel Schwartz Memorial Hockey Tournament (JSMHT), held on March 11 at Chesswood Arena in Toronto, was created in honour of Schwartz, who died in 2009 at age 25, two weeks after he returned from a Birthright Israel trip.

Diagnosed with Asperger syndrome, Schwartz was a client of the Reena Foundation, an organization that provides services and programs for people with developmental disabilities so they can realize their full potential.

Through the endowment fund, the CIE Birthright-Israel Reena Participant Program gives young people with developmental disabilities the opportunity to experience a Birthright trip to Israel. With the help of a Reena "shadow," who is trained to assist a client with special needs, program participants are fully integrated with non-disabled peers.

The endowment fund ensures that shadows can be sent with Reena clients on Birthright trips. "We know [Joel] would be honoured to have initiated a charity for others like him to grow and develop into mature adults while finding their places in the world," said Jonathan Schwartz, Joel's brother and founder of the tournament with friends Zack Belzberg and Jesse Abrams.

"Joel was a breath of fresh air for many of the people who knew him well, and he leaves behind a legacy bigger than most would after a life of 25 years. He continues to remind family and close friends of the values of respect, family, friendship, and, most importantly, what it takes to become a better person."

In the weeks that followed Schwartz's passing, "the community came together in a way that indicated the impact that both Joel and his family had, and continue to have, on those around them. We knew that we had to find a way to commemorate Joel's valuable legacy and rally the community behind this important cause," said Belzberg.

"Joel loved to watch his brother's hockey games and would be so happy to see his friends and hundreds of others come together in his honour."

The tournament featured games, food, a silent auction, a free skate and a guest appearance by Hockey Hall of Famer and former cabinet minister, Ken Dryden.

"Throughout the evening, I hope people developed a more informed understanding of who Joel was, why it's important to preserve his legacy and how they have contributed to an exciting new initiative created in his honour," said Belzberg.

This year's tournament committee introduced Joel's Ongoing Inclusion Initiative, which will oversee the use of proceeds from the tournament and invest annually in one new program that supports inclusion initiatives at Reena, he said.

"Our committee has dedicated their time, efforts and resources to ensure that those in our community who are living with developmental disabilities are granted the same treatment and life enjoyment that we have been offered," said Jonathan Schwartz. "In doing so, we hope to nurture their mental, emotional and physical growth while empowering them to strengthen their confidence."

Shane Urowitz and Mitch Goldenberg, with Ken Dryden dropping the puck.

Belzberg said the tournament has given him "the ability to witness first-hand the incredible generosity and cohesiveness of our community. Thousands of people have come together as players, volunteers, donors and fans in support of Joel, the Reena Foundation and our committee."

Eric Sherkin, a tournament participant whose brother has autism, said the event surpassed his expectations. "I jumped at the chance to come back for the second year. My brother is a longtime Reena client and still participates in Reena programs all year long. I've seen first-hand how amazing an organization it is, and it truly needs the continued support of the community to be able to provide the kinds of services upon which so many people rely."

Sherkin said that "giving Reena clients the chance to participate in Birthright Israel while still getting the one-on-one support they require is a fantastic initiative, and it seems as though that experience meant a great deal for Joel Schwartz. If we can spread that feeling to more Reena clients, that's a wonderful thing."

For more information about the Joel Schwartz Memorial Hockey Tournament, visit www.jsmht.org.

Defence chiefs deepen Canada-Israel relationship

IDF's Gantz makes stop on way to Washington

Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf
Staff Reporter

Canada and Israel continue to strengthen their defence ties.

Israeli Defence Forces' chief of the general staff, Lieut.-Gen. Benny Gantz made a two-day trip to Ottawa last Thursday and Friday to hold a series of talks with Gen. Walt Natynczyk, Canada's chief of the defence staff, and other high-ranking Canadian military personnel.

It was Gantz's first official trip to Canada and the first stop before leaving for meetings in Washington, D.C., over the weekend.

The two military leaders met to expand upon a memorandum of understanding signed by the two nations in January 2011 that aims "to strengthen existing ties by underlining the practical benefits of our growing defence relationship," according to the Department of National Defence.

That memorandum laid the groundwork for expansion of co-operation between Israel and Canada in the areas of counter-terrorism, training, search and rescue, intelligence, command and control and the sharing of new technologies.

Gen. Walt Natynczyk, left, and Lt.-Gen. Benny Gantz attend the Ceremony of Remembrance with the seven *Books of Remembrance* located in the Memorial Chapel on Parliament Hill on March 15, shortly after the IDF general's arrival in Ottawa. The books are a collective record of the names of more than 118,000 Canadians who died in wars and major conflicts from 1884 to the present day. ***[IDF photo]***

In January, Canada and Israel further cemented their defence relationship when Israel's Ministry of Defence appointed IDF Brig.-Gen. Eden Attias as its first defence attaché to Ottawa.

Natynczyk also hosted Gantz at an official dinner, which included his deputy and other senior officers, and called it an "honour" to meet with his Israeli counterpart.

"Meeting with the chiefs of defence of allied and friendly nations is always time very well spent. This is an important opportunity for us to share perspectives on global security issues," Natynczyk said. "Our relationship with the Israeli Defence Forces is growing. We will continue to build upon our friendship with practical initiatives of mutual benefit."

According to an IDF statement, the two men also met for an extended "one-on-one" meeting on March 16, in which they "exchanged views on current security issues."

Gantz also briefed Natynczyk and his staff about current challenges and trends in the Middle East and "the radical elements which carry negative influence on the area course of the past year," the IDF said.

The CJN will have an interview with Attias in an upcoming issue.

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Retired businessman seeks stem cell match

Sheri Shefa
Staff Reporter

David Geneen needs a hero, one who could save his life with hardly more than a cheek swab and ultimately, a blood stem cell donation.

Saving a life doesn't get much easier than that, but finding the right match can be a lot harder.

Geneen, 64, the retired former owner of Grand Touring Automobiles, a car dealership in Toronto, explained that he suffers from myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS), a rare, pre-cancerous blood disease that is chronic and ultimately fatal.

"I was always exhausted and I didn't know why. I thought, it's pressure from work, anxiety, my mother had passed away and it seemed to happen after that, so I thought, maybe I'm just not coping well," said Geneen, who began looking into his symptoms in 2007.

"It turned out there was something wrong."

His doctor discovered that his blood production was abnormal, and after ruling other causes out, he was diagnosed with MDS.

He said his medications had been successful in staving off the disease until recently.

"The drugs have started to wear off, and I'm needing transfusions more often."

A stem cell transplant is the only treatment that can cure MDS.

The good news is that while other blood disorder sufferers can only hope to go into remission after a successful stem cell transplant, MDS patients can be cured completely.

Geneen and his family hope that an upcoming stem cell drive at Holy Blossom Temple on March 25 will result in his match, putting this deadly disease behind him.

But Geneen understands that the odds are against him.

"Because I'm Sephardic, the chances of a match are even lower… Sephardis are harder to match," he said.

Since no one in his family was a match (the odds of a familial match is only 30 per cent), they decided to appeal to the members of the Jewish community – his best chance at finding a donor.

David Geneen, flanked by his sons Julian, left, and Daniel, right, hopes a stem cell drive will result in a match that could save his life.

"I'm not really sure if anything can come out of this for me, but if we can get a couple thousand swabs, that's 2,000 more people who could become donors [for others]," Geneen said.

Lucy Waverman, Geneen's sister, organizer of the stem cell drive, and food columnist for the *Globe and Mail*, said she's been eagerly spreading the word about the drive through Facebook and by circulating an e-mail containing a plea from Geneen's two sons, Daniel and Julian.

"We love our dad more than you can imagine. He's always been there for us, and now it's our turn to be there for him. We can't imagine life without him," the letter said.

Waverman said she teamed up with OneMatch, the stem cell and marrow network, which will provide enough kits to register 500 people at the drive.

"They'll have more kits available if they see they're running out," she said.

As an incentive to the potential donors, Waverman said she and her "foodie friends" will be providing homemade baked treats.

"We're trying to get people to stay, have a cup of coffee, dessert, talk to David, talk to me," she said.

Truthful Lies, a local band, will also be performing during the event, in hopes of attracting the younger crowd.

"My cousin, who works at Universal Music, will also be hauling in all sorts of CDs to give away," Waverman said.

But more important than enticing crowds with the promise of baked goods and music is dispelling the myths about stem cell donation.

People are often hesitant to register at stem cell and bone marrow drives because of a misconception that donating stem cells and bone marrow is a painful process, Waverman said.

She explained that the process begins with a cheek swab – a cotton swab is rubbed against the inside of your cheek. In the unlikely event that you are a match, if you agree to move forward with the process, you're required to do a physical exam to make sure you're healthy.

According to the OneMatch website, if you pass the physical, you'll register at a hospital as an outpatient and have your blood drawn. The blood passes through a machine that separates the stem cells so they can be transplanted into the patient. The filtered blood is returned to the donor through the other arm.

"You're only in the hospital for a few hours and then you get to go home," Waverman said.

Although Geneen is acutely aware that the odds of finding a match may not be in his favour, he said he's grateful for the new perspective his ordeal has given him.

"When going through something like this, it's easy to become self-centred, but this has helped me get outside myself and think, maybe I can help someone else if not myself."

Waverman is optimistic.

"He's a real fighter and he goes to the gym every day… and he's determined," she said. "I have great admiration for him. He wants this."

The drive is being held at Holy Blossom Temple on March 25 between 12 p.m. and 4 p.m. Alternatively, a cheek-swab kit can be sent to your home by visiting OneMatch.ca.

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Jerusalem hostel caters to the non-observant

Sheri Shefa
Staff Reporter

A few things set Heritage House – a youth hostel in Jerusalem's Old City – apart from the others.

More than a place to stay, Heritage House, which is divided into two buildings in the Jewish Quarter to separate the men and women, is open to young Jewish travellers who are interested in exploring their Jewish roots.

It's virtually free to stay there – the staff asks for a donation in return for their hospitality – and the hostel is closed during the day to encourage the guests to explore the city and gain experience.

Chaya Weisberg, who directs the women's hostel with her husband, Matan, said a vast majority of their guests are non-observant, disconnected Jews.

"People who want to be at the Kotel, are not for us... The people who don't even know the value of the Kotel, or the value of having a Shabbat in the Old City... those are the people we want to help have that experience," Weisberg said.

Although Weisberg insists that nothing is forced on the guests, the hostel staff is available and eager to offer interested travellers the chance to experience a Shabbat in the Old City, and provide information about travel opportunities, internships and education programs.

"There's no programming. It really is just a hostel, but the live-in staff are there to create the environment, a very Jewish environment, but at the same time, there are no rules," said Weisberg, 29, who lives at the hostel with her husband and three children.

"People can wear what they want, they can use their cellphones and laptops on Shabbat – whatever they're used to, we respect that. They don't have to go to Shabbat meals, they don't have to go to classes, but based on what they want, we give them opportunities and inform them about what is out there."

While the Weisbergs have been working at the Heritage House for nearly eight years, the non-profit organization was founded 26 years ago, by a rabbi who dedicated his life to connecting Jews to their roots.

Rabbi Meir Schuster was "quiet, shy, reserved – not someone who had a gift with words," Weisberg said.

"He would often go to the Kotel to pray, and he saw all these travellers come, take a picture and leave, and it bothered him that that was their whole experience."

Weisberg said Rabbi Schuster became a fixture at the Kotel because he would literally yell at God while he prayed.

Continued on page 21

Heritage House co-directors Matan Weisberg and his wife, Chaya, and their three children.

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No rules at hostel for young people

'They don't have to go to Shabbat meals, they don't have to go to classes'

Continued from page 20

"People would take pictures of him. He would yell at God because he felt that it was so unfair that there were so many Jewish people who have no opportunity to experience their Judaism... It really hurt him," she said.

"So this shy, quiet, not a socially adept kind of guy went up to them and... he'd tap them on the shoulder and ask, 'Are you Jewish? Do you want to come to a Shabbat meal? Do you want to hear from a Jewish philosopher?'"

She said many of those he approached brushed him off, but over the years tens of thousands accepted his offer and followed him to a class on Jewish thought, or attended their first Shabbat meal with a family who was happy to host a fellow Jew.

He spent 10 years doing this before his efforts were noticed by donors who gave him a generous grant to buy two buildings in the Jewish Quarter.

Over the past 26 years, about 60,000 young Jews from around the world have stayed at the Heritage House.

Sadly, about four years ago at the age of 65, Rabbi Schuster was diagnosed with Lewy body, a disease with debilitating symptoms similar to Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease. The Weisbergs, who had initially been working at the hostel on a part-time basis while they completed their studies, eventually took over as the directors of the house.

Weisberg said there have been countless examples of guests who arrived at the house with little or no connection to their Judaism, and left having had meaningful Jewish experiences.

Danielle Rose, a 25-year-old Toronto native stayed at Heritage House when she extended her Birthright Israel trip in 2006.

Rose learned about the hostel from her Birthright leader who recommended it as a free place to stay.

Rose, who was then 19 years old, said that beyond celebrating Jewish holidays, she had little connection to her Judaism. Still, she was open to learning more about her heritage.

"I was open to influence and to learning more about Judaism. I had a friend who didn't want to spend Shabbat there, but I actually did want to. I went there to learn about these things," Rose said.

She said her first Shabbat experience was "meaningful, it felt like an authentic experience to be having in Jerusalem."

Rose said her involvement with the Weisbergs and the Heritage House was part of what influenced her to move to Israel for three years and become shomer Shabbat.

Although she has since moved back to Toronto, she said the Heritage House "is good for people who might not otherwise get to experience a Shabbat meal... and want to have a [deeper] experience with observant Jews."

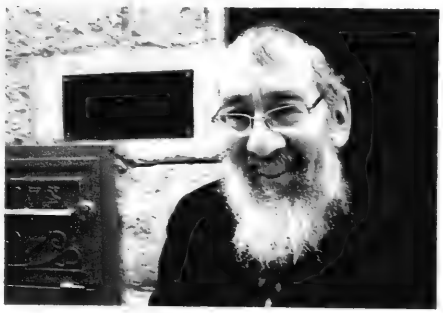
Weisberg said that are countless stories of reluctant, disconnected Jews who have embraced their religious roots following a stay at the hostel.

She remembered one guest who told her she hated Israel, didn't feel a connection to Judaism, and would never return to Israel.

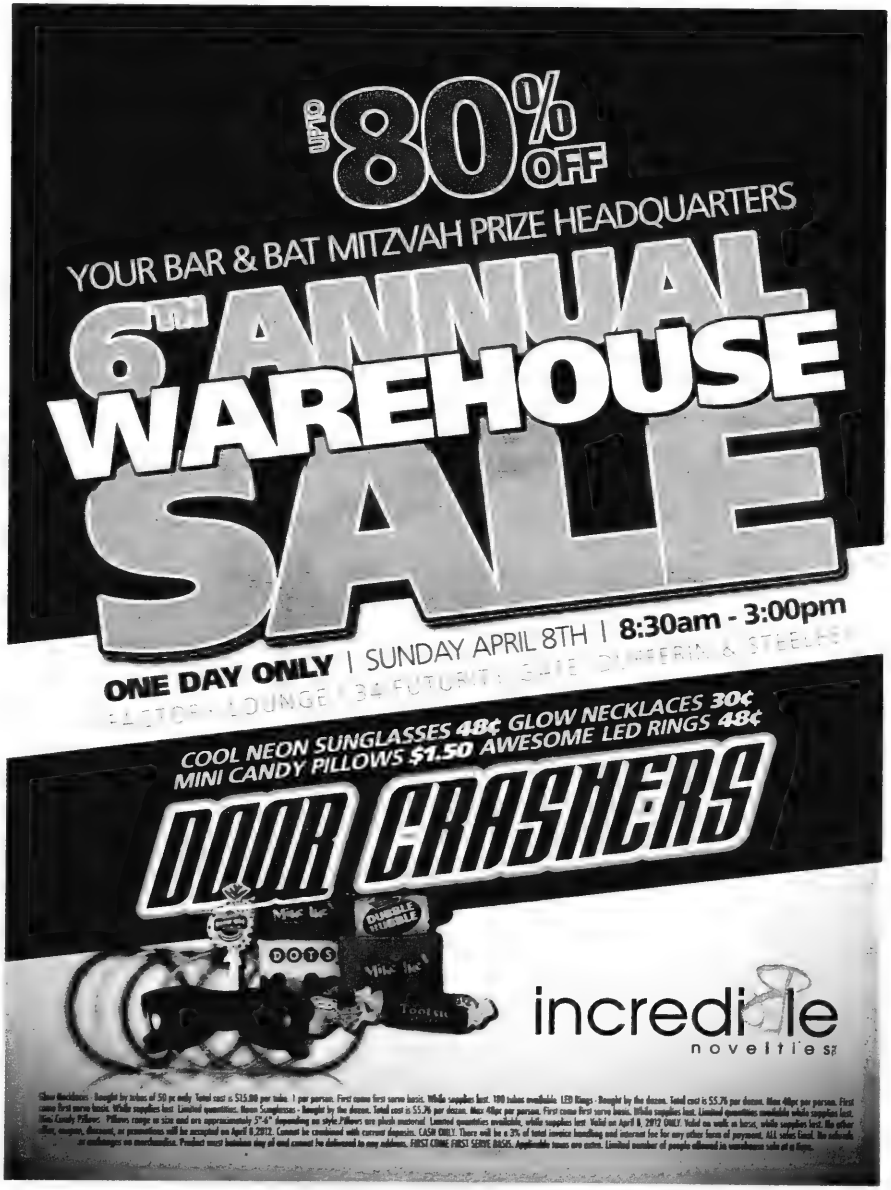
Weisberg said she convinced her that if she were to make an informed decision about whether or not she really hated it, she'd have to learn more.

"She felt comfortable at a liberal place – she went to Pardes [Institute of Jewish Studies] – and she called me a few months later and said she loved the learning so much that she was going to study to become a rabbi," Weisberg said.

"I see that as a tremendous success – to go from not wanting to be affiliated to wanting to make an impact on the Jewish people."



Rabbi Meir Schuster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Put your maror where your mouth is

Rabbi Meir Rosenberg

Pesach is the season for asking questions. We all gush with pride when the youngest child stands up to ask the Four Questions of the Haggadah. This is one of the blessings that we enjoy on Pesach. It is indeed a privilege to ask questions. And just as it's important for our children to ask questions, it's even more important that we know how to answer.

Even so, it's impossible for us to know the answers to all of the questions that will be asked at our seder tables this year. Perhaps, then, our secondary emphasis on Pesach should be the technique through which we imbue our available knowledge to our children and families.

Centuries before John Dewey of Columbia University and the inauguration of modern methods in education, our sages insisted that, especially for children, the best way to learn is by doing.

This methodology is evident in the following discussion that we read in the Magid section of the Haggadah during the seder.

At one time, the sages considered the possibility of relating the story of the Exodus long before the seder night. "*Yachol me'Rosh Chodesh?*" – perhaps the Haggadah should be read on the first day of the month of Nissan?

The answer is no! "*Talmud lomar bayom hahu*" – because the Torah states: "You shall relate it to your children on that day." This sentence implies that the Haggadah is to be recited on the anniversary of the Exodus.

Rabbinic Reflections

The sages were still in doubt. Could it be that the reading of the Haggadah should take place when it's still daytime, thereby approximating the time when the Korban Pesach was offered in the Temple? Again the answer is no, because inherent in the phrase of the commandment to tell the story of the Exodus is the phrase: "*ba'avur zeh*" – "because of this." When the word "this," "*zeh*," is used in the Torah, it must always be referring to something specific. Our sages tell us that the specific something is the time when the Haggadah should be read. That could only be when "the matzah and maror are placed before you."

Talk is not cheap. We value the ability to converse with our children and relate our heritage to them, so much so that the Haggadah recognized that it might take the entire night.

But at the same time, the words of our heritage must not only be heard, but proudly displayed and practised in our homes. We must practise what we know and ask questions about the customs and rituals that we're not familiar with, even beyond Pesach.

Chag Kasher v'Samayach

Rabbi Meir Rosenberg is spiritual leader of Congregation Ayin L'Tzion in Thornhill, Ont. and national executive director of Mizrachi Canada.

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A second look at legalized gambling

The Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation would like to add a casino in Toronto and make lottery tickets and slot machines more readily available, arguing that this could add up to $2 billion a year to government revenues.

At a time when the Drummond Report has warned that without radical action today, the Ontario deficit could balloon to unmanageable levels, an extra couple of billion dollars could sure help. And since the money would be given voluntarily, it's much less politically or economically painful than tax hikes or spending cuts.

Jewish law lists gamblers among those whose testimony is not accepted in a court of law. According to some, gambling is actually a form of theft, making a gambler a low-level thief. Others note that gamblers "do not engage in the development of the world." One cannot trust the word of non-contributing members of society. The Talmud notes that according to this second accepted opinion, occasional gamblers, who otherwise make positive contributions to society, would have their testimony accepted.

Nonetheless, while the recreational gambler may not be invalidated, gambling – even on an occasional basis – has been frowned upon in our tradition, so much so that Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef, perhaps the pre-eminent authority of Jewish law today, has ruled that Jews may not purchase tickets to Mifal HaPayiss, the Israeli version of Lotto 6/49. And years ago, Rabbi Moshe Feinstein ruled that, ideally, a shul should not raise money through bingo.

Yet the issue is more complex. For many worthy institutions, lotteries serve as an important fundraising mechanism. It's hard to classify people who purchase such lottery tickets as gamblers, although without the (remote) possibility of winning, many would not buy tickets. Government-sanctioned lottery tickets, while offering a greater percentage of revenues in winnings, serve to bring in needed funds.

Money Matters

Rabbi Jay Kelman CA

One can make a cogent argument that today's casinos are actually very much involved in the "development of the world." They are arguably no different than any other form of entertainment – be they sporting events, movies, theatre–providing gainful employment to many, and much-needed economic benefits. And while one can properly argue that there are better uses for one's time, it's quite clear that entertainment is an important feature of the world we live in.

One may argue that gambling is addictive and has the potential to ruin one's life. However it's no more, and likely much less, ruinous than alcohol, or tobacco for that matter, and no one proposes outlawing those. Societal decisions cannot be driven by worry about how careless individuals may act.

Yet at the same time, we're aware how those who can least afford it are the ones who in reality spend the most on gambling. For the poor, the allure of winning is much more enticing. It's not for nothing that gambling is known as a tax on the poor.

Yet when all is said is done, it appears to me that society has an obligation to act in the best interests of most people. Legalized gambling already exists. Perhaps along with expanding it, some money should be made available to treat those who fall prey to its addictive nature.

Send comments to rabbijay@torahinmotion.org.

Kosher Jesus is rather treif

Views & Reviews

Martin Lockshin

One of the most controversial areas for ancient historians is determining the true character, worldview and biography of the historical Jesus. While fundamentalist Christians believe that the depiction of Jesus in the New Testament is, so to speak, gospel truth, judicious New Testament scholars generally admit that they have little certain knowledge about the historical Jesus. They contend that the four gospels were written many years after Jesus died by authors who had vested interests and who actually never knew Jesus. Furthermore, there are serious discrepancies between the four gospels.

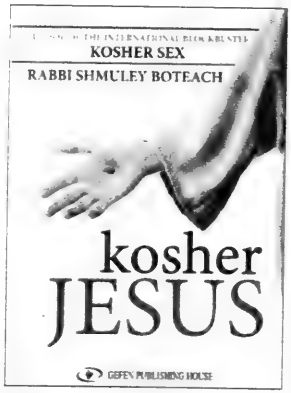
A new book on this subject is causing a stir: *Kosher Jesus*, by Rabbi Shmuley Boteach, known to some as "America's rabbi," author of the controversial best-seller *Kosher Sex*, and rumoured candidate both for chief rabbi of England and the Republican nomination for a U.S. Congress seat in New Jersey. Were it not for the fame of the author, there is little reason to think that the book would be drawing attention. It contributes nothing new to the historical Jesus debate. Rabbi Boteach is not a New Testament scholar, yet he paints a non-standard picture of Jesus about which he expresses no doubts. It is based almost entirely on the scholarship of the late Prof. Hyam Maccoby, an academic whose views do not reflect the scholarly consensus.

Rabbi Boteach is certain that Jesus observed all the mitzvot of the Torah like any pious first-century Jew; that Jesus was never opposed by the contemporary rabbinic leadership, since he was one of them; that Jesus was a proud Jew who got into trouble with and was crucified by the Romans because he encouraged Jews to reject Roman culture and oppose the Roman occupation; that the New Testament "slanders a good man" when it claims that Jesus said, "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's"; that the New Testament character Judas never existed; that Pontius Pilate was a ruthless tyrant, not the sensitive man of the gospels; that Jesus would never have allowed himself to be called the son of God and would never have claimed to have been born of a virgin; that Matthew's interpretation of Isaiah 7:14 is "ridiculous"; that Jesus wanted to deliver the Jews from Rome, but Paul wanted to deliver them from Judaism, and that "the editors of the New Testament took a Jewish sage and lover of his people and put a white hood on his head and a swastika on his arm, and sent him out spewing vitriol against his people."

The book is, to be blunt, sloppy. To cite just two trivial examples, Rabbi Boteach writes that the Second Temple was destroyed in 70 BCE (p. 169) – it was 70 CE. At another point, he writes that in the gospel of John, the trial of Jesus took place on the second night of Passover (p. 91). Actually in that gospel, Jesus was, significantly, killed on the eve of Passover (see John 19:31), and his trial took place before his execution.

As a student of Jewish history, I consider Rabbi Boteach's speculative reconstruction of the historical Jesus possible. But it is hardly provable, and it fails the test of a good scientific hypothesis, as it is not falsifiable: Rabbi Boteach dismisses any evidence that might be cited against his theory as the opinions of New Testament editors who were allegedly embarrassed by the true story of pious Rabbi Jesus.

Another problem I have with the book is that I have always felt that it is impolite and possibly imprudent for Jews, and perhaps particularly



for rabbis, to turn to practitioners of another religion and tell them they don't really understand their own religion correctly, and if they just listened to us Jews, they would understand it better.

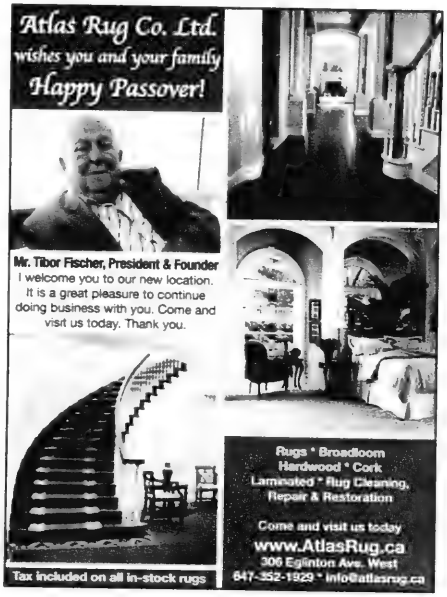
The reaction to this book has been telling. Many fundamentalist Christians seem delighted by it, even though it rejects and sometimes scorns standard Christian beliefs about Jesus and about important theological issues, such as how people improve or "save" themselves. And many Jews are upset by it, even though it portrays Jesus essentially as a proud Orthodox rabbi. One Toronto Orthodox rabbi, Rabbi J. Immanuel Shochet, has suggested that it should be banned as heretical.

Perhaps the same principle explains both the positive evangelical and the negative Jewish reactions. Rabbi Boteach makes it perfectly clear that he hopes that this book will bring Jews and Christians together as they all agree to esteem pious Rabbi Jesus. Those Christians who would like to see Jews accept the "true messiah" can't help smile when they see an Orthodox rabbi admiring Jesus. They presumably realize that Rabbi Boteach is not advocating Christianity, but they feel that he has taken a bold step closer. As Dr. Kenneth Beshore, founder and president of the World Bible Society (and one of many evangelicals who is on a first-name basis with Rabbi Boteach) writes on the book's dust-jacket, "Few evangelical Christians can really understand how difficult it is to do what Rabbi Shmuley has done. I pray his journey continues."

Prudent religious Jews who realize that we are a tiny minority in North America in a predominantly Christian society can't help wonder what is accomplished by trying to bring Jews and Christians even closer together around a supposedly shared theological truth. I squirmed as I read Rabbi Boteach referring to the American Dr. Michael Brown (no connection to any Torontonian of that name), as my "dear friend… I love Mike." Brown, an apostate Jew, dedicates his life to converting more Jews to Christianity, not an undertaking that generally wins rabbis' love.

Even if we grant that there is little fear that a new conception of Jesus will lead American Jews to Christianity, the idea that Jews and Christians might come together around Rabbi Boteach's postulated historical Jesus is absurd. At one point in the book (p. 136), Rabbi Boteach admits, "The two Jesuses [his and the New Testament's] are irreconcilable." On the very next page he writes, "The images may seem inherently contradictory. But then again, it's not so strange to hold two simultaneous and seemingly contradictory views of Jesus."

Sorry, Rabbi Boteach, but it is.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Embattled seniors home seeks new CEO

Former chief official 'lightning rod' for perceived faults

Myron Love
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — The Simkin Centre, Winnipeg's embattled Jewish seniors home, is officially in the market for a new chief executive in the wake of the not-unanticipated resignation of longtime CEO Sandra Delorme.

Delorme, who had been a lightning rod for criticism for the perceived faults of the seniors home over the past couple of years, had been on sick leave since last October. Her resignation was announced March 13.

"Sandra did a wonderful job for us," said Bill Brownstone, spokesperson for the Simkin Centre board. "She was with us for nine years and was intimately involved in the construction of our new building," which opened in south Winnipeg in 2001.

The institution, which was long known as the Sharon Home, is almost 100 years old. Formerly situated on two sites, its north Winnipeg location closed in fall 2008 following the completion of phase II of the south Winnipeg building.

Brownstone praised Delorme for "co-ordinating the relocation of all our residents from our former north Winnipeg location, [which] was a huge job. She did a great job. It is unfortunate that she recently developed health problems."

While Delorme may have been a good administrator, her people skills have been questioned by a group of individuals who are very unhappy with the care their parents received there as residents.

Sandra Delorme

Delorme was caught in the eye of a storm that began about 18 months ago with the death of Lilyan Peck, a 93-year-old resident of the home, shortly after she was transferred to a hospital, where it was found she was suffering from a severe, untreated infection.

As a result of Peck's death and lobbying efforts by her daughter, Marsha Palansky, as well as Harriet Berkal Sarbit and Harvey Berkal – whose father, Rabbi Louis Berkal, was a resident of the home for the last few months of his life – and others, a number of investigations into the Simkin Centre's operations were conducted last year.

One of them was done by Peter Kafka, CEO of the Louis Brier Home, Vancouver's main Jewish seniors residence.

Kafka painted a picture of a staff suffering from low morale due to a combination of factors including ongoing negative publicity over the past year, unrealistic expectations from some of the families, "a lack of perceived leadership" and a "lack of trust" among some staff members.

He recommended that regular staff meetings be held and that annual staff satisfaction surveys be conducted. He also urged management to circulate in the building to improve communication with staff, patients and families.

"While most families are satisfied with the care and support their family members receive, lack of access to and lack of visibility of senior staff was a common theme," Kafka wrote. "Many families did not feel welcomed by the staff and felt the staff resented their involvement."

A statement from a group calling itself "Delegation of Concerned Families," which is led by Palansky and the Berkal siblings, wished Delorme "all the best with her health" in the future.

"At the same time however," the statement added, "we are optimistic that a change in administration will only have a positive impact on the health and welfare of the residents and the Home at large. This resignation is in keeping with the recommendations of Peter Kafka, who recognized the need for a reorganization of the institution to bring it to its optimal functioning base."

They said they hoped Delorme's departure "marks the start of a bright future for Simkin, incorporating a more transparent and community-based approach to its governance – an approach that must focus first and foremost on improving medical and nursing care in the facility."

They urged that as the board searches for new CEO, a "wide source of candidates should be canvassed through widespread advertising. And the person they select should possess the necessary qualifications to instill confidence in the entire community."

Brownstone said the board is looking for a new CEO with strong health-care experience and managerial skills who "can relate to our culture."

In a related development, the Berkals and Palansky are continuing to pursue legal action against the Simkin Centre in connection with Peck's death.

Palansky and the Berkals had tried to launch a private prosecution against the home. After considering the request and the evidence the complainants presented, the Crown declined to prosecute, but it did refer the evidential material to the Winnipeg Police Service to investigate further.

In reponse to a query on the progress of the investigation, the police would only say that "this is an ongoing investigation and there is no further information to provide."

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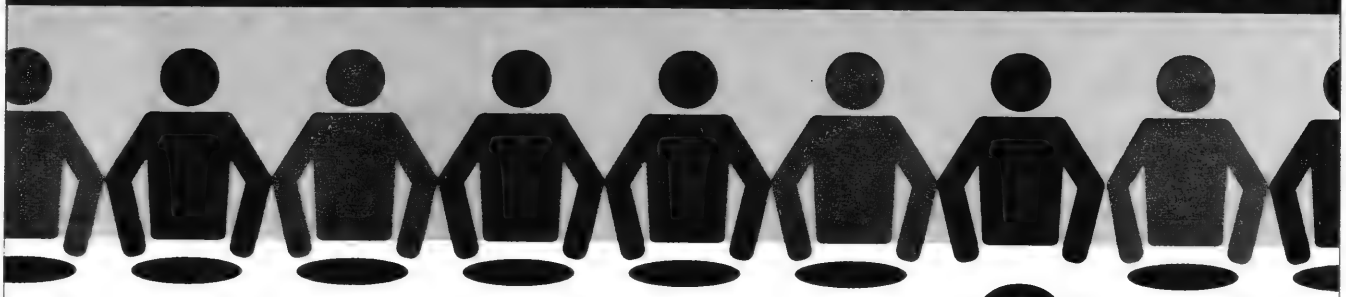

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Former spymaster sees long war ahead against Islam

Halevy to share his views at Winnipeg lecture

Myron Love
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — As a former director of Israel's Mossad, Efraim Halevy knows how to keep secrets. But, on the other hand, he is not shy about sharing his many opinions about the Mideast conflict and about Israel.

Halevy is known for sometimes making controversial comments. He has said that Israel should take up Hamas' offer of a long-term truce and negotiate with the group because the Islamic movement is respected by Palestinians and generally keeps its word. He also said the growing haredi radicalization within Israel poses a bigger risk to Israel than Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. And he believes that it will take at least 25 years for the West to win its war against radical Islam.

Halevy will be sharing these and other opinions with members of Winnipeg's Jewish community when he takes the podium on May 3, as the guest speaker at the seventh annual Sol and Florence Kanee Distinguished Lecture Series, the Jewish Heritage Centre's major yearly fundraiser.

Halevy's predecessors on the podium have included historians Sir Martin Gilbert and Deborah Lipstadt, Rabbi Chaim Rozwaski, political commentator David Frum and Halevy's fellow Israeli machers, Shlomo Avineri, director general of Israel's Foreign Ministry in prime minister Yitzhak Rabin's first cabinet, and Dore Gold, former Israeli ambassador to the United Nations.

"I think Efraim Halevy is going to be the most fascinating speaker who we have heard to date," says Belle Millo, chair of the Freeman Family Foundation Holocaust Education Centre, who suggested the former Mossad director and author of *Man in the Shadows* (2006) as this year's Kanee lecture series speaker. "I had spoken to a number of people who had heard him speak and were greatly impressed," she says.

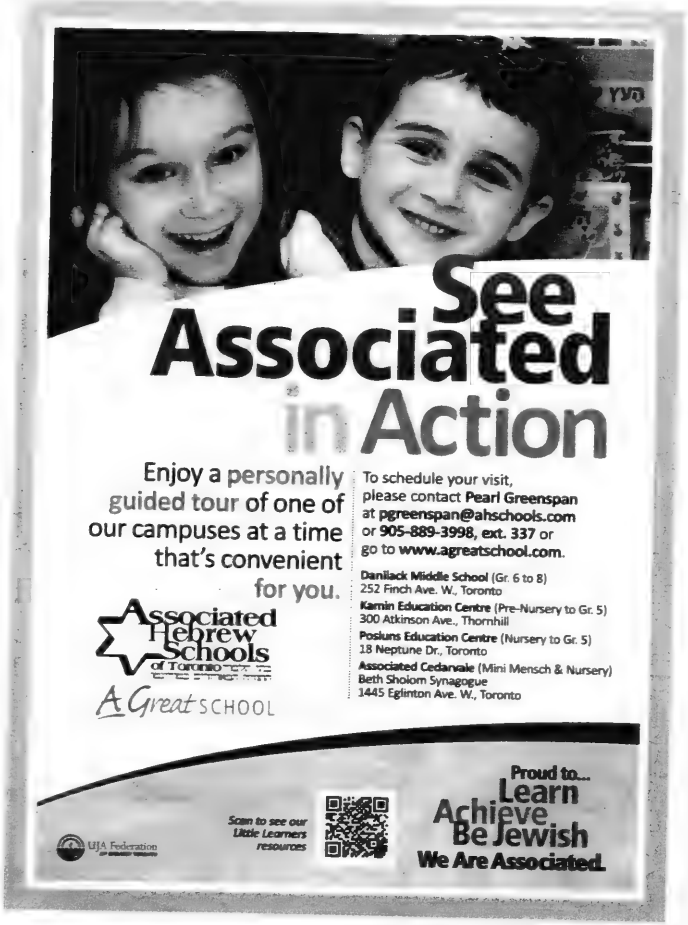
Efraim Halevy

"He has been the confidant of five prime ministers and served as Israel's ambassador to the European Union in addition to his career in the Mossad. I think his role in helping to forge the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan was an incredible accomplishment."

Millo adds that Halevy has been known to speak his mind on numerous issues. "He can't be pigeon-holed as left wing or right wing," she says. "That makes him unique."

The British-born Halevy, 63, began working for the Mossad in 1961. His Mossad career spanned 28 years, during which he headed three different branches. He became deputy director in 1990. He was appointed Israeli ambassador to the EU in Brussels in 1996. In 1988, following the resignation of Mossad director Danny Yalom, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called Halevy back from Brussels to head the agency.

After leaving government service in 2003, Halevy took up a post as head of the Center for Strategic and Policy Studies at Hebrew University of Jerusalem.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Quebec opposition condemns ritual slaughter

Two parties demand investigation into kosher, halal practices

Janice Arnold
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — The opposition Parti Québécois and the new party Coalition Avenir Québec last week demanded that Quebec's Charest government investigate the distribution of ritually slaughtered meat in the province.

Describing the practice as contrary to "Quebec values," PQ agriculture critic André Simard, a veterinarian, on March 14 called on Agriculture Minister Pierre Corbeil to provide a full public accounting of Muslim halal and kosher slaughter by March 23.

On March 15, Premier Jean Charest underlined the need for strict assurances that any ritually slaughtered meat is labelled as such, but the government did not respond directly to the PQ's demand.

Agriculture Minister Pierre Corbeil decried the PQ's tone as "alarmist" and rejected claims of cruelty or lack of safety with regard to ritual slaughter. Mount Royal Liberal MNA Lawrence Bergman denounced the PQ for "odious ethnic bashing, between the lines."

The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) deplored the PQ's raising of a "false problem".

What triggered the issue were media reports that poultry slaughtered according to halal ritual at at least one meat processor was being sold to the public without being identified as such.

Simard said that the law permitting ritual slaughter is a federal one that "crashes headlong into Quebec values," a claim that "outraged" CIJA.

"In Quebec, we have made the choice long ago to slaughter our animals for consumption by taking measures to anesthetize animals and to slaughter them by minimizing their suffering," Simard said in a statement.

"In their great openness, Quebecers accept, as an exception, that religious communities can go ahead with slaughter according to their rituals. But, when the exception becomes the rule, there is a problem." According to information he said he has, such practices are becoming more and more widespread.

Simard told the media elsewhere that halal or kosher slaughter may raise the risk of human disease, including the spread of E. coli bacteria.

CAQ leader François Legault said: "We are in Quebec and that [ritual slaughter] must be the exception." CAQ shares the PQ's concern to the extent that consumers have the right to know what they're buying, he said.

Rabbi Reuben Poupko slammed the PQ for "trying to score cheap political points by exploiting the worst tendencies of Quebecers" when they fear their identity is threatened. The spiritual leader of Montreal's Congregation Beth Israel-Beth Aaron also called it an "ignorant attack" and challenged shchitah's critics to come to an abbatoir and witness what's done there.

"It has been confirmed numerous times and in a variety of countries that kosher slaughter is beyond reproach. It is unfair to characterize shchitah as anything but the most humane method possible. It's the quickest and most painless.

"In fact, western civilization owes a debt of gratitude to the tradition Jews bequeathed to the world of limiting cruelty to animals."

The PQ is raising a baseless issue, at least with regard to Jewish slaughter, because kosher meat has been clearly identified and marketed as such for nearly a century in Quebec, said CIJA Quebec vice-president Luciano Del Negro in a March 16 statement. "To claim that it threatens to become the norm is strictly unfounded."

He also said it is unacceptable to suggest kosher meat could be a health risk, because kosher slaughter conforms to the same governmental standards as any other method of slaughter.

In a letter to CIJA, CAQ immigration critic Benoît Charette acknowledged these points. "To claim that these practices lack transparency is, consequently, false," he wrote.

Rabbi Saul Emanuel, the executive director of the Vaad Ha'ir, the main kashrut supervisory body in Quebec, which oversees the MK hechsher, thinks it's impossible for meat or poultry slaughtered according to kashrut to make its way into the general market.

Meat or poultry destined for the kosher consumer is supervised constantly from the time of slaughter through the butchering and processing, he said.

Rabbi Schachar Orenstein of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue spoke at the annual convention of Quebec veterinarians last November about kosher slaughter. The professional order devoted a half-day session to ritual slaughter and also heard from one of its prominent opponents.

Rabbi Orenstein said he hopes Quebec won't embark on a debate on banning such slaughter, as has taken place in some European countries, most recently France, and notably New Zealand.

Rabbi Orenstein, who is a vegetarian and an animal lover, said if Quebecers are opposed to ritual slaughter because they are concerned about animal welfare, he believes, a respectful dialogue is in order.

"However, I wonder if there is something else behind this initiative. My question is: what is the motivation for bringing this up now? I think that there are a lot of other more pressing issues, such as how livestock is raised and transported."

The Muslim Council of Montreal, which represents 275,000 Muslims, condemned the "inflammatory culture war being instigated by" the PQ and certain Quebec media.

Spokesperson Salam Elmenyawi said that they are "seeking to create a mass hysteria and frenzy by deliberately twisting and misrepresenting the facts in this issue," noting that halal slaughter is subject to the same safety controls as any other.

One Quebec politician who has spoken out against the attempt to make ritual slaughter a political football is Amir Khadir, the sole MNA for the sovereignist Québec solidaire, who is known for his anti-Israel statements and politics.

"I find it deplorable that the PQ is importing this debate launched in France by the Front National and is playing on the fears of the population. As a doctor, I have never seen a health problem linked to halal or kosher meat."

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Student population has grown to 57 since '09

Continued from page 3

Rabbi Miller said that since he moved to Calgary in 2009, the school's student population jumped from 34 students to 57.

"We'd like to grow even more... and show them what we have to offer," said Rabbi Miller, a father of 11 children and grandfather of 25 (and counting).

Rabbi Miller said that in the short time he's been living in Calgary, his congregation has grown significantly.

"Like every synagogue, you have people who come three times a year, and then you have your regulars. When we came 2-1/2 years ago, we had one young family – not counting teachers and rabbis – that came to shul every week. Now we have seven," he said, adding that his congregation has roughly 140 families.

Rabbi Miller boasted that his community is a welcoming one.

"Here, people don't necessarily fit into one box. In larger cities, you can find a synagogue where everyone is just like you. We have people who are not as observant by conventional standards, we have people who are on their way, people who are modern Orthodox, people who are ultra-Orthodox, and it's a family," he said.

"We feel we have something really important here and we want other people to know about it."

The Rabbi said he has ambitions to build an eruv, an enclosure that allows shomer Shabbat Jews to transfer objects from one place to another on Shabbat, which would otherwise be prohibited.

"We're trying to build something here."

The campaign to lure Jewish families to Calgary with the promise of free tuition has already resulted in one family from Montreal moving to Calgary, he said.

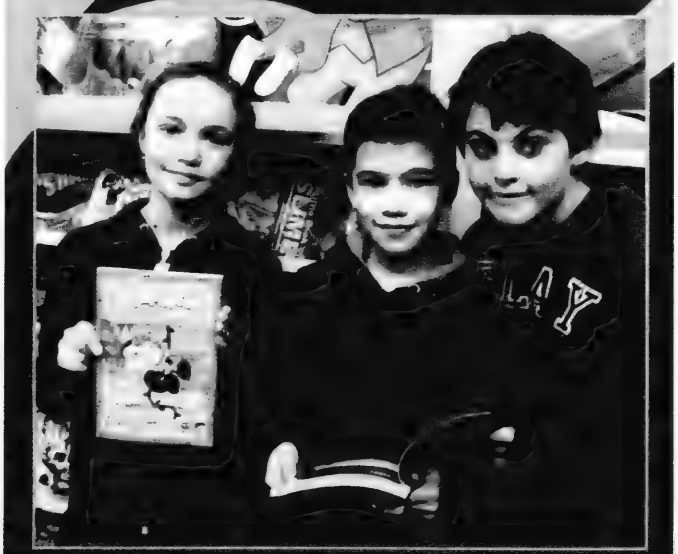
A few more families have also inquired about the offer.

"If someone moves here, they won't have to worry about making a Shabbat meal for the first six months. We set them up with families," Rabbi Miller said.

"We provide a sense of being a part of a spiritual community. It's not just a shul – you belong here. My ideal is that everybody should visit Calgary, fall in love with the place, and if they can move here, great. If not, they can love us from afar."

For more information, contact Rabbi Miller at homji@telus.net, or call 403-259-3230.

NURSING VOLUNTEER: Leya Aronson, centre, volunteer nursing and program co-ordinator for the Silverman Guyana Medical Missions' COMET Medical Team at the Peter A. Silverman Centre for International Health, spoke to Grade 11 and 12 students at Hiipanat Orot as part of the school's WoW (Women of the World) series. Over the past 12 years, Aronson, a nurse at North York General Hospital and in a pediatric practice, has participated in 10 missions to Guyana as part of a medical team setting up clinics in villages in the rainforest.



BOOK LOVERS: Elis Blokhin, left, Ron Blokhin, centre, and Udi Glinauer were among the students who excitedly browsed through the many volumes available at the annual book fair held recently at Robbins Hebrew Academy's Beth Tikvah campus.

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PUBLIC SPEAKERS: Grade 8 students at Bialik Hebrew Day School competed in a public speaking contest, in which they delivered speeches in English, Hebrew and Yiddish. Pictured are the winners of the Hebrew contest, from left, Courtney P., who placed first, Atar P., who placed second, guest judge Pnina Harlap, from the Anne and Max Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto, Bialik teacher Hagit Dekel, and Laura G., who placed third.

OUT OF THE COLD: BTteens, Beth Tzedec Congregation high school student group, helped youth director Ally Leibtag, organize and run an Out of the Cold Art Show. All the art was created by people in the Beth Tzedec/Beth Sholom Out of the Cold program. All funds raised from sales will go directly to the artists and back into the program. Over the course of Purim, BTteens raised more than $1,000. There will be another show at Beth Sholom on April 22. Pictured, from left, are Maddie Tannenbaum, Emma Friedman and Ido Moshe.

WRITING FOR READERS: Head of school Gail Baker, pictured with Taya, was among senior staff from the Toronto Heschel School who visited the senior kindergarten classroom to celebrate its Writer's Workshop, in which the children used a variety of strategies to effectively write for readers.

Mazel Tov
מזל טוב

Happy fourth birthday to Huck Jordan from parents David Hall & Kristy Bignell and grandparents David & Susan Bignell.

Jessica Weider & Benjamin Greisman were married on Oct. 23. They are enjoying being newlyweds, and are looking forward to their honeymoon in Paris.

Luke Baszak was born Dec. 9, 2011. His parents Reni Hoz & Miro Baszak. Big sister Natalia Leah. Proud grandma, Pearl Pnina Hoz.

Marianna & Robert Nemes: mazel tov on your 60th wedding anniversary March 16. You are a source of pride and admiration. Love your children and grandchildren!

Mazel tov on the wedding of Samantha, daughter of Debbie & Victor Goldman, to Jeremy Mack, son of Karen Mack and Eric Mack.

Happy 61st anniversary Carl & Vera Gold! Thank you for everything. Love, Riva, Darrell, Romy, Gary, Eleesha, Kortney, Rachel, Jacob and Yoni.

Email your digital photos to cblackman@thecjn.ca or go online to www.CJNews.com and click the "Family Moments"

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What's New

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Deadline reminder: March 26 is the deadline for the issue of April 5. April 2 is the deadline for the issue of April 12. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; e-mail whatsnewcjn@gmail.com, or fax 416-391-0829.

Thursday, March 22

PRE-PESACH CONCERT

Cantor David Edwards and **Klara Bagley** present a Pre-Pesach Nash and Drash Concert, Beth Emeth Synagogue, noon. Tickets $12, advance only. 416-633-3838.

CRYPTO-JEWS

Judith Cohen discusses Crypto-Jews, 7:30 p.m. Lodzer Synagogue. 416-636-6665.

LITERARY LEVEE

Miriam and ATID chapters of Canadian Hadassah-WIZO Toronto present a literary levee with author **Liz Pearl**, Reuben Cipin Healthy Living Community at 6:30 p.m. Enjoy a book discussion, dinner and silent auction. Tickets $36. 416-630-8373 or www.chw.ca/toronto.

Saturday, March 24

HAVDALAH ON ICE

Temple Har Zion holds its Havdalah on Ice, 7:30 p.m., Elvis Stojko Arena. RSVP, 905-889-2252, ext. 5, or thzskates@gmail.com.

B'NAI SHALOM

B'nai Shalom, a Conservative congregation in Halton-Peel meets at 10 a.m. in Oakville. www.bnaishalom.ca or 905-901-9889.

BINGO

Simcha Kadima Club of Na'amat Canada is holding a bingo night, Borochov Cultural Centre, 7:30 p.m. Tickets $20 in advance, $25 at the door. For tickets, 416-636-5425 or www.clubsimchakadima@gmail.com.

CONTENTS SALE

Act to End Violence against Women (formerly JWIC), Golda Meir Chapter, is holding a contents sale, 16 Doncrest Dr., Thornhill today and tomorrow, 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Sunday, March 25

MUSICALE

Club Beersheba, Na'amat Canada presents a musicale with pianists, flutist and vocalist, 1:30 p.m., Bernard Betel Centre. Entrance, $18. Call 416-636-5425 or 416-225-2112, ext. 105.

MATZAH BAKERY

Children are invited to learn how to bake matzah at 770 Chabad Gate, Thornhill, 3 p.m. Call **Elyse Tytel**, 416-621-5675, or etytel@ujafed.org.

ISRAEL & ARCHEOLOGY

Beit Rayim Synagogue presents **Carl Ehrlich** discussing the science and art of Israeli archeology, TanenbaumCHAT, 9600 Bathurst St. $5 advance, $10 at the door. 905-889-0276, ext. 31.

RIKUDIYAH

The Israeli Dance Festival for Children will be held at TanenbaumCHAT, Wallenberg Campus, 200 Wilmington Ave. Performances at 11 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. Tickets at www.cjetoronto.com. For details, call **Teme Kernerman** 416-638-1881, ext. 4364.

Continued on page 31

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Continued from page 30

NEW CHALLENGES IN ISRAEL

Brig.-Gen. Israela Oron discusses the impact of religious extremism on gender equality, democratic values and the Israeli military, Temple Sinai, 7:30 p.m. 416-781-4322 or info@nifcan.org.

SOVIET JEWS IN WWII

An international conference on Jewish Life and Death in the Soviet Union During World War II takes place today and tomorrow at Hart House, 7 Hart House Circle (Uof T). Today **Ilya Altman** discusses "The Holocaust in the Soviet Union: Unknown Pages," 10:30 a.m., Hart House.

A photo exhibit of Soviet Jewish soldiers will be on display today and tomorrow at Hart House and March 27-April 4 at Darchei Noam Congregation.

BEYOND THE GREEN LINE

Yehudit Shier Weisberg discusses "Jewish Communities Beyond the Green Line: Myths and Facts," Congregation Darchei Noam, 7:30 p.m.

BUNDI'IM

Toronto's Workmen's Circle screens the film *Bundi'im*, 2 p.m. at 471 Lawrence Ave. W. Film is in Hebrew and Yiddish with English and Hebrew subtitles.

PASSOVER WORKSHOP

Danforth Jewish Circle holds a Passover learning workshop, 2 p.m., Eastminster Church, 310 Danforth Ave. RSVP info@djctoronto.com.

Monday, March 26

A MORE INCLUSIVE ISRAEL

Brig.-Gen. Israela Oron discusses how to build a more inclusive Israel, 8 p.m., Supermarket, 268 Augusta Ave. Registration required at newgen26.eventbrite.ca or 416-781-4322.

ROTH AND MOSS

Israeli artist **David Moss** presents his ketubot and haggadah and the collection of **Cecil Roth,** 7:30 p.m., Beth Tzedec Congregation. RSVP 416-781-3511.

Wednesday, March 28

CANTORS IN CONCERT

The world's greatest cantors perform, 7:30 p.m., Toronto Centre for the Arts. Call **Rivy,** 416-783-6103, ext. 228, or www.greatestcantors.com.

JEWISH GENEALOGY

Bill Gladstone discusses "Landsmanschaft (Mutual Benefit Society of Toronto)," North York Central Library, 5120 Yonge St., 8 p.m. For more details, www.jgstoronto.ca.

JEWS FOR JUDAISM

Rabbi Michael Skobac discusses "Evangelicals and Israel: Knight in Shining Armour or Trojan Horse," Shaarei Tefillah Congregation, 8:05 p.m. 416-789-0020.

Thursday, March 29

IBERIAN JEWISH HISTORY

Rabbi Wayne Allan discusses "Persecution, Expulsion and Resurgence," 7:30 p.m., Beth David Synagogue. $15.

Other News

CHOCOLATE SEDER

Shaar Shalom Synagogue holds a chocolate seder, April 1, 1:30 p.m. RSVP by March 26, youth@shaarshalom.ca or 905-889-4975, ext. 62.

PASSOVER SEDERS

Chabad of Markham holds a seder April 6, led by **Rabbi Nachman** and **Aviva Forer.** RSVP 905-886-0420, ext. 221, or www.chabadmarkham.org

Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism holds a seder April 6, led by **Barry Olshen** and **Sandi Horwitz.** RSVP 426-385-3910 or roby@oraynu.org.

Temple Har Zion holds a Passover seder April 7, led by **Rabbi Cory Weiss.** Reserve by April 2. 905-889-2252 or e-mail: thzpasoverseder@gmail.com.

Danforth Jewish Circle seder, April 10. RSVP info@djctoronto.com.

United Jewish People's Order sponsors a third seder with musicians **David Wall, Marilyn Lerner** and the Toronto Jewish Folk Choir, April 15. RSVP by March 30, 416-789-5502 or info@winchevskycentre.org.

FRIENDS OF YIDDISH

Sheva Zucker discusses "Secular Yiddish Schools: History and Heritage in English and Yiddish," April 1, 2 p.m., Beth Tikvah Synagogue. RSVP by March 28. Call 416-736-8073, 416-458-1440 or e-mail yiddish18@yahoo.ca.

SPRING LECTURE SERIES

Temple Emanu-El's spring lecture series featuring **Adam Chapnick, Arne Kislenko, Iain Scott** and others begins April 16. To register, 416-449-3880.

HELPING OTHER PARENTS

HOPE (Helping Other Parents Everywhere) is a support group for parents of acting-out youth. The group meets Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m. at Edithvale Community Centre, 131 Finch Ave. W. Call **Bernice**, 905-737-3403.

SCHWARTZ REISMAN CENTRE

The centre is open for daily tours. Register now for pre-school and daycare. Call 905-303-1821.

JF&CS GROUPS

All programs require pre-registration and are open to all members of the community. To register, call **Shawna Sidney,** 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or www.jfandcs.com. All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst. St., unless otherwise noted.

Mind, Body Connection for Women: An 8-session group for women who want to learn mindfulness and meditation. Topics include stress and anxiety reduction, enhancing your self-esteem. Starts March 27, 7 p.m.

When You're About to Separate, What to Tell the Kids: A workshop for parents in the early stages of separation, March 29, 6:30 p.m.

BEREAVED PARENTS

Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer** at JF & CS, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or bfeffer@jfandcs.com.

FOR SENIORS

Association of Jewish Seniors. Tammy, 416-635-2900, ext. 458. April 7, Passover seder, Bernard Betel Centre, 6 p.m. $20. Reserve by March 26.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park. (60+). **Valerie**, 416-395-7881. Casino Rama, April 18. Dance with live music, March 25. Tuesdays, gentle exercise, 10 a.m.; Wednesdays, duplicate bridge, 12:30 p.m.; Thursdays, line dancing, 10 a.m.; social bridge, 12:30 p.m. Non-members welcome.

National Council of Jewish Women, Aviva branch, is looking for women over 70 for their group. Call 416-633-5100.

LZA Seniors Cultural Club meets Tuesdays, 10 a.m., Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell. 416-630-9444.

New Horizons is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club that offers kosher food, card games, casino trips. 416-256-1892. .

Adath Israel Congregation. Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub. Refreshments $2. Call **Pearl**, 416-635-6317, or **Sheila**, 416-665-3333.

Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue welcomes new players for mah-jong and Rummikub Monday and Wednesday afternoons. 416-633-3838.

The bridge club at Forest Hill library has reopened and is looking for new members. Call **Lea** (evenings), 416-487-7630.

Bernard Betel Centre 416-225-2112. March 27, **David Lipovitch** discusses "Archeology of Ancient Israel from Ezra to Herod"; March 29, lecture on seniors personal safety, 1:30 p.m. Sign up now for trip to Europe, May 30-June 13.

Haverim at Beth Tzedec. Seymour Epstein discusses his book *From Couscous to Kasha* and his experiences working for the American Jewish Joint Committee, April 2, 1:30 p.m.

Seniors Gentle Fitness Club offers Tai Chi Chih classes, Wednesdays, 7 p.m. and Feldenkrais, Mondays, 10:30 a.m., Edithvale Community Centre. 416-665-9050.

Active Seniors, Miles Nadal JCC, 416-924-6211, ext.155. March 22, **Jordan Klapman** presents "The Jewish-Black Music Connection: Louis Armstrong and Beyond," with live piano, 1:30 p.m. Beginner's computer course, 8-week session, starts April 17.

PROSSERMAN JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com.

The movie *The Syrian Bride* will be shown March 26. Intro at 12:45 p.m., movie at 1 p.m.

Tickets for spring/summer theatre trips are on sale now.

The spring/summer program guide is available now, ext. 4235.

Save the date for community bingo, April 7; computer animation classes, April 17; Shalom Sesame Pesach, April 4.

MILES NADAL JCC

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The Diary of Anne Frank by Shakespeare in Action runs until March 24, Al Green Theatre. Ext. 0.

Kevin Courrier discusses "Movies in the Obama era," March 26, 7 p.m.

Night Without a Moon: Jewish Women's Cabaret with **Marcia Beck, Tova Kardonne, Marni Levitt** and **Ilana Newman** 8 p.m., March 24. Ext. 154.

Janusz Makuch, director of the Krakow Jewish Culture Festival, discusses "Jewish Culture in Contemporary Poland," March 25, 2 p.m. Ext. 154.

Toronto Jewish Film Society presents *Divan*, March 25, 4 and 7:30 p.m. with guest filmmaker **Pearl Gluck.** Ext. 606.

Tickets on sale now for Stars on Spadina Gala with **Theresa Tova, Moshe Hammer, Hilario Duran** and more, April 23, 7:30 p.m.

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 24

Egyptian, Israeli diplomats meet with students

Janice Arnold
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — The consuls general of both Israel and Egypt were confronted with heated questions at a Concordia University event organized by a pro-Israel student club.

The Egyptian envoy, Amin Meleika, was disparaged by some students for sitting at the same table as an Israeli diplomat, for his defence of Egypt's ruling military council and his Mubarak-era connections, while the Israeli Joel Lion faced accusations about his country's alleged aggression against civilians in Gaza and doubts about Jewish national rights.

The situation, however, never got out of hand, thanks to polite but firm chairing by Dana Remer and Ehle Shachter, co-presidents of Concordia Students for Israel (CSI). The group was formed last semester by students of varying political leanings as an "educational initiative" and to encourage dialogue.

The March 14 event, which was open to anybody, was held in the seventh-floor Concordia Student Union lounge, with visible security. About 100 students attended, exceeding the number of chairs set up.

It was publicized as being co-sponsored with the Concordia Egyptian Students Association, but Remer said the group pulled out the morning of the event.

Remer said she respected that decision and credited the 15 or so members who did attend with helping to calm things down when questioning was becoming hostile.

The scheduled discussion on the importance of peace between Israel and Egypt was overshadowed by the Islamist-led Egyptian parliament's anti-Israel resolution earlier in the week and renewed fighting between Israel and Gaza terrorists.

It was also taking place while Israeli Apartheid Week continued at Concordia with an exhibition at the McConnell building.

Meleika, who has been in Montreal since December 2010, described the 1979 Egypt-Israel peace treaty, although limited, as still being in the interest of both countries.

Israeli Consul General Joel Lion talks with students after the Concordia University event.

Egyptian Consul General Amin Meleika talks with students after the Concordia University event.

However, whatever regime comes to power in his country will be "taking into account the opinions of the man on the street" and that is turning against Israel, he said, because they see Gaza Palestinians as being "punished for matters that are out of their hands..."

"Egyptians always thought that the treaty would lead to a broader regional settlement, particularly of the Palestinian question," he said, adding that "disunity and mistakes" among Palestinians is also to blame.

Meleika said Egyptians today are about equally divided among those who want to keep the treaty, those who want it repealed, and those who don't know. If Israel and the Palestinians achieved a lasting peace, polls indicate that roughly 40 per cent of Egyptians would support maintaining their treaty with Israel.

Lion said that sitting together with his Egyptian counterpart shows that, at the official level, the two states can disagree without resorting to violence.

However, the ties between Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood, which is gaining support in Egypt, have Israel wondering how much longer it can trust that country, he said.

The first to ask questions were two women wearing the hijab. One, incensed by the Egyptian and Israeli flags side by side, started yelling at Meleika in Arabic.

"I did not organize this event, I was invited to participate," he replied. "It is my job to talk about the situation in Egypt and to present the government's policies in all its aspects, including the treaty. I did not force you, I did not ask you, to come here."

Lion, not quite as coolly as Meleika, responded to comments about Israeli armed forces allegedly killing civilians: "As I always tell my own people: Don't believe your own propaganda."

He contended Palestinian terrorists use civilians as "human shields," hiding munitions in residential neighbourhoods, even schools. Israel has no choice to strike there if it is to defend itself, he said.

On the other hand, Gazans are targeting missiles at Israeli citizens, he said.

"We are family. We have to find a way. I respect the Palestinian people and their right to an independent state. They must accept Israel as the state of the Jewish nation... There is no other solution but one state for each people... A bi-national state is not viable," Lion said.

Many students stayed behind after the formal session gathering around each of the diplomats to continue the discussion in a less heated manner.

Concordia fine arts professor David Pariser, active with the pro-Israel Canadian Institute for Jewish Research, called the event "a red-letter day for Concordia."

"There was arguing and shouting, but overall it was a civil discourse," he said in an interview. "There could have been a disaster here, things could have gotten out of control, but the students agreed to disagree. You can't expect better than that."

Remer was also pleased at the conclusion.

Asked if she thought unnecessary risk had been taken in staging such an open event, Remer said, "One of the problems on this campus and in the city is that people are afraid of yelling or repercussions or of a repeat of 2002 [a reference to the violent protest against Benjamin Netanyahu]. We want people to not be fearful. We knew that the second Israel comes up there will be emotion, but this was in a civilized, academic manner.

"We also had confidence that when we asked people to step down, they would, even if it was not right away."

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Haifa U course teaches web hasbarah strategies

Sheri Shefa
Staff Reporter

A new course at the University of Haifa will teach students how to use new media to reclaim Israel's narrative from its detractors.

Eli Avraham, a senior lecturer at Haifa U's communications department who leads the program, said when false claims are made about Israel, such as labelling it an apartheid state, people need to be equipped with knowledge and tools to speak out against those claims.

"The main idea is that this is about how to use the new media to reclaim Israel's narrative and promote Israel's point of view," Avraham said.

"I'm an expert in public diplomacy during crises – what kinds of strategies countries can use to restore their image after a crisis... With the knowledge that I've accumulated over the years in public diplomacy, I can help somebody."

The course, titled "Ambassadors Online," is free and not accredited. It was designed for students, whether they're acquiring a PhD or an undergraduate degree, who want to learn how to combat anti-Israel bias in the media.

Avraham explained that the four-hour-a-week program was initiated and co-ordinated by students who were eager to learn about hasbarah.

"I'm from the communications department, and my students told me that it's not fair that the only students that can study a course about Israeli hasbarah belong to the communications department," he said.

One of his doctoral students, David Gurevitz, took the lead in approaching the dean of students, the student union, and the university's Comper Center for the Study of Anti-Semitism and Racism, all of whom agreed to support it.

"A ministry spokesman can issue an official statement. But we, as students, can make personal connections and speak as a primary source. As young people living the Israeli reality, we have a real chance to influence people," Gurevitz said in a statement.

About 50 students applied to take the course, but only 30 were selected, Avraham said, adding that he was thrilled with the level of interest and never anticipated turning students away.

Eli Avraham

The course, which teaches students how to write and edit Wikipedia entries, maintain a pro-Israel Facebook page, write balanced, factual blog entries, and challenge anti-Israel views in chat rooms and forums, requires that students speak and write in English well.

"The interview was in English, because they need to be able to write their Facebook and Twitter messages in English. We hope they're going to be in touch with people all over the world, so English is needed," Avraham explained.

The students will also hear from expert guest lecturers, including Reda Mansour, the former Israeli consul general in Atlanta, as well as Miri Eisen, the former foreign press adviser to the prime minister, and Neil Lazarus, a Ministry of Foreign Affairs external adviser.

"We teach them about history, about what really happened, about public diplomacy... and how to understand your audience," Avraham said.

He added that during the first class, held last week, he gave a lecture on how American and European media cover the Middle East conflict.

Not surprisingly, when students heard about the course, some expressed concern that it might be sponsored by the Israeli foreign ministry, or that it would push a right-wing agenda.

"I don't have an agenda. I'm not supporting the right. I'm not supporting the left. What I'm saying is that there is a lot of knowledge out there, and we can do better," Avraham said.

Next year he hopes to present the course entirely in English in order to accommodate international students who might be interested in it. He also has ambitions to develop a program that can be taught through centres for Jewish studies at universities around the world.

YU panel explores Jewish education

Vicky Tobianah
Special to The CJN

Society turns towards secularism at certain times in history, Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Rabbi Daniel Korobkin told an audience of about 200 at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation earlier this month.

"It's not because world events have shaken people's faith, but because of new media and technology, which have caused people to be less pensive and thoughtful about religious issues."

Rabbi Korobkin was speaking at a Canadian Friends of Yeshiva University's event on "Igniting Spiritual Passion in a World of Religious Routine," which was part of a weekend-long Yeshiva University Shabbaton, held March 9 to 12.

The event brought together five panellists from Yeshiva University to discuss how to spark spirituality in Jewish education: Rabbi Hershel Schachter, Rabbi Isaac Elchanan, Rabbi Kenneth Brander, Dr. Rona Novick, Yeshiva University president Richard Joel and Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner, who served as the founding rosh kollel of Toronto's Yeshiva University Torah MiTzion Beit Midrash.

The panellists emphasized that encouraging Jewish children to be inspired about religion should be a priority of Jewish educators.

"We are the first and foremost teachers of our children and grandchildren," Rabbi Brander said. "Sometimes there is a spiritual void in our classrooms."

While some of the panel members raised concerns that students are not encouraged to ask questions or delve deeply into Jewish texts in the classroom, others shifted the responsibility onto parents.

"They spend the first 18 years with you, so what I want to ask is, 'What happens at your Shabbat table?'" Novick said.

The panel agreed that children need good spiritual role models if they are to pass on the passion for Judaism to their children.

"Children can sniff hypocrisy from a mile away so if you teach spirituality but don't practise it, what message are we sending?" Novick asked.

"The best way to ignite spirituality in children is for them to see people living real and spiritual lives."

Children should be encouraged to ask questions about religion, even if teachers do not have the answer, Novick said, but many teachers are reluctant to admit to a student that they can't answer their question. So they just move on to the next subject.

"The problem is that we're actually very good in nursery school, when kids have questions about God, but then it gets us nervous. We forget to allow ourselves to be uncomfortable and not know... We have to make time in our educational curriculums to perhaps memorize less, fill the vessel with less knowledge, but make sure the connections we build are real and valuable."

In a world of rapid technological changes, which seem to foster a narcissistic culture, Rabbi Brander noted, it is important to remember that students are still looking for meaning.

"In this world there may be a big focus on one's self, but I still see young people really focused on ensuring that they live lives of meaning. Our job is to find ways to show them how they can," he said.

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Tackling gender segregation in Israel

Retired general set to speak in Toronto

Viva Sarah Press
CJN Israel Bureau

With security issues still taking centre stage in news headlines in Israel, the country's long-ignored gender-segregation crisis continues to fester.

That's why retired brigadier-general Israela Oron, an analyst and commentator on Israeli security and strategic affairs with a background in gender issues, says that now is the time to put Israeli women's plight on the table.

Oron, who was the first woman to command an all-male officer-training course in the Israeli Air Force and the first woman to serve on the faculty of the National Defense College, will be speaking on "Gender, Security and Religion in Israel" on March 25 at Temple Sinai in Toronto. The event is free and is being sponsored by the New Israel Fund of Canada, Temple Sinai and ARZA – Canadian Association of Reform Zionists.

In the last few months, gender problems hit the front pages in Israel. Women were instructed to sit at the back of buses, and female performers in the Israel Defence Forces entertainment corps were told not to sing, because it was "too sexual." Then billboards in Jerusalem and other cities deemed "more religious" than elsewhere in Israel, blurred or cropped women's faces in advertisements, and an eight-year-old Orthodox schoolgirl was called a prostitute by a group of men who deemed her attire too liberal.

Israela Oron

"We are facing a problem in equality in certain cities and towns in Israel where the majority of the population are ultra-orthodox and this has an impact on all of Israeli society," Oron told *The CJN*.

The haredi may be a minority in the overall population, but Oron warns that politicians who say they'd rather maintain the status quo than deal with the issues at hand are actually leading Israeli society astray.

"There's an attitude… let us leave them alone and allow them to deal with those issues in the places they live," says Oron. "Not only do I not agree with that but I object to it. If we describe Israel as a democracy, I cannot accept the fact that women are treated differently because of gender. It's not about, 'Let them do what they want because they don't live in our neighbourhood.' It's not OK. We cannot have two kinds of rules. This is my business, even if I'm not religious."

Oron knows what she's talking about. She broke through the gender barrier during her distinguished military career. Oron's last military posting was as the commander of the IDF's Women's Corp, for which she initiated significant reforms.

The original Declaration of Independence in 1948 promised "complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex," she says.

And while women have held top positions in Israel, Oron says that in politics, in the military or in day-to-day life, sexist remarks and practices are prevalent.

But she's optimistic that activist groups will help Israeli society get back on track.

Oron serves on the boards of leading peace and social justice organizations, including the Geneva Accord, the Acharai Movement, and the New Israel Fund international council.

"Israel cannot separate itself from western society and excluding women is a no go," she says. "The New Israel Fund is the kind of organization that is in the frontline of fighting segregation of women and minorities and fighting for Israel to be a democracy. If the NIF plans will be successful, I think that we have a good chance to stop this trend."

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Workshop helps survivors of gender-based violence

Continued from page 6

The workshop, which took place earlier this month, focused on practical skills necessary to support survivors of gender-based violence.

The local social workers were taught to hone their interviewing skills, and practise active listening and supportive engagement, self-regulation and stress-management techniques.

Zahavi said the ultimate goal is to educate the local community about the value of women in society.

"When the government heard what we're doing, they asked us to provide a wider national training program on gender-based violence. They approached us," Zahavi said.

"Our main idea now is to help the South Sudanese government… currently in gender-based violence, and later on with health issues and then agriculture production. We're gradually trying to figure out their needs and we're basing it upon their request."

Zahavi credited UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, which partly funds the organization, for its support.

"UJA has, from the beginning, been supporting this. They supported us in the initial phase of the relief distribution when South Sudan first received their independence," Zahavi said.

"They provided us with funding to distribute relief items in the camps in surrounding Juba. They've continued to support our efforts on a long-term basis."

Zahavi said he hopes, with continued support, the initiative will foster lasting changes in the region.

"Hopefully over the next year, we'll provide them with as much training as we can and eventually these groups will spread out throughout South Sudan in the smaller towns and build a system where they're better able to deal with the whole gender issue."

A group of South Sudanese social workers take part in a gender-based violence workshop led by Israeli therapists.

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SickKids doctor honoured for work with women

Carolyn Blackman
Staff Reporter

Dr. Gideon Koren, founder of Motherisk, a program for pregnant women run out of the Hospital for Sick Children, has been awarded a top achievement award in health research.

The award is sponsored by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*.

Koren, 65, a native of Israel and a graduate of Tel Aviv University's Sackler Faculty of Medicine, established Motherisk in 1985, three years after he arrived at the hospital to study the effects of medicines of unborn children.

Dr. Gideon Koren

He is a pediatrician, pharmacologist and toxicologist at the University of Toronto and the University of Western Ontario, as well as a professor of medicine at both U of T and Western.

In accepting the award, Koren said that every year, scores of new medications enter the market, but few of them have safety data concerning fetal exposure during pregnancy.

"With half of all pregnancies unplanned, and with large numbers of women who have conditions requiring treatment during pregnancy, there is a serious knowledge gap as to which medications are safe for the baby and which should be avoided."

Motherisk was established, he said, to acknowledge this gap.

Its mandate is to counsel women and health professionals, conduct large-scale laboratory and clinical research, and translate this knowledge into counselling, Koren said.

"Motherisk is at the forefront of knowledge translation, empowering the continuity between the laboratory, the patient and the population," he said.

"By telephone, fax, e-mail or in person, the team – currently 75 members – counsels over 200 women and health professionals daily, directly affecting the care of thousands of Canadian women and their infants each year, in addition to numerous international cases."

It is the only line in the world, he said, for women who want to know how to deal with morning sickness safely.

He said that the Brewers Association of Canada supports a Motherisk hotline for women who abuse drugs and alcohol, "because they want to help women avoid drinking or taking drugs while pregnant.

"A big step came when Shoppers Drug Mart sponsored a 1-800 number, so calls can come from across the country and internationally."

Many women are afraid to take necessary medication during pregnancy, he said, "but not taking it can be more dangerous. Every week, we see women who are empowered to take their medication safely.

"They are [often given bad advice] about their medications. It is a national sport to frighten pregnant women. We let them know the risks of untreated conditions on both them and their baby," he said.

If Motherisk staff determine that a woman is addicted to drugs or alcohol, he said, they refer her to therapy. "There is a lot we can do for them. We can put their mind at ease, or we can warn them that they may need help."

Koren said he is gratified to be doing this work. "I get a lot of letters from women whose pregnancies went well because of our help. Their physicians are also grateful. It is a very good feeling to know that we can change the way women and babies are treated."

Sports journalist Michael Landsberg recently spoke about his battle with depression. Here, the members of Mount Sinai Hospital's Future Sinai committee are seen with their guest speaker, Michael Landsberg, and Dr. Jared Peck, from left, are Daniel Warner, Andrew Draper, Jordan Nahmias, Alex Enchin, Peck, Landsberg, Carly Bennie, Rikki Bennie, Ashley Steinhauer and Lauren Winberg. To read story, please go to cjnews.com *[Annie Tong photo]*

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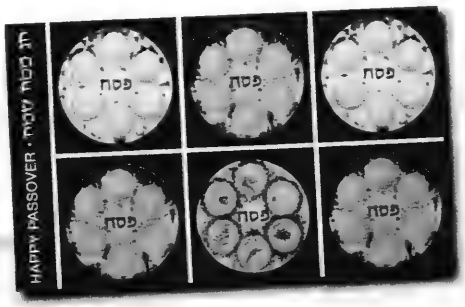

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Beauty from the inside out

Life Coach Corner

Judy Siblin-Librach

Years ago, when I worked for a national television talk show, we did a program on the "beauty myth." I'll never forget the guest who had taught the first-ever women's studies class.

She asked her students to bring in a picture of someone they deemed to be the most beautiful. At the time, Farrah Fawcett was a beauty icon and so every girl in the class brought in a picture of the actor.

The professor brought in a picture of an 80-year-old woman diving into a pool of water. She was wearing a bathing cap, and her makeup-free face was healthy and fresh. That woman's health, vitality and well-being was shining through, and the professor wanted to make the point that this picture of health was truly beautiful.

We are so hard on ourselves, always worrying about that extra weight, the physical imperfections that come with aging and fading beauty. Bliss and well-being are much more important than outer beauty or a youthful appearance, and I am concerned when I see teens to 80-somethings obsessing about how they look on the outside, and putting their energy into salvaging their youth instead of embracing and loving the way they are inside with all of their "Shirley Valentine" imperfections.

Now I'm not saying that each new birthday doesn't bring that (gulp!), "I'm still 21 years old. Why are there so many extra candles on my birthday cake?" phenomenon. But as one of my best friends, Sari, always says, "It's a happy problem."

And as a coach who specializes in helping people find inner bliss, it is worrying to see the focus on an area that really doesn't bring any inner peace or happiness.

So I was very excited when I was combing through my favourite new website, Pinterest, to find a book called *Beautiful You* by Rosie Molinary, which deals with exactly this notion of truly being happy with the way we are.

Every day we are bombarded with images of beauty in magazines, newspapers and movies and on the Internet and TV. This book helps women and girls to develop a healthier self-image and learn how to love themselves from within and not just the way they look on the outside. Instead of typical affirmations and meditations, Molinary has a 365-day action plan that gives the reader daily actions and exercises that they can to do to retrain their minds to love their bodies and themselves from the inside out

A guest on another show, which I produced, had 18 plastic surgeries to turn herself into a living, breathing Barbie doll. And I distinctly remember her showing up at our studio with three outfits, including one that resembled the pink-and-white polka-dot dress my first Barbie had sported many years ago. The psychotherapist on the panel said that it didn't matter how beautiful or great this Barbie lookalike appeared; there was something wrong with the overemphasis on her looks and her desire to turn herself into an inanimate object. It didn't matter how many surgeries she had; none of them were able to repair her damaged self-esteem.

So how can young girls, teens and even older women and men boost their confidence and learn how to love themselves? Well, a great way to start is to check out *The Everything Self-Esteem Book* by Robert M. Sherfield. Some of his tips on how to create more healthy self-esteem are: to practise optimism, learn to live on the light side, strive for some joy every day and let go of perfection.

Judy Siblin-Librach is an Adler-trained coach. You can reach her at her website, www.findingyourbliss.com, or watch her new TV show, Finding Your Bliss, *on Rogers TV, Channel 10, Toronto; Channel 63, Scarborough.*

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SHABBAT CELEBRANTS: Junior kindergarten at Leo Baeck Day School's Thornhill campus recently invited their families to take part in a JK Family Kabalat Shabbat. The kids and their relatives sang songs, chanted prayers and created a challah cover together. Pictured, from left, are Isaac Ponte, Ami Starr and Jack Ponte.

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וען מע קוקט זיך אַרום זעט מען אַז ארעמקייט איז א געשעפט וואָס האלט אין איין וואקסן. דער וינט פון נידט בלאזט אין די בידנע וינקעלעך פון דער העלט. די ריין פון די ארבעטלאָזע וערן גרעסער און די עקאנאמיסטן האָבן ניטש גרינגע ענטפער. איך שרייב היינט וען די וינטער וינטן בלאָן. דאס וואָרט "וינט" אין דעם שפּריכוואָרטל וואָס איך האָב געוועט אין קעפל האָט מיר דערמאנט אַ פאמע געשריבן פון ראובן אייזלאנד, איינער פון די פאעטן וואס האבן זיך געוופן די "יונגע" אין האבן עטאבלירט אן אמעריקאַנער שטימע אין דער יידישער פאעזיע.

איבער אלע דעכער
פון ראובן אייזלאנד
איבער אַלע דעכער
העגט א שטילע נאכט
אנגעלענט בײם פֿענצטער
שטייט מײן קינד פֿאַרטראכט.

שטעלט זיך אַרף די פֿינגער
קוקט אוֹן קוקט אַרוֹיס,
זײַן געזיכט וועָרט בלאַסער,
אוֹן די אויגן גרוֹיס.

זײַנע בלאָנדע לאָקן
קרײזלען זיך אין וינט.—
ווײַס איין גוטער גאָט נאָר,
וואס עס טראכט מײַן קינד.

Iber Ale Dekher
Iber ale dekher,
hengt a shtile nakht.
ongelent baym fenster
shteyt mayn kind fartrakht.

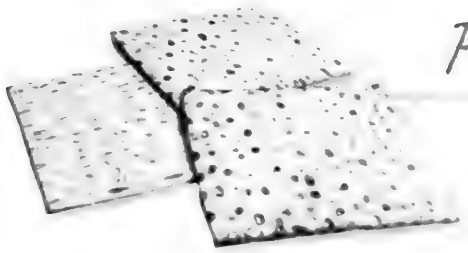
Shtelt zikh oyf di finger
kukt un kukt aroys,
zayn gezikht vert blaser,
un di oygn groys.

Zayne blonde lokn,
krayzlen zikh in vint.—
Veys eyn gutter got nor,
vos es trakht mayn kind.

א שפּריכוואָרטל צו נעדענקען:
יידישע עשירות קומט מיטן וינט און גייט אוועק מיטן רויך
Yiddishe ashires kumt mitn vint un geyt avek mitn roykh.

Jewish wealth comes with the wind and departs with the smoke.

אריכ איר האָט נעדאַנקען וועגן אונדזער וויקלי שרייבט דורך פאָסט אדער בליין- פאָסט: cjninfo@gmail.com



Passover Food Ideas

Gluten-free Passover sides – more than just potatoes

Norene Gilletz
Special to The CJN

Passover has its own unique set of culinary challenges when it comes to side dishes. No noodles, grains, beans or legumes! No wheat, rye, barley, oats or spelt. No soy sauce or sesame oil. No problem!

Passover, Pesach, Pessah – no matter how you spell it, preparing side dishes for Passover presents a challenge to cooks everywhere. And if you have people at your table who want gluten-free, non-gebrocht recipes, look no further.

Here are some scrumptious, creative sides that are sure to bring smiles to those at your table, vegetarians and non-vegetarians alike. Vegetables provide a colourful cornucopia of choices that are tops in taste and provide variety for your Passover meals. They're good enough to serve all year 'round! So whether you're craving potatoes, pasta or just want some healthier choices, this selection will offer up some terrific options. Enjoy!

* * *

Here is a terrific side dish from cookbook author Leah Schapira with nary a potato in sight. Leah believes that a recipe doesn't have to be complicated to be delicious and this one has even passed the "kid taste test!" Passover is usually a carb-loaded holiday so this roasted vegetable melange is a wonderful way to lighten up somewhat on Passover for the whole family.

Leah Schapira's website is www.cookkosher.com. She writes: "If you're trying to watch your waistline, this side dish may help a bit. I'm not big into tricking my kids and I prefer telling them what they are eating, but when I made this, my children assumed it was potatoes and sweet potatoes. They ate peacefully and filled up. Only the one with finer taste buds realized something was different."

ORANGE-GLAZED ROOT VEGETABLES

Adapted from Fresh & Easy Kosher Cooking *by Leah Schapira (Artscroll)*

2 parsnips
2 sweet potatoes
1 large turnip
2 carrots
1 medium celery knob
3 tbsp. orange juice
2 tbsp. olive oil
1 tbsp. sugar
1 tsp. salt
pinch black pepper

Preheat oven to 475. Line a baking sheet with foil or parchment paper. Peel all vegetables and cut into evenly sized chunks (about 1-inch).

In a large bowl, toss vegetables with the juice, oil, sugar, salt and pepper. Spread vegetables on baking sheet. Bake for 1 hour or until vegetables are tender. Yield: 4 to 6 servings. This recipe multiplies easily.

* * *

Cookbook author Levana Kirschenbaum loves to play the "move-over-potatoes" game. She writes: "Not because I don't love them, but more because I can enjoy them only occasionally. I am confident that you will concur. This recipe will move effortlessly from your stepchild "restricted" list to your A-list, just because it's perfectly delicious. Wait until you see all the variations you can play with! I love to use frozen veggies because they are all ready to go, clean, and full of flavour and with all their nutrition intact, but of course you can use fresh." Levana Kirschenbaum's website is www.levanacooks.com.

Continued on page 38

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Continued from page 37

BROCCOLI CAULIFLOWER KUGEL

Adapted from the newly published and redesigned Whole Foods Kosher Kitchen: Glorious Meals Pure & Simple *by Lemana Kirschenbaum.*

5 cups frozen broccoli florets
5 cups frozen cauliflower florets
1 medium onion, quartered
6 eggs
1 cup white wine or water or a combination
1/2 cup potato starch
1/3 cup olive oil
salt and pepper to taste
good pinch nutmeg
1/2 tsp. dried thyme or ground bay leaves
1 tsp. turmeric, optional

Preheat oven to 375. In a food processor, coarsely grind the vegetables. Transfer the mixture to a bowl and add all remaining ingredients, combining thoroughly.

Pour the mixture into a greased 11x14-in. baking pan. Bake about 40 minutes, or a little longer until the top is barely firm. Serve hot. Room temperature will be good too. Makes 8 servings.

Variations: In addition to – or instead of – part or all of the cauliflower and broccoli, consider these possibilities, in equal parts – all equally good and exciting: frozen chopped spinach or kale, thawed and squeezed dry; grated carrots; sweet potatoes; kabocha squash; potatoes; zucchini; parsnips; celery root, etc.

Vary the seasonings according to the selection: use cinnamon, ginger, dill, oregano, etc.

Sautéed mushrooms (these must be sautéed first, or they will release too much moisture and throw off the good liquid-solid balance).

Make it into individual servings: pour the batter into greased muffin moulds and bake 30 minutes or a little longer, until the tops are set.

***

Craving pasta? Why not make up a batch of Pesach noodles! Kids, guests, husbands – everyone loves to nosh on these, so if you want to save them for the soup course, make them late at night or when you're home alone!

CRISPY POTATO ROAST

Source: The Complete, Informative and Inspirational Bais Yaakov Cookbook: 200 recipes to uplift and enhance your Shabbos, Yom Tov and Everyday Table

A potato is a potato is a potato. Well, that's what I thought until I tasted this! Imagine a potato that is not fried and absurdly delicious. Who would believe?

6 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, divided
coarse salt
1/2-1 tsp. red pepper flakes
4 lb. Yukon gold potatoes, peeled
4 shallots, peeled
8 sprigs thyme

Preheat oven to 375. With a sharp knife or mandolin (or use the slicing blade of your food processor), slice potatoes very thinly. Place about 1 tbsp. of extra-virgin olive oil on the bottom of a 9-in. oven-to-table dish and spread it evenly. Sprinkle a few pinches of coarse salt over oil; this will allow you to season both the top and bottom of the potatoes. Arrange your potato slices vertically in the dish, so the edges, not the flat sides, are up.

Thinly slice shallots with a sharp knife or a mandolin. Place shallot slivers between potato slices, distributing them as evenly as possible. Brush with remaining 5 tbsp oil. Generously season with salt, lightly season with paprika. Bake 1-1/4 hours. Makes 10 servings.

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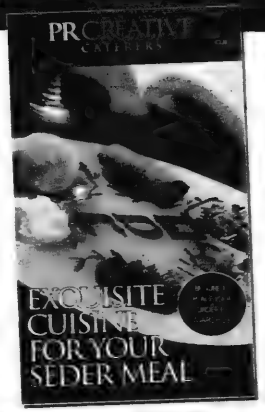

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Sweet treats for Passover

Rivka Tal
Special to The CJN

These days, when all manner of Passover candies and treats are available, even at local supermarkets, not to mention "kosher" stores, we take their availability for granted. But years ago (not even that many years!), there were limited options for ready-made sweets and treats that were kosher for Pesach.

Various forms of carrot candies were popular, often flavoured with ginger. And cocoa and chocolate have been available for Pesach for a long time, so they were useful ingredients to satisfy the children's (and the adults'!) sweet tooth. The ginger cookies called *ingberlach* in Yiddish were a popular sweet, as were various nut and/or date or other dried fruit mixtures, depending on availability of kosher for Pesach ingredients. Try these for old-fashioned flavour.

INGBERLACH

Ingber means "ginger" in Yiddish.

1 lb. carrots
2 cups sugar
1/2 cup chopped walnuts or pecans
1/4 tsp. ground ginger

Peel the carrots, then grate them on a fine grater. Put the grated carrots and sugar in a heavy pan over the lowest possible heat. Stir contents constantly until the sugar has dissolved.

Rinse an 8x12-inch jelly roll pan under running water and keep it damp

Continue to cook the carrots, stirring frequently, until the mixture is thick and forms a ball, about 10 minutes.

Test the mixture by dropping a spoonful into a cup of cold water; if it sets hard as it touches the water, candy is ready.

Remove the pan from the heat and immediately stir in the nuts and ginger

Pour the mixture quickly onto the damp surface of the jellyroll pan

Cut into 1-inch diamonds or squares before completely hardened. Let dry for 30 minutes to 1 hour. Remove with a spatula.

CHEWY CHOCOLATE TREAT

10 oz. bittersweet chocolate or chocolate chips
1 1/2 cups toasted matzah farfel
3/4 cups toasted chopped walnuts
1/4 cup dried apricots or cranberries
1/4 cup chopped marshmallows
1/4 cup golden raisins

Melt chocolate over very low heat, stirring until smooth. Mix in remaining ingredients.

Line a jelly roll pan with parchment paper. Drop tablespoons of chocolate mixture onto paper. Refrigerate until hard. Store in freezer until serving.

DRIED FRUIT-WHITE CHOCOLATE CONFECTIONS

Years ago, there were no silicon pans, much less microwaves, but this recipe is simple as well as delicious.

8 oz. white chocolate, broken into squares
1/2 cup mixed dried fruit, cut into small pieces

Melt chocolate squares in a microwave on low-medium power, carefully stirring every 15 seconds or so with a wooden spoon.

Scatter dried fruit into 12 round silicon compartments. Fill compartments immediately with melted chocolate. Freeze. Release from pan when frozen, and serve immediately.

This Passover, ask a 5th question:
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Old fashioned dill pickles
Tzimmes with fresh prunes, yams & carrots
Gefilte fish with white fish & salmon
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Cabbage borscht with tender beef flunken
OR
Homemade matzo ball soup
CHOOSE ONE
Farm fresh baby spinach salad with red onions, toasted almonds, mandarin oranges, topped with a citrus vinaigrette
OR
Traditional coleslaw
CHOOSE TWO
Brisket, served with gravy au jus
OR
Pickle Barrel famous B.B.Q. chicken
OR
Baked salmon with an orange miso glaze
OR
Grilled salmon with a sweet teriyaki glaze
CHOOSE ONE
Garlic infused mashed potatoes with caramelized onions
OR
Farfel with sautéed button & shiitake mushrooms
OR
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Some new ideas to try

Sue Epstein
Special to The CJN

Passover has always tested the ingenuity of even the most creative of Jewish cooks. There are some who, either as a way of "solving the problem" or because they like the tradition of it, serve the same dishes each year on Passover. But I think that most of us like to mix the traditional with the new.

There are certain dishes, such as my matzah balls, matzah brie and brisket, that are on my menu every year, and I wouldn't change these recipes for anything. But beyond my few must-haves I am always looking for new and interesting dishes to serve.

On a recent visit to the States, my favorite foodie friend Shelly Shaw and I sat discussing Passover and Passover recipes, even though it was just February. Shelly is a fabulous cook, and when she tells me that a recipe is good, I know it will be. The first two recipes below are ones she gave me that I can't wait to try this Passover.

PASSOVER APPLE RHUBARB COBBLER

Rhubarb generally comes on the market around Passover time and this dish is a great introduction to rhubarb season.

Crumble Topping:
1 1/2 cups potato starch
1 cup matzah meal
1/3 cup brown sugar
2 tsp. Passover vanilla sugar
pinch of ground cinnamon
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 cup unsalted Passover margarine or unsalted butter
1/4 cup orange juice

Apple Rhubarb Filling:
6 cups peeled and sliced apples
1 cup coarsely chopped rhubarb
3/4 cup sugar
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
1/4 cup orange juice
2 tbsp. potato starch

Preheat oven to 350. Generously grease a 9x13-in. or 8x10-in. rectangular pan, or a 10-in. springform pan.

Make topping: in a medium bowl, combine the dry ingredients. Cut the margarine or butter into the dry mixture. Stir in the orange juice to make a crumbly topping that just holds together. Set aside.

In a large bowl, toss all the filling ingredients together.

Sprinkle half the crumble topping over the bottom of the pan and press very slightly. Spoon the fruit filling over this. Sprinkle the remaining crumble topping over the fruit. Bake until the fruit is bubbling and the top is lightly golden (25 to 35 minutes). Cool well in the pan before serving.

Variation: You can substitute cranberries or raspberries for the rhubarb for rosy or tart filling, or substitute apricots (fresh or canned) for a sweeter filling. Serves 12 or more.

EGGPLANT PARMESAN

It is very important not to skip salting and draining the eggplants. This step prevents the eggplant from absorbing the oil and tasting greasy.

2 medium eggplants, cut into 1/2-in. slices
salt for sprinkling
2 eggs, beaten
2/3 cup matzah meal or potato flour
oil for frying
11 oz. marinara sauce or 1 11-oz. can tomato-mushroom sauce and 1/3 cup water, optional, mixed with sauce
salt and pepper to taste
1 8-oz. package sliced Swiss cheese
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Sprinkle eggplant with salt. Let stand for 30 minutes. Rinse slightly and dry. Dip slices in beaten eggs, then in matzah meal or potato flour. Fry on both sides until fork tender. Combine sauce with water and seasonings.

In a greased, 2-quart casserole, place a little sauce, a layer of fried eggplant, and a layer of sliced cheese. Repeat, ending with sauce. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Bake in a preheated 350-degree oven for 30 minutes. Serves 8.

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"If you make a *simcha*," Mrs. Adler says, "I will not just say, 'Go to the store and buy my wines.' No. You come here, we sit down with you." Mazel Wines has experts (and the expertise) to help not only select the appropriate wines and liquors, but also help plan the occasion, from picking the wines to choosing the after dinner liqueurs.

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Although Mrs. Adler insists that her role is to help her customers enjoy the greatest selection and quality of wines available, her favourite role is in helping people by offering convenience and the benefit of her expertise. "We service our clients with the whole package, including purchasing all of the wines, liqueurs and liquor for their *simcha*. We are, in essence, a one-stop provider with the expertise to advise on what wine is best suited to the food being served and to advise on what quantities are needed."

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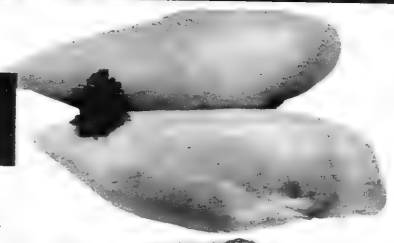

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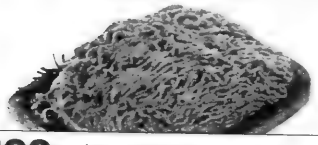

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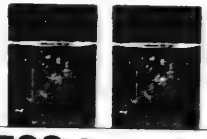

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Baking your own matzah: with community or at home

Jennifer M. MacLeod
Special to The CJN

The author joins in at the Shoresh Food Conference matzah-baking workshop.

If you've never baked your own matzah before, you should. It's certainly fast – from raw ingredients to burnt-to-a-crisp goodness in under 20 minutes. Rachael Cayley, co-organizer of the annual community Matzah Bake in Dufferin Grove Park in Toronto, says it's easy, too: "If you don't usually bake, follow the instructions and you'll be fine; if you usually bake, ignore your intuitions."

For experienced bread bakers, flat, tasteless bread would be considered a failure. Their goal is usually to produce something delicious – but that's the opposite of matzah, which, says Cayley, a lecturer at University of Toronto, offers "sustenance without pleasure – it reminds us of sacrifice and suffering, the distance between freedom and enslavement. Challah is ego, but matzah is humility."

The great news is that you barely need a recipe. Cayley and her husband, Mitch Davis, who runs the annual Matzah Bake, led a hands-on matzah workshop as part of the Shoresh Food Conference in early February, long before most of us were thinking about matzah at all. The conference was one of the Shoresh Jewish Environmental Programs, an organization established in 2002 as part of the Jewish environmental movement in the Greater Toronto Area.

The top-secret formula: 1 cup of flour (whole wheat, white or a mixture), along with 1/3 of a cup of water (add gradually, starting with 1/4 cup and add more as needed). The water should be cool, preferably spring water that has been left out overnight.

Davis said Jewish sources explain that dough is considered "leaven" after 18 minutes from the flour's first contact with the water. "That's not a *chai* thing," Davis said, referring to the number 18, but rather, the time it takes for the flour to begin fermentation.

For matzah to be used on Pesach, it can't have come in contact with any leaven. Implements and surfaces used with the dough must be spotlessly clean: in bakeries, all equipment is cleaned thoroughly between batches. There are also issues with the flour: it is generally watched either from the time of harvest or the time of milling to ensure that it stays absolutely dry.

At the workshop, held in the kitchen of the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, an iPod counted down the minutes as participants kneaded flour and water into a very stiff dough, rolled it out paper-thin, then scored the surface with a fork before arranging the matzah "boards" on aluminum foil baking pans, and baked at 500 degrees for six to 10 minutes. Amazingly, by the time the alarm rang, almost everybody was holding some very hand-made-looking, plain-tasting results.

Cayley said it's odd, especially for home cooks who pride themselves on making their own food, to not think about making this ritual food, so central to the holiday table. As well, tying into the Shoresh conference's theme of reconciling food ethics with Jewish tradition, families who normally emphasize locally sourced, organic foods may be uncomfortable with mass-produced matzahs.

Davis sources local, organic flour or wheat berries (to grind at home) for those interested in negotiating the complicated halachic hurdles of making their own matzah for Pesach.

"It's a matter of deciding what works, what matters for you," Cayley said.

They also pointed out that, while most of us use the word flour synonymously with wheat flour, matzah can be made, according to Jewish law, with flour of any five specific grain species: wheat, oats, barley, spelt and rye. Just don't add salt, rabbinically thought to enhance fermentation (and perhaps a bit of flavour).

If you're too timid to try it at home, you're still invited to the community Matzah Bake in Dufferin Grove Park, which attracts Jews of different observance and knowledge levels. This is the 15th year for the event, which began just a few years after the park's wood-burning pizza oven was set up. "There were three people at that first bake," Davis said. "Last year, there were 50 or 60."

He began as a volunteer one year. At the end, the person organizing told him she'd be away the following year and asked if he'd like to run it; this is his fifth year at the helm.

"You get people wandering by, saying, 'What's this?' They don't know what matzah is."

Everybody's welcome to try baking and sharing stories with Jews and non-Jews alike. "Community happens around a wood oven."

Join in this year's Matzah Bake (BYOT – bring your own timer!) on Sunday, April 1, from noon to 3 p.m. in Dufferin Grove Park, on Dufferin Street, just south of Bloor, across from Dufferin Mall. Suggested donation (to cover expenses): $5-10 per family. For more information, e-mail mitchdavis@rogers.com or visit http://www.facebook.com/DufferinGroveParkMatzahBake.

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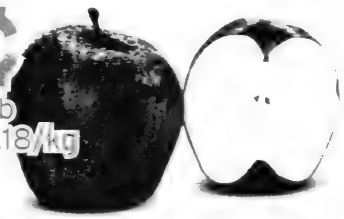

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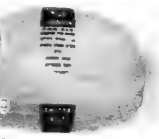

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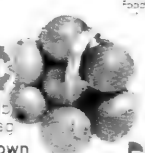

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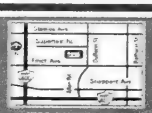

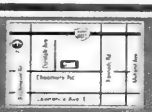

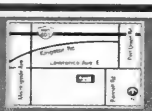

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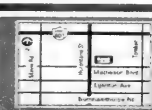

Desserts to put a smile on your face

Daphna Rabinovitch
Special to The CJN

Baking, no matter what time of year it is, should be fun, enticing and easy. Above all, the end result should be captivating and delicious.

Over the past number of years, several novels have been penned based on the premise that anything the heroine cooks or bakes reflects what she was feeling at the time. If she was sad, her cakes have a bittersweetness to them. If happy, her casseroles sing and her cookies bring smiles to those who eat them. That kind of power, you might conclude, is the stuff of imagination and literary whim. But I don't think so. Maybe it's because I'm so content when I'm baking or cooking, but I really do believe that if you're happy, then your cookies, cakes actually do taste better.

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VANILLA BEAN CHEESECAKE WITH MANGO PEACH SAUCE

In a pinch, drained yogurt can be used to replace the sour cream. You can also use light sour cream but not the no-fat variety, which contains too much water. The almonds in the crust pair beautifully with the tang of the vanilla and the fruit in the sauce.

Crust:
1 cup ground almonds
3 tbsp. light brown sugar
2 tbsp. potato starch
3 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted
Filling:
1 lb. cream cheese, softened
3/4 cup granulated sugar
1 vanilla bean (or 1 tbsp. vanilla powder)
3 eggs
pinch salt
3 cups sour cream
Mango Peach Sauce:
2 tbsp. unsalted butter
1/3 cup packed light brown sugar
pinch each ground ginger and cinnamon
3 cups frozen peach slices
2 cups frozen mango slices or chunks
1/3 cup peach, mango or fruit juice
1 tsp. potato starch

Preheat oven to 325. In bowl, combine almonds, sugar and potato starch. Stir in butter until well moistened. Pat crust onto bottom of lightly greased 8-1/2-in. springform pan. Place pan on large piece of aluminum foil; press foil tightly to outer sides of pan. Bake in centre of preheated oven for 10 minutes. Set aside.

Meanwhile, using stand-up mixer and paddle attachment or hand-held beaters, beat cream cheese with sugar until fluffy. Cut vanilla bean in half lengthwise. With small paring knife, scrape out seeds. Add seeds to cream cheese mixture. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Scrape down sides of bowl. Blend in sour cream. Pour batter over crust in prepared pan.

Place pan in large roasting pan; pour in enough hot water to come 1-inch up sides of springform. Bake in centre of preheated oven for 60 to 70 minutes or until edges are set but centre still jiggles slightly. Turn off oven. Let cake cool in oven for 1 hour. Remove to rack; let cool completely. Cover loosely and refrigerate for at least 24 hours or for up to 3 days.

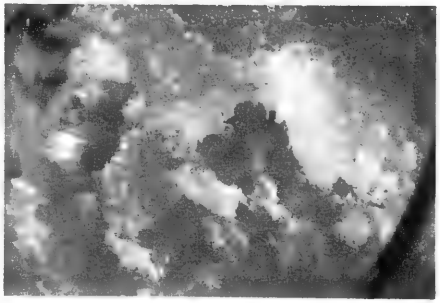
Sauce: In large skillet set over medium heat, melt butter. Stir in sugar, ginger and cinnamon until bubbly. Add peaches and mangos, stirring until well coated. Dissolve potato starch in 1 tbsp. water; pour into skillet along with juice. Bring to boil; reduce heat slightly and boil gently for 2 to 3 minutes until liquid is slightly thickened and fruit is tender. Chill. (Sauce can be made ahead and refrigerated for up to 3 days). Bring to room temperature before serving with cake.

Slice cake into wedges. Serve with sauce. Makes 10 to 12 servings.

CRANBERRY CHOCOLATE SORBET WITH CRANBERRY RASPBERRY COULIS

The cranberry raspberry coulis is quite tart, which helps tone down the intense sweetness and strong chocolate taste of the sorbet. It is beautiful paired with any sorbet, matzah brei or any other dessert.

6 oz. unsweetened chocolate, finely chopped
1 cup granulated sugar
1/2 cup dried cranberries
2 tbsp. frozen cranberry cocktail or juice concentrate
Sauce:
3 cups frozen cranberries



2 cups frozen raspberries
1/4 cup granulated sugar
1 tbsp. potato starch

In saucepan set over medium heat, combine chocolate, sugar and 2 cups water. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Reduce heat to low; simmer, stirring constantly, until completely smooth and slightly thickened, about 8 minutes. Remove from heat; let cool to room temperature. Stir in cranberries and concentrate.

If making in ice cream or sorbet machine, freeze according to manufacturer's directions. Or, transfer mixture to 8-inch square baking pan. Freeze, stirring every 20 minutes, until frozen. Freeze overnight. Before serving, defrost for 20 minutes. Cut into chunks; buzz in food processor until smooth.

Sauce: In saucepan, combine cranberries, raspberries, sugar, 1/3 cup water and potato starch. Bring to boil; reduce heat and simmer for 3 to 5 minutes or until cranberries have burst, raspberries have broken down and liquid is thickened. Transfer mixture to food processor; process until pureed. Strain through fine mesh sieve, pressing with a wooden spoon to extract all of the liquid. (Sauce can be refrigerated covered for up to 4 days.)

Serve sauce drizzled over sorbet. Makes 6 servings.

Note: The following recipe is considered kitniyot, and therefore suitable only for Sephardim.

PEANUTTY CHOCOLATE CHIP TOFFEE COOKIES

These cookies, perfect straight out of the oven, actually get softer as they sit at room temperature in an airtight container.

1/2 cup unsalted butter or margarine
1/2 cup packed light brown sugar
1/4 cup granulated sugar
1 egg
2 tsp. vanilla powder
3/4 cup matzah cake meal
1/4 cup potato starch
1/2 tsp. each baking soda and salt
1 cups semisweet chocolate chips
1/2 cup unsalted peanuts, coarsely chopped
1/3 cup finely chopped toffee bits or chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 350. Using stand-up mixer fitted with paddle or hand-held beaters, beat butter with brown and granulated sugar until fluffy. Beat in egg. Beat in vanilla powder. With wooden spoon, stir in matzah cake meal, potato starch, soda and salt. Stir in chocolate chips, peanuts and toffee. Drop heaping tablespoonfuls onto parchment paper-lined baking sheets. Bake in centre of preheated oven, one tray at a time, for about 8 minutes or just until golden. Cool on pan on rack for 5 minutes. Remove to rack to cool completely. (Cookies can be stored at room temperature in an airtight container for up to 10 days). Makes about 3 dozen cookies.

Suggestions for breadless lunches

Daphna Rabinovitch
Special to The CJN

Whether you're packing lunch for your kids at school or a brown bagger yourself, sandwiches, with the dizzying array of breads and rolls on the market today, is a smorgasbord of options and possibilities.

During Passover, though, when breadstuffs are prohibited, lunches can still enjoy the same landscape of choices, given some ingenuity and creativity.

Matzah makes for a great foundation for any kind of pizza meal, and greens of any fashion can do double duty as the "bread" holding a sandwich together. Make a double batch of the caramelized onions and roasted tomatoes to splurge on during the eight-day holiday. Both condiments are wonderful not only on matzah but fabulous served with chicken, over fish and with any kind of roast.

The fennel salad is highly portable, but also fancy enough to please a crowd. The feta and pine nut spread should be served at room temperature, which will make it easy to spread over lettuce, matzah or even raw vegetables. The tuna-filled avocado can be made ahead as well – just be sure to rub or brush lemon juice over the flesh of the avocado to prevent it from browning.

CARMELIZED ONIONS AND OVEN ROASTED TOMATOES ON MATZAH WITH CHEESE

Although these tomatoes take some time to roast in the oven, they're well worth the effort. Double or even triple the recipe so you can have them on hand for more than one meal. Similarly, caramelized onions pair perfectly with just about anything – chicken, turkey, scrambled eggs, you name it – so you can never have enough of those on hand either!

Oven-Roasted Tomatoes
1-1/2 lb. fresh ripe plum tomatoes (about 5)
1 tbsp. sherry or balsamic vinegar
2 cloves garlic, minced
1/4 tsp. each salt and pepper
2 tbsp. olive oil

Caramelized Onions
2 tbsp. vegetable oil
4 onions, sliced
1/4 tsp. each salt and pepper
2 sheets regular matzah
2/3 cup shredded Meunster cheese

Preheat oven to 300. Slice tomatoes lengthwise. Place cut side up on aluminum foil-lined rimmed baking sheet. In small bowl, whisk together vinegar, garlic, salt, pepper and olive oil; drizzle evenly over tomatoes. Roast in centre of preheated oven for about 1-1/2 hours or until very tender and golden around edges. (Tomatoes can be cooled and refrigerated, covered for up to 5 days).

Meanwhile, heat olive oil in skillet set over medium-high heat. Add onions, salt and pepper. Cook, stirring, for 5 minutes. Reduce heat to medium; cook for 20 to 30 minutes or until deep golden.

Place matzah on rimmed baking sheet. Place 5 tomatoes halves over each piece. Smash lightly. Top evenly with caramelized onions. Sprinkle cheese evenly over. Broil for 3 to 5 minutes or until cheese is melted. Makes 2 to 4 servings.

Continued on page 48

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Sweets made with Passover marshmallows

Randy Fingrut
Special to The CJN

Marshmallows are a sweet, spongy candy that's delicious straight from the bag. However, in dessert recipes, marshmallows are quite often used melted as the glue that holds the ingredients together.

Additionally, marshmallows are the time-honoured camping treat roasted on a wooden stick over the campfire. The marshmallows that we know today are usually made from sugar, corn syrup, gelatin, water and flavourings.

But this was not always the case. Marshmallows have a proud history in the candy world. Originally produced as a medicine, the main ingredients were taken from the marsh mallow plant, harvested from salt marshes near the sea in Africa and West Asia. Sap and occasionally the pith of the plant were extracted, a labour-intensive endeavour, and whipped until foamy. The foam was left to dry and then used as an anti-inflammatory remedy for sore throats, as well as therapy for other ailments. Early 19th-century candy makers added the marshmallow to their inventory as a confection by whipping the marsh mallow plant ingredients with sugar and egg whites.

This modern marshmallow was still extremely labour intensive, and a better way to make it was devised. Candy makers found that with the addition of gelatin in place of the marsh mallow sap, the marshmallows of today stay thick, spongy and flavourful. But let us not forget the marsh mallow plant. Its medicinal side can still be found today in herbal anti-inflammatory treatments at health food stores.

Marshmallows can play a big role at Passover as a delicious snack or for their adhesive properties. Producers of kosher marshmallows pride themselves on providing the consumer excellent fresh marshmallows that are also kosher for Passover. They achieve this by using kosher fish gelatin and replacing the corn starch and syrup with glucose and tapioca starch. So, creating unique Passover desserts is in the bag, in the bag of Passover marshmallows!

BANANA CAKE WITH TOASTED COCONUT MARSHMALLOW TOPPING

This delightful cake is comparable to the hummingbird cake, a cake popular in the southern U.S. states. It is said that the hummingbird cake is so delicious it makes you hum with happiness. Possibly the cake is so named because it is sweet enough for hummingbirds, so that people hover around the cake similar to the way hummingbirds hover around flowers. Perhaps it was named after the way the cake draws people in and they eat quickly, similar to the eating habits of those tiny, lively little birds. Either way, one and all will linger around your dessert table.

Cake:
7 eggs, separated
1 cup sugar, divided
4 large ripe bananas, mashed
3/4 cup cake meal
1/4 cup potato starch
1/2 tsp. salt
1 can (14 oz.) pineapple tidbits, or similar, very well drained (reserve 1/3 cup of pineapple for topping)
Topping:
1/2 cup margarine
1 cup sugar
2 eggs, beaten
1 package (10 oz.) Passover toasted coconut marshmallows
1/3 cup pineapple tidbits

Cake

Grease a tube pan with margarine, and preheat oven to 325.

Beat egg whites with clean, dry beaters until soft peaks form. Gradually add 1/2 cup sugar and beat egg whites until stiff peaks form. Set aside.

Beat egg yolks and remaining sugar until light yellow. Add bananas and beat well. Mix in the cake meal, potato starch and salt to egg yolk and banana mixture, combine well.

Fold 1/4 of the egg whites into mixture and combine well. Gently fold the remainder of the egg whites into mixture until well combined. Fold in pineapple tidbits. Pour into prepared tube pan.

Continued on page 47

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MENU #4
Gefilte Fish & Horseradish, Chicken Soup & Matzo Balls, Roast Veal, Lockshen Pudding, Pan Roast Potatoes, Green Beans Almondine, Cole Slaw, Honey Cake, Passover Cookies, Seder Plate, Charoses
$189.00 for 5 people

MENU #5
Gefilte Fish & Horseradish, Chicken Soup & Matzo Balls, Roast Chicken, Roast Brisket of Beef, Chicken Fingers, Green Beans Almondine, Lockshen Pudding, Passover Cookies, Seder Plate, Charoses
$179.00 for 5 people

MENU #6
Chicken Soup & Matzo Balls, Sweet & Sour Meatballs, Poached Salmon, Pan Roast Potatoes, Green Beans Almondine, Lockshen Pudding, Passover Cookies, Seder Plate, Charoses
$169.00 for 5 people

ADDITIONAL MENU SELECTIONS
MEAT DISHES: Roast Turkeys, Turkey Breast, Cornish Hens, Chopped Liver, Cabbage Rolls, Veal Roast, Flanken in Borscht, Roast Duck, Lemon Chicken Breast, BBQ Chicken Wings, Honey Garlic Wings, Chicken Fingers, Knishes -Potato or Beef, Kishke, Meat Kreplach
FISH: Poached Salmon
SALADS: Cole Slaw, Pickled Beets, Tossed Salad, Cucumber Salad
VEGETABLE DISHES: Vegetarian Loaf, Matzo Lasagna, Stir Fry Vegetables, Grilled Vegetables, Apple Farfel Pudding, Farfel & Mushrooms, Potato Latkes, Green Beans Almondine, Broccoli & Mushrooms, Handmade Egg Noodles, Seder Plates, Charoses
DESSERTS: Apple Flan, Chocolate Cake, Chocolate Brownies, Chocolate Lemon Roll, Fruit Compote, Fresh Fruit Salad, Honey Cake, Macaroons, Mandlebrot, Mocca Cake, Passover Cookies

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DELIVERY AVAILABLE

Simple treat makes a delicious dessert

Continued from page 46

Bake for one hour. Cool in pan over a cooling rack. To remove from pan run a small offset spatula around the outside and the inside of the pan. Gently shake until cake bounces. Hold a platter over the top of the tube pan and invert.

Topping

In top of a double boiler, melt butter; add sugar and eggs. Cook over the boiling water, whisking continuously for 10 minutes*. Add toasted coconut marshmallows and stir until melted. Remove from heat. Stir in remaining pineapple tidbits. Cool.

*If you find any cooked egg pieces in mixture, strain them out before adding marshmallows.

To Assemble

Place strips of parchment paper on platter around cake to catch any drips from topping. Cut cake in half horizontally. Carefully remove the top of the cake and spoon about half of the topping over the middle of the cake. Replace the top and spoon the remaining topping over the top layer and let it run down the sides. Cool, pull away parchment paper.

PASSOVER MOLTEN CHOCOLATE LAVA CAKES

The chocolate lava cake is one of the trendiest desserts to hit dessert menus everywhere. Whoever it was that removed a chocolate cake from the oven too soon, to discover that it was completely baked on the outside and still warm and gooey on the inside was brilliant! The marshmallows make this dessert more decadent than ever.

12 oz. bittersweet chocolate, chopped
3/4 cup margarine, plus extra to grease ramekins
6 eggs, separated into two large bowls
1 cup sugar, divided
2 tsp. vanilla
10 Passover marshmallows

Preheat oven to 350. Prepare 10 1/2-cup ramekins by greasing with margarine. Fill one or two large Pyrex dishes 1/4 full with water and place on middle rack in oven. In a large glass bowl, melt chocolate and margarine in microwave for 90 seconds. Stir with a fork until all the chocolate is melted and the mixture is well combined. Set aside to cool, stirring occasionally.

With clean, dry beaters beat egg whites until soft peaks form. Gradually add 1/2 cup of sugar and beat until stiff peaks form. Set aside.

Beat egg yolks and remaining sugar until mixture is thick and light yellow. Add vanilla and combine into mixture. Fold the chocolate mixture into the egg yolk mixture, making sure it is well combined. Fold 1/4 of the egg whites into the chocolate mixture, combine well, and gently fold in the remaining egg whites until well combined. Spoon batter into ramekins about half-way to the top.

Place a marshmallow in the centre of each ramekin and cover with batter to just below the top. Place ramekins in the Pyrex dish(es) in the oven, and bake for 35 minutes, or until the cakes puff up over the top of the ramekin and start to crack. Carefully remove Pyrex dish(es) from oven, and with a tongs carefully remove ramekins from water. Cool 3-5 minutes before serving.

CHOCOLATE MALLOW NUT ROLL

Simply Fun!

2 cups walnuts or pecans
12 oz. chocolate, chopped
1 tsp. oil
1 package Passover toasted coconut marshmallows
1 cup dried apricots
baking sheets
parchment paper, 2 pieces about 16 inches in length

Preheat oven to 350. Place 2 cups of nuts on parchment-covered baking sheet and toast in oven for 5-7 minutes. Watch that nuts do not burn. Cool.

Melt chocolate in the microwave for 90 seconds. Stir with a fork until completely melted and smooth. Add the oil and combine. Cool chocolate for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Cut the marshmallows in half and then cut each half into 4 pieces. Do the same with the apricots. Add the marshmallows and apricots to the melted chocolate and combine well. Place parchment paper over a baking sheet. Spoon mixture over the middle of a length of parchment paper. Fold the parchment paper over the chocolate mixture.

By compressing the parchment paper form the chocolate mixture so that it becomes a roll, approximately 12 inches long and 3 inches wide. Prepare another piece of parchment paper and lay 1 cup of nuts along the middle. Transfer the roll over the nuts and place the remaining nuts on top. Again wrap parchment around the roll and compress the nuts into the mixture. Wrap well and place in the refrigerator until it becomes solid. To serve, using a serrated knife, slice the roll into "cookie-size portions.

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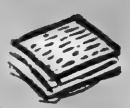

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Creative Passover 'sandwiches'

Continued from page 45

FENNEL AND APPLE SLAW WITH GINGER AND BUTTERMILK DRESSING

1 bulb fennel
1 tart apple
1 cup sliced red onion
1 cup julienned sweet red pepper
1/2 cup golden raisins
1/4 cup each light sour cream and buttermilk
2 tsp. grated fresh gingerroot
1 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
1/4 tsp. each salt and pepper
1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley

Remove fronds and inner core from fennel; reserve fronds for garnish Slice fennel thinly. Core and thinly slice apple. Place fennel and apple along with red onion, red pepper and raisins into bowl.

In separate bowl, whisk together sour cream, buttermilk, gingerroot, lemon juice, salt and pepper. Pour dressing over fennel mixture, tossing gently until well coated. Sprinkle with chopped fresh parsley. Makes 8 cups.

TOMATOEY TUNA IN AVOCADO

1/4 cup mayonnaise
1/4 cup seeded and finely diced plum tomato
1 tsp. tomato paste
2 tbsp. chopped fresh chives
1 can tuna, drained and rinsed
1/4 cup grated carrot
2 large ripe avocados
2 tsp. lemon juice

In bowl, stir together mayonnaise, tomatoes, tomato paste and chives. Mix in tuna until well combined. Stir in carrots. (Mixture can be refrigerated, covered, for up to 3 days).

Cut avocados in half lengthwise. Remove pit. Brush lemon juice over surface. Place each half on plate. Spoon tuna mixture evenly into cavity of each avocado. Makes 4 servings.

FETA PINE NUT SPREAD 'SANDWICHES'

We've provided a host of ideas to replace bread below, but don't be limited to those. Scour your fridge, consider your preferences or those of your family, and enjoy!

1/2 cup cream cheese, softened
1 tbsp. mayonnaise
1/4 cup feta cheese, crumbled
1/4 cup toasted pine nuts or chopped walnuts
4 green onions, chopped

"Sandwich" Options:
radicchio leaves
endive spears
matzah
cucumber slices
roasted red pepper slices
julienned sun dried tomato

In bowl, cream together cream cheese and mayonnaise. Stir in feta, pine nuts and green onions.

Spread feta mixture evenly over radicchio leaves, endive spears or matzah. Layer with cucumber slices, grated carrots, roasted red pepper or sun dried tomato. Sandwich with either second piece or lettuce leaf or spear or more matzah. Makes 1 cup of spread.

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EU moves to cut Iranian bank transfers

Barak Ravid
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Israeli Finance Minister Yuval Steinitz on Sunday welcomed the exclusion of Iranian banks from international financial transfer networks.

The decision deals "a tough blow to Iran's economy" and "makes the import and export of oil very difficult," he told reporters before the weekly cabinet meeting in Jerusalem.

"This thing can cause the collapse of the Iranian economy. Is it enough? I don't know. Is it significant and will it affect their endurance? Without a doubt it is a very dramatic step," he said.

All Iranian banks that were already subject to a freeze on their EU-held assets are affected, including the central bank and several commercial lenders.

EU countries agreed to the measure March 15 as part of efforts alongside the United States to pressure Iran into backing down on its nuclear program, which the West suspects is of a military nature but which Iran insists is strictly peaceful.

Yuval Steinitz

The Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT), an international network that controls the world's largest financial messaging system, announced March 15 it intended to cut off Iranian banks targeted by European Union sanctions.

The move was an unprecedented measure that will effectively prevent Iranian institutions from electronically transferring global funds.

In a statement March 15, SWIFT said financial institutions hit by EU measures would be removed from the network as of Saturday, March 17.

"The new European Council decision, as confirmed by the Belgian Treasury, prohibits companies such as SWIFT to continue to provide specialized financial messaging services to EU-sanctioned Iranian banks," the statement said, adding that "SWIFT is incorporated under Belgian law and has to comply with this decision as confirmed by its home country government."

SWIFT CEO Lázaro Campos said that the EU decision to sanction Iranian banks forced "SWIFT to take action," adding, "Disconnecting banks is an extraordinary and unprecedented step for SWIFT. It is a direct result of international and multilateral action to intensify financial sanctions against Iran."

An Israeli official indicated that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu raised the issue of disconnecting the Iranian banks from the SWIFT system during his recent conversations with U.S. President Barack Obama as well as with Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper. According to the official, Netanyahu told Obama that "we need SWIFT swiftly."

In response to SWIFT's announcement, the Prime Minister's Office released a statement later in the day, saying that "prime minister Netanyahu congratulated SWIFT for its decision to cut the Iranian banks from the system."

In December, EU foreign ministers adopted new sanctions against Iran in response to the country's nuclear program.

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Convicted death camp guard Demjanjuk dead at 91

Ofer Aderet
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

MUNICH — Convicted Nazi death camp guard John Demjanjuk, 91, has died in a retirement home in southern Germany, police said Saturday.

Last year, a German court found the retired Ohio autoworker guilty of aiding in the murder of 27,900 Jews at Sobibor, a Nazi extermination camp in occupied Poland, over several months of 1943.

The Munich court initially sentenced Demjanjuk to five years in jail, but then decided to release him pending an appeal, due to his advanced age.

Demjanjuk had been exonerated in a separate Holocaust trial two decades ago in Israel, where he was initially sentenced to death for being the notorious "Ivan the Terrible" camp guard at Treblinka in Poland. Israel's Supreme Court overturned the ruling after new evidence exonerated him.

Holocaust survivors welcomed the guilty verdict, as did the Nazi-hunting Simon Wiesenthal Center, where Rabbi Marvin Hier said: "John Demjanjuk's Nazi past finally caught up with him."

"Humanity owed this to the memory of the tortured and the dead," Elan Steinberg of the American Gathering of Holocaust Survivors and their Descendants said, adding his "cynical manipulation of the legal system has at last been ended".

John Demjanjuk

The Ukraine-born Demjanjuk, who once topped the Simon Wiesenthal Center's list of most wanted Nazi war criminals, said he was drafted into the Soviet army in 1941 then taken as a prisoner of war by the Germans.

Demjanjuk attended the 18-month court proceedings in Munich – birthplace of Adolf Hitler's Nazi movement – in a wheelchair and sometimes lying down, with his family trying to argue that he was too frail to stand trial.

His son, John Demjanjuk Jr., said in an e-mail ahead of the verdict that his father was a victim of the Nazis and of postwar Germany.

"While those who refuse to accept that reality may take satisfaction from this event, nothing the Munich court can do will atone for the suffering Germany has perpetrated upon him to this day," he said.

Prosecutors had faced several hurdles in proving Demjanjuk's guilt, with no surviving witnesses to his crimes and heavy reliance on wartime documents, namely a Nazi ID card that defence attorneys said was a fake made by the Soviets.

Guards at Nazi death camps such as Sobibor were essential to the mass killing of Jews, because extermination was the focus of such camps, prosecutors said. Some 250,000 Jews were killed at Sobibor, according to the Wiesenthal Center.

According to a German newspaper, Demjanjuk will be buried in Germany where the state will pay for his burial.

In an initial response to his death, Demjanjuk Jr. said his father "died as a victim of Soviet and German brutality that he suffered through since childhood."

"He loved life, his family and humans," Demjanjuk Jr. said. "History will prove that Germany used him as a scapegoat when it placed responsibility for Nazi crimes on a helpless Ukrainian prisoner of war."

Prof. Cornelius Nestler of Cologne University, who represented the victims' families in the trial, told *Ha'aretz* over the weekend that his clients "received what they had expected from his conviction, that he was held accountable for accessory to murder of their parents and siblings in Sobibor."

Despite the fact that there will be no appeal on Demjanjuk's appeal, Nestler believes that such an appeal "never had a chance to succeed."

"The evidence is clear," he said. "John Demjanjuk was a guard in Sobibor.

"I hope that the written verdict of the district court in Munich, which summarizes all the evidence and makes clear that Demjanjuk participated in the mass murder in Sobibor, will find the attention it deserves."

Chief Executive Officer

Louis Brier Home and Hospital and the Weinberg Residence

The only Jewish care facilities in British Columbia, the Louis Brier Home and Hospital and the Weinberg Residence provide superior long-term care and assisted living in a culturally sensitive milieu emphasizing Jewish content, customs, and values. Nestled in the heart of Vancouver, the two facilities make up the Dr. Irving and Phyliss Snider Campus for Jewish Seniors, with the Louis Brier Home and Hospital offering 218 complex-care beds and the Weinberg Residence offering 40 assisted-living suites and 20 multi-level-care beds. Exemplary standards of care and service are maintained within this blend of public and private pay facilities, fully accredited and affiliated with Vancouver Coastal Health.

As Chief Executive Officer, reporting to the Boards of the Louis Brier Home and Hospital and the Weinberg Residence, you will guide the growth of these progressive facilities into the future, enhancing their roles in care services, education, and research. Managing a budget in excess of $18 million, you will lead a team of over 300 unionized employees and management staff, as well as over 300 volunteers, inspiring them with your commitment to serving the social, spiritual, and care needs of the Snider Campus's predominantly Jewish residents.

Visionary, decisive, and energetic, you are a strategic thinker and an agent of transformational change. An experienced healthcare leader (ideally with an advanced degree), you have an abiding dedication to the care of others. You have a full appreciation of the Jewish faith, culture, and heritage, and will understand their central importance within the facilities. With superior interpersonal and team-building skills, and a well-organized, open-door management style, you will ensure the highest quality of care at the Snider Campus, and will sustain and develop the strong relationships among the Boards, staff, residents, and families who truly constitute its community.

CALDWELL PARTNERS

Correction

The March 8 article, "Cotler rejects 'Israeli apartheid' – in South Africa" incorrectly reported that Liberal member of Parliament Irwin Cotler was "lobbied" by senior government officials on Canada's visa policies preventing African National Congress members from visiting Canada. Also, his presentation to South African officials, rejecting the depiction of Israel as an apartheid state, was based on his view that such an allegation is fundamentally an insult to the anti-apartheid movement. He did not describe Israel as a bastion of human rights in those meetings. We regret the errors.

Eradicating racism

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at a meeting with Ethiopian community leaders said he was committed to stopping racism. "I asked for this meeting because I am committed to the Ethiopian immigrant public," Netanyahu said at last Wednesday's meeting. "One of the things that I cannot tolerate is displays of racism." Netanyahu told the Ethiopian leaders – social activists and community religious leaders – about plans by his government to help the Ethiopian community's integration into Israeli society. The government's five-year plan, according to the Prime Minister's Office, includes assistance in schools to boost achievements, promoting higher education and preventing dropouts, employment assistance and efforts to assist Ethiopian soldiers in the Israeli Defence Forces, and grants to assist in finding housing for those leaving absorption centres. The plan also includes the establishment of youth centres for Ethiopians and a move to memorialize those who died in Sudan as they tried to reach Israel. Netanyahu promised there would be more meetings with Ethiopian leaders.

Envoy's exit urged

The Egyptian parliament voted unanimously on a statement calling for the deportation of Israel's ambassador and stopping gas exports to Israel. The People's Assembly passed the resolution Monday night stating that the halting of gas exports is in protest against attacks by Israel on Gaza. The measure also called for the withdrawal of the Egyptian ambassador from Tel Aviv, according to the newspaper *Al Masry Al Youm* and a renewal of the Arab boycott against Israel. "Egypt after the revolution will never be a friend of the Zionist entity, the first enemy of Egypt and the Arab nation," the resolution reportedly said, and demanded that the Egyptian government review all its relations and agreements with that "enemy," according to *Al Masry*. The motion is largely symbolic, according to the Associated Press, because only the ruling Military Council, the country's current government, can make such decisions. People's Assembly Speaker Saad al-Katatny asked a special parliamentary committee to take the demands to the government, according to *Al Masry*.

With files from JTA

Gunman kills four at Jewish school

© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

TOULOUSE, France — Four people were killed and another seriously wounded in a shooting at a Jewish high school in the southern French city of Toulouse, French media reported on Monday.

The shooting took place near a synagogue on the campus of the Ozar Hatorah school where children and their parents usually wait for a bus that takes them to the various Jewish preschools in the community. One victim, Jonathan Sandler, a Jewish studies teacher at the school, was waiting for the bus with his two children when the shooting occurred.

According to reports, a man riding a motorcycle opened fire at the children and the parents at around 8 a.m. The gunman then abandoned the motorcycle, entered the school and began shooting at the students and faculty.

French prosecutor Michel Valet said Monday that those killed were Sandler, 30, and his three-year-old and six-year-old sons. Valet said another child, between eight and 10 years old, was also killed, and a 17-year-old seriously wounded.

Baruch, Sandler's learning companion at the Judaic studies program at the Ozar Hatorah school, told *Ha'aretz* that he spoke to Sandler moments before the shooting.

"I saw him, greeted him, and left toward the school. Seconds later, I hear shots. I didn't turn around and started running toward the synagogue that is about 10 to 15 metres from the entrance gate," he said.

"Everyone started shouting, 'Shooting, shooting!' and fled. At some point, the shooter entered the school and began firing inside. We hid under the synagogue in a shed, until the police came and escorted us out."

French police said that the man opened fire with an automatic pistol of the same kind that was seen at two previous attacks on soldiers in Toulouse and the nearby town of Montauban, the report said. Three soldiers died in those two incidents, and one was seriously wounded.

Police closed off the street on which the school is located and deployed large forces at the scene. Some 50 French police officers were drafted into the investigation, including anti-terrorist officers, French media reported.

The French interior ministry has requested increased vigilance and surveillance in all of southwest France, particularly in the Jewish districts.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy cancelled other appointments and was on his way to Toulouse on Monday morning, accompanied by Education Minister Luc Chatel and the president of the CRIF French Jewish association, Richard Prasquier.

Jean-Yves Camus, a research associate with the Institute of International and Strategic Relations in France, told *Ha'aretz*, "The lone-wolf scenario seems the more likely, both in the case of the Toulouse shooting spree and in the cold-blooded murder of French servicemen, who belonged to an elite unit having fought in Afghanistan."

"One interesting point in those murders is that all soldiers belonged to an ethnic minority, three were from North Africa and one was from the West Indies. Until now, experts have agreed that the French neo-Nazi scene, while it is much appreciative of [Anders] Breivik's killing in Norway [Breivik bombed government buildings in Oslo last year, resulting in eight deaths] and often refers to the "lone-wolf" or leaderless resistance modes of action, do not have the capability of committing such actions."

Ozar Hatorah is a religious school that, according to its website, aims to provide its students with a balanced education that will enable them to integrate fully into civil society, to "form the French citizens of tomorrow, in harmony with their Judaism."

According to a member of the community, the Jews in Toulouse see the Ozar Hatorah school as the centre of their community. Toulouse is home to a community of 25,000 Jews.

'Abominable drama'

Continued from page 1

David Koschitzky, chair of Canada's Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, said in a statement that the "Canadian Jewish community shares the terrible pain of the families of the victims of the massacre at Ozar Hatorah. This crime is all the more grotesque because the murderer targeted children.

"We are confident that French authorities will do everything necessary to identify and bring to justice those responsible."

Sarkozy said Monday that the shooting was an "abominable drama and a frightening tragedy." He cancelled his appointments and left for Toulouse, accompanied by Education Minister Luc Chatel and CRIF president Richard Prasquier.

Sarkozy and Socialist presidential nominee François Hollande announced the suspension of the election campaign.

French police heightened security around Jewish schools across France, closing streets.

The president met with local police officers. Speaking in Toulouse, he said that "the investigation will be completed in its entirety. Whoever did it was crazy to murder Jewish children."

The commander of the local police said they didn't yet have a lead, but that a suspicious white car was seen at the scene of the crime.

Sarkozy said that on Tuesday, students in every school in France were to stand for a moment of silence for the victims of the Toulouse shooting.

KPMG
cutting through complexity

Jewish-Americans in Canada Affected by IRS Tax Filing Enforcement Efforts

Lorne Shillinger, Partner, Tax, KPMG, Toronto

Jeffrey Brown, Partner, Tax, KPMG, Hamilton

Thousands of Jewish-Americans are among the roughly one million "United States persons" living in Canada who are subject to US income tax. US persons include US citizens, green card holders and even some "accidental Americans" who don't realize they are subject to US tax. Non-compliance with US tax laws among US persons in Canada remains widespread and has recently become subject to intense enforcement by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

Unlike most countries, the US subjects US persons to tax on their worldwide income wherever they reside and they are required to file annual US personal income tax returns even if no tax is due. A foreign tax credit often eliminates the US tax liability of US persons who pay tax in Canada but significant differences between US and Canadian tax laws can produce unexpected US tax.

> **"The window of opportunity for US persons abroad to favourably correct past non-compliance is closing."**

US persons are also required to file an annual information return called the Report of Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts (FBAR) with the US Department of Treasury disclosing all foreign financial accounts if the aggregate value of the accounts exceeds US$10,000 at any time during a year. Foreign financial accounts include bank and investment accounts in which a US person has signature authority or a beneficial interest as well as Registered Retirement Savings Plans (RRSPs), Registered Education Savings Plans (RESPs) and Tax-Free Savings Accounts (TFSAs). Penalties for not filing FBARs can be as high as 50 percent of the total balance of the foreign accounts at the time of the violation. After 2010, a foreign account disclosure similar to and in addition to FBAR is a part of the US income tax return.

Other US tax reporting obligations exist for interests in Canadian mutual funds, non-US trusts, corporations, partnerships, RRSPs, RESPs and TFSAs.

Until a few years ago, US persons living in Canada could fix late US filing obligations with a "quiet disclosure" filing of up to six years worth of tax returns along with a reasonable cause statement requesting penalty abatement. The IRS rarely, if ever, denied such requests.

Two IRS amnesty programs, in 2009 and 2011, and a recently announced third one, attempted to facilitate wider voluntary compliance by delinquent US persons abroad with promises of reduced or no exposure to civil or criminal sanctions. With the IRS's historic "leniency" perceived to have ended with the 2011 amnesty program, a December 2011 IRS Fact Sheet reinforced longstanding IRS policy of encouraging voluntary disclosure by non-compliant US persons with reduced risk of civil or criminal penalties *where no tax is due*. The Fact Sheet further indicated that the IRS may grant penalty relief for late filers *who owe tax but demonstrate reasonable cause*. In addition, the Fact Sheet indicates that penalty relief may be available for some late FBAR filings.

The window of opportunity for US persons abroad to favourably correct past non-compliance is closing. Beginning in 2014, a US law called the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act mandates that financial institutions outside of the US disclose to the IRS all accounts held by US persons.

KPMG can help US persons in Canada manage past non-compliance with US tax filings and remain compliant in the future. More than 200 of KPMG's US tax professionals, including many US-trained and licensed CPAs and attorneys, practice in Canada's largest Jewish communities including Toronto, North York, Hamilton, Ottawa, Montreal, Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver.

For more information, please contact ***Lorne Shillinger*** *in Toronto at 416-777-8692 or* ***Jeffrey Brown*** *in Hamilton at 905-523-2226.*

Material provided by KPMG LLP (Canada). Please visit our website: **kpmg.ca**.

Hockey instructor offers personalized service

Paul Lungen
Staff Reporter

There are hands-on entrepreneurs and then there's Daniel Bochner, a business owner who's the manager, employee, strategic analyst and marketing maven for his own company.

Whether he prepares his own taxes is unclear, but when it comes to Universal Hockey, he is pretty much the company.

Only 27, Bochner has parlayed his skills on the ice, along with the experience he's accumulated playing in Canada and Europe, into a successful elite player development academy.

It's the go-to location for young players already competing in AAA, the highest level of hockey available in Canada. The instructor who joins them on the ice, prepares the drills and demonstrates the techniques is Bochner himself.

"I teach it, all the sessions," said Bochner. "Our skills are very difficult. It's a European training style."

"The way I set up my business is to offer a very elite product that people can't find elsewhere... People come because I'm the one teaching their kid. If I put X, Y, or Z on the ice, the people will feel cheated and won't come."

Bochner does have three people working for him, although not on the ice. One is Adam Reynolds, who runs a dry-land training program for the players. Another is Brenley Shapiro, a sports performance consultant who deals with the psychological issues faced by elite athletes. He's also hired a full-time administrator to handle the logistics and paperwork associated with the business.

Listen up: Daniel Bochner delivers on-ice instruction

"It's an all-encompassing development camp we run for kids," Bochner said.

Two years ago, when he started the business, he had one client who booked him to provide private lessons for his son. "Now I have students from more than seven countries," Bochner said.

The academy offers private and semi-private lessons, weekly camps and summer camps. The client list and the business have grown so quickly that Bochner has become a major customer for ice time at a couple of Toronto-area rinks. Most of his sessions are at the Pavilion and Chesswood Arena.

Daniel Bochner, centre, with a couple of his students

He admits he's spent almost nothing on advertising. News of the academy gets around by "word of mouth" and through Internet videos.

The business grew quickly. His first client, impressed with the results, offered to back him financially. He loaned Bochner enough money to book ice time in advance and purchase warm-up jackets and other accessories to make the company look more professional. Bochner proudly said he repaid the loan in only three months.

Today, the firm "is in the six figures in profit," Bochner said.

As an elite academy, Universal charges a premium for its services, about $100 to $150 more than at most other week-long camps. The hourly rate, which includes ice rental, is $220. Bochner is confident that despite the multitude of hockey camps and instructional assistance services that are out there, Universal is well worth the price.

Bochner employs some of the best techniques that he picked up in a lifetime of hockey. A product of the Toronto-area hockey organizations, he played for teams in Ajax and Thornhill, as well as the Mississauga Senators and the Lindsay Muskies.

Until fairly recently, he also played professionally in Finland, France and Serbia. In between, Bochner, whose father is from Haifa, joined the Israeli junior and senior national teams to play in IIHF Division II and III tournaments, winning two gold, two silver and two bronze medals.

When his competitive hockey career ended, "I still wanted to stay involved in hockey. I wanted to give back to the kids. A lot of people did a lot for me when I was a kid," he said.

Living in Europe, Bochner took note of the different techniques employed to teach youngsters individual skills. He believes Europeans are better at it than Canadians, who focus more on team-oriented concepts.

Europeans use a club system in which youngsters play as they grow up. That creates familiarity with players' skills and allows instructors more time to work with them. Canadian kids switch teams and coaches much more frequently. They simply don't work on individual skills as much as Europeans do, Bochner said.

Canada produces lots of talented hockey players, Bochner conceded, but consider that there are 550,000 people playing here, 40,000 in the GTA alone. In all of Sweden there are 65,000 players and in Russia, a country of 130 million, there are only 63,000 players. On a per capita basis, they do better at developing elite players, he said.

Bochner's on-ice sessions are based on "things I picked up along the way," in Europe and Canada.

Videos on his website show youngsters demonstrating skating agility and puck control that might intimidate lesser players. "Coaches here feel kids can't do these things," Bochner said, "so they don't teach it. I have a competitive advantage in that I can demonstrate the drills."

Videos of the drills carried on the Internet have attracted the attention of skaters around the world. Four kids from Austria enrolled in his camp after viewing the videos on YouTube.

The Internet has proven to be his main marketing tool, along with word of mouth.

Things are looking up for Universal. Bochner plans to expand by opening his own gym for off-ice training. And he expects to grow outside of Canada.

"I want us to become an international brand," he said. Next year he plans to open an academy in Sweden that will operate when Swedish kids are on holiday and Canadian kids are in school.

He plans to do the training himself. "I'm not concerned about the money. It's something I'm passionate about and giving people a fair product," he said.

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Books examine Jews of Canada and Toronto

Bill Gladstone
Special to The CJN

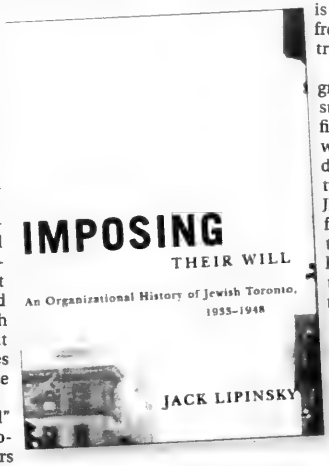
In *Imposing Their Will: An Organizational History of Jewish Toronto, 1933-1948* (McGill-Queens), Toronto writer Jack Lipinsky presents an original and illuminating study of Toronto's Jewish community and convincingly demonstrates that the community underwent a crucial maturation in the 15-year period under discussion.

Community developed through series of clashes

Similarly, in *The Defining Decade: Identity, Politics, and The Canadian Jewish Community in the 1960s* (University of Toronto Press), Toronto academic Harold Troper, whose previous works include the renowned *None Is Too Many*, shows that the colourful '60s, now half a century distant, was a pivotal and transformative decade for Canadian Jews, a time when they found their place within wider Canadian society. Both books are welcome additions to our still understocked shelf of works addressing the history of the Jews in Canada and more specifically, Toronto.

Not since Stephen A. Speisman's classic 1979 book *The Jews of Toronto: A History to 1937*, have we seen a work of scholarship on Toronto Jews as encompassing and insightful as Lipinsky's. Like Speisman, Lipinsky conducted much trailblazing archival research and interviewed previously neglected communal figures such as Dr. Martin Cohn, who spent his later years in Chicago. Also like Speisman, Lipinsky wrote the work initially as a PhD thesis – in his case rescuing it from an old computer disk and recalling it back to life after 18 years.

The thesis of *Imposing Their Will* is that Toronto's Jewish community developed through a series of clashes that pitted the old-fashioned "downtowner" Jews – with their shtetl mentality and religious notions about tzedakah – against a younger, more assimilated generation of "uptowners" with their professional ideas about how social work and charities should be managed to maximize efficiencies.



Only by "imposing their will" in a somewhat less than democratic fashion did the uptowners ultimately win this tug of war, bringing a semblance of organizational unity to the community. The book provides compelling back stories regarding the alphabet soup of Jewish social agencies and charities that often worked at cross-purposes to one another in the community's early days.

The Jewish Children's Home was a communal orphanage that was established on Simcoe Street about 1910 and was moved to a large house on Annette Street in the west Toronto Junction in 1922. The Maternal Aid Society ran the Home with funding from the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies (FJP), the Children's Aid Society and its own fund-raising campaigns. Dozens of dedicated volunteers faithfully visited and mentored the children.

But according to the FJP, the home suffered from a "narrowness of vision " and amateurish methods; also, its fund-raising campaign, in 1933, clashed with the FJP's own centralized campaign. Martin Cohn, whom Lipinsky fortuitously interviewed in 1985, was (in 1933) the FJP's executive director. A social-work professional and thus an uptowner, Cohn wrested control of the home from the downtowners and radically transformed how the community took care of its orphans – placing them in private homes rather than collectively under one institutional roof – in keeping with best professional practices.

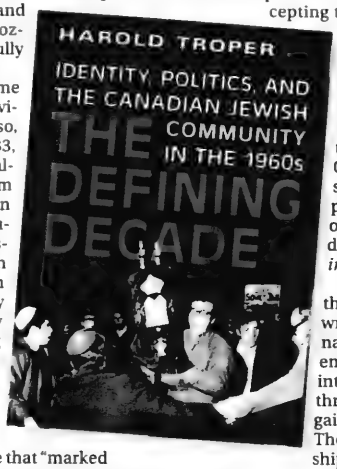
Cohn achieved the takeover by establishing a personnel committee that "marked a watershed in Toronto Jewish history," Lipinsky writes. "It signified the first acceptance of 'scientific charity' and its attendant beliefs in communal organization based on the theories of social work and communal planning."

Students of local Jewish history will appreciate such revealing glimpses into our communal institutions and the bitter battles that occurred behind the scenes. Although this is a bureaucratic history, it is one in which knives are drawn frequently: in other words, it is true to life.

The Toronto Jewish Immigrant Aid Society was the sole surviving local agency of the first Canadian Jewish Congress, which expired in organizational disarray soon after its premature birth in 1919. Regional JIAS offices were operating effectively in several cities across the country, but in Toronto the local JIAS was ineffective and the community turned instead to steamship ticket agents and other private influence peddlers for help on immigration-related issues.

Lipinsky has magnificently reconstructed this "lost" institutional history, which involved a protracted power struggle between JIAS's Toronto and Montreal offices. Ultimately, Montreal forced Toronto to "shed its narrow parochial vision" and revitalize itself.

He likewise turns his magnifying glass upon various other communal institutions including Congress, the Toronto Hebrew Free School and the United Jewish Welfare Fund (UJWF). Perhaps the period's most significant watershed moment occurred when the UJWF joined the citywide United Community Chest fund-raising campaign of 1943, thus accepting a role alongside the city's churches "as part of the larger civic society. By accepting the invitation, Toronto Jewry indicated that its interests were expanding beyond the parochialism of the prewar years."



Lipinsky thus pinpoints the beginning of the major transformations that brought Canada's Jews into the mainstream of Canadian society, a process that Troper (who was one of Lipinsky's mentors) describes so well in *The Defining Decade*.

The Defining Decade is a thoroughly researched, well-written account of the Canadian Jewish community's emergence from the shadows into daylight, propelled in part through a new self-confidence gained after the Six Day War. The author's obvious scholarship is embellished with incisive observations, telling statistics, crisp anecdotes and occasional splashes of humour. Both these books should appeal to readers who have a hearty interest in Canadian and/or Toronto Jewish history.

Bill Gladstone is the author, most recently, of A History of the Jewish Community of London Ontario. *He gives frequent illustrated talks on the history of Toronto's Jewish community, a topic he also explores on his website, www.billgladstone.ca.*

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Comedian inspired by the great raconteurs

Marvin Glassman
Special To The CJN

Comedian Larry Miller, known for his funny anecdotes on late night talk shows, is bringing his one-man show *Cocktails With Larry Miller: Marriage, Children and Drinking and How One Leads to Another* to the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts on March 29.

"There is a connection with drinking that leads to all that happens in your life," Miller, 58, said from his home in Los Angeles. "You celebrate life by drinking, you cope with problems with drinking and so marriage and children can lead you to drinking a lot more than you think."

While his name sounds common,his comedy is not. Miller uses his ability to observe funny incidents that happen in everyday life and, instead of reciting funny punch lines, builds a story about the incident to make the situation even more humorous.

Born in Valley Stream, N.Y., Miller grew up admiring the famed Jewish comedians who were great raconteurs, such as Myron Cohen and Alan King.

"They used words to great comic effect and being Jewish made it easy to be a comedian. Judaism is a religion that is about using words wisely, with many inflections. The Torah is all about story telling, so it is natural for me to tell funny stories on my observations of life."

Miller has also created memorable characters in the 100 films and television appearances in his career. Miller played the obnoxious doorman in the television series *Seinfeld* and the social climbing Arnie Stein in the 2006 film *Keeping Up With The Steins*. On occasion, Miller has also played dramatic roles such as a wife killer on *Law & Order*.

"Even though I am known for comedy, I relished having a dramatic role and the wife killer turned out to be one of the most viewed episodes of *Law & Order*."

In 2006 Miller published some of his funny observations in the bestselling *Spoiled Rotten America: Outrages From Everyday Life* and shares some of these stories on stage. He will also perform beloved routines, such as *Five Stages Of Drinking*, his parody of the famed song *These Are A Few Of My Favorite Things*, and playing Moses bickering with God about the Ten Commandments. Miller, who is married to television writer Eileen Conn and has two children will also tell anecdotes about his family.

Larry Miller
[Colette Blonigan photo]

Off the stage, Miller has shared some political commentary in a serious manner, such as his view that there is no country called Palestine, as he wrote in a 2000 column in *The Weekly Standard*.

"I strongly feel what I wrote back then is still true and nothing has changed to make me feel different. The Jewish people have achieved so much and all the Palestinians want is to destroy everything we accomplished," said Miller.

Unlike Jackie Mason who expresses his political comments on stage, Miller does not want his commentary to interfere with comedy.

"When I go on stage, I am having a good time and I want to take the audience along with me. The political comments are part of whom I am, but not when I am with an audience."

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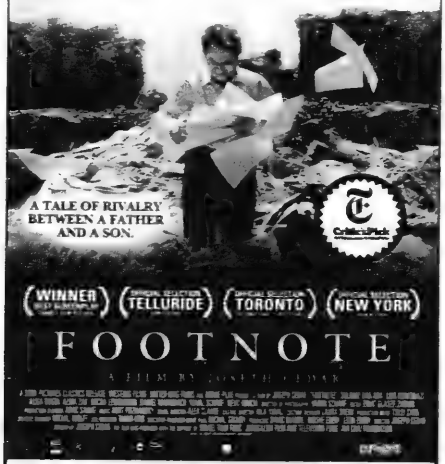

IN THEATRES MARCH 23RD

Israeli jazz trio pays visit to Canada

Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf
Staff Reporter

Emerging Israeli jazz ensemble, the Ofir Shwartz Trio, gave their first concerts in Canada earlier this month.

Playing two shows, a March 8 warm-up gig at the University of Toronto, followed by a March 9 full performance at Edmonton's YardBird Suite jazz club as part of its international jazz concert series, the trio was excited to finally make it to Canada.

Speaking to *The CJN* before the Toronto appearance, Ofir Shwartz said he was already looking forward to returning for city's 2013 jazz festival.

"We have good plans for returning, and we've been in touch with the Toronto Jazz Festival [organizers]," Shwartz said.

The trio's jazz style is upbeat, unorthodox and extremely engaging.

Shwartz, who plays piano and is the principal composer, is accompanied by Simon Starr on double bass and Roy Oliel on drums.

They've been receiving critical acclaim since releasing their first CD, 2010's *Earlier in Time*, which the trio has been supporting via world tours much of the last two years. A new album is in the works, and Shwartz said he anticipates finishing it in Israel this year.

The trio's style is unique, likely because Shwartz, 32, learned to play jazz by ear. As such, his style and vision of the music comes from an intuitive source rather than any formal training.

"I didn't go to university to study it or anything like that. I got into jazz in high school through a friend. I was immediately fascinated by the sounds, the harmonies. I've been into music since I was two years old... and there was something in [jazz] music that was nowhere else," he said.

Shwartz said he is influenced by fellow Israeli jazz musicians as well as internationally renowned players Chick Corea, Brad Mehldau and Keith Jarrett, among others. Canadian jazz piano legend Oscar Peterson is also one of his influences.

Asked how he feels being a jazz ambassador for Israel, Shwartz said it's a "fascinating" experience.

"Everywhere I go, we get lots of love from the crowd. And I like to represent Israel in a different way. It's not like [Israel] is represented in the news. It's a cultural experience that the crowds love, and I love to do it."

He added: "Not many people know about Israeli jazz, and when they hear it, they're just astonished. But there are many amazing Israeli jazz players who are in the top [tier] of the jazz ranks worldwide."

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The search for heirloom turns into quest for roots

Sheldon Kirshner
Staff Reporter

Pearl Gluck's obsesssive search for a family heirloom – a well-worn 19th-century Turkish-style couch known as a divan – turns into a quest for roots and a deeply felt rumination on family and faith in her 90-minute debut documentary, *Divan*.

It is scheduled to be screened by the Toronto Jewish Film Society at the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre's Al Green Theatre on March 25 at 4 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

A feisty and inquisitive woman, Gluck was born in Borough Park, a New York City chassidic enclave she describes as "a whole Yiddish country" nestled in the folds of Brooklyn.

Raised as a strict Orthodox Jew, she assumed she would marry a Torah scholar and have 10 children. But this was not to be. When Gluck was 10, her parents divorced, and she and her mother left Borough Park for good.

Gluck attended a liberal Jewish school and broke with chassidic Judaism. Torn between her past and present, she became something of an outcast in her former community.

Nonetheless, Gluck retained nostalgic feelings about Borough Park and remembered the stories she had heard about her great-great-grandfather's legendary divan in Hungary and the rebbes who had slept on it.

Long estranged from her conservative father, who disapproved of her secular lifestyle, profession as a filmmaker and single status, Gluck decided to retrieve the divan to please him.

The journey that takes her to Rohod, a town in northeastern Hungary where her ancestors lived, comprises the bulk of the film. She meets a distant cousin – a Holocaust survivor in a country where more than 400,000 Jews were murdered in 1944 – and visits a Jewish cemetery.

Travelling farther afield, she ventures into a part of Ukraine that was torn from Hungary's grasp and encounters the remnants of old Jewish communities and connects with her family's history.

She finds the elusive couch – a grand piece of period furniture upholstered in a gold and burgundy pattern – but cannot buy it. To her delight, she stumbles upon a suitable substitute in a flea market and has it shipped to the United States.

As she suggests, her father would have been far more satisfied had she brought back a suitable husband. Dad, however, appreciates his daughter's gesture, and reconciliation is now possible.

Pearl Gluck and her divan

Gluck weaves the sub-stories of alienated chassidic Jews into the fabric of *Divan*, and their revealing comments add nuance and spirit to what is sometimes a meandering and disjointed film.

French films portray the two faces of Islam

Sheldon Kirshner
Staff Reporter

Two radically different sides of Islam are depicted in two French films due to be screened at the 15th annual Cinefranco festival, which runs this year from March 23 to April 1 at the TIFF Bell Lightbox (350 King St. W).

Free Men (March 25 at 6:30 p.m.), set in Nazi-occupied Paris in 1942, focuses on the imam of a mosque who takes it upon himself to help Jews facing deportation.

The Disintegration (March 28 at 9 p.m.) unfolds in present-day Lille and is a disturbing account of a Muslim extremist who converts a group of young men to his radical creed.

Although fictional, *Free Men*, directed by Ismael Ferroukhi, is inspired by real events.

Younes (Tahar Rahim), a young, Algerian-born black marketer who survives by his wits, is arrested by the Vichy police and forced to become an informer. The mosque is doling out fake identity certificates to Jews and resistance fighters, but who are the recipients? Younes' task is to find the answer.

As he loiters on the grounds of the mosque, a serene sanctuary in a bustling city, he meets the imam, a reflective man named Ben Ghabrit (Michael Lonsdale), and befriends an Algerian cabaret singer, Salim (Mahmoud Shalaby).

At first Younes is merely a self-interested hustler who has emotionally distanced himself from the Nazi occupation. The profit motive is his only concern. But as he draws closer to the imam and Salim, who holds one of the imam's certificates, he becomes fully engaged in the struggle against fascism and a member of the French resistance movement.

Free Men, which unfolds against the backdrop of Nazi roundups of Jews, is propelled forward by frenetic bursts of intrigue and suspense. But there are also somnolent moments when the film sputters and loses momentum.

The cast is competent, lending plausibility to an inspiring footnote in wartime Paris in which a decent imam emerges as a quiet hero. *The Disintegration*, directed by Philippe Faucon and featuring a nearly all-Arab cast, delves into the nether world of partially assimilated North African Arabs who turn to Islamic fundamentalism for succor after being rejected by mainstream French society.

Ali, a forklift operator who lives with his mother and sister in a drab apartment building in a bleak suburb, is mystified why he cannot find a white-collar internship that may brighten his otherwise dim prospects.

Continued on page 56

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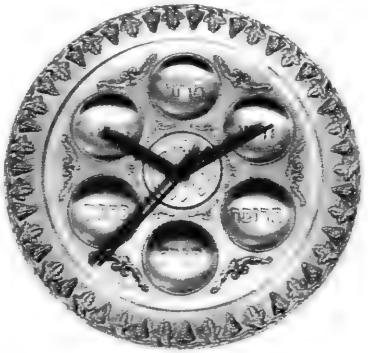

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Honeycomb Way offers up Jewish musical fusion

Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf
Staff Reporter

TORONTO — When two masters of radically different Jewish musical styles join together in performance next week, the outcome is apt to be aurally astounding.

Frank London, leader and trumpeter of the popular klezmer band The Klezmatics, and Yair Dalal, renowned Israeli oud player and Middle Eastern Jewish music aficionado, are currently composing songs that will blend their respective musical genres and then perform the pieces at a March 28, 8 p.m. concert at the Jane Mallett Theatre in Toronto's St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts.

The concert is titled The Honeycomb Way: A Musical Journey into the Sacred.

The two musicians are in town this week conducting master classes at the Koffler Centre with local players as well as working in a weeklong residency together with a who's who of popular Toronto-based Jewish and multi-ethnic musicians who will accompany them on stage next Wednesday night for the performance.

Scheduled to perform with Dalal and London on stage next week are Sudanese multi-instrumentalist Waleed Abdulhamid; Aviva Chernick, lead singer of Jaffa Road; percussionist Rick Shadrach Lazar; Prague-born Yiddish singer Lenka Lichtenberg; Greek outi and bouzouki player Demetrios Petsalakis; South Asian drummer Debashis Sinha and Egyptian-Canadian songstress Maryem Tollar.

Frank London

Reached in California by phone last week, Dalal told *The CJN* he was looking forward to working with London and the other musicians on this musical venture.

He said juxtaposing his beloved Jewish Iraqi musical influences with the Ashkenazi eastern European genre is not without its challenges. However, he said the two styles do share some similar scales and common Jewish melodies, and themes that he believes will render something beautiful for both the listener and the players.

"There's a lot of opportunity to find common ground between the two [musical] traditions. Because the source of the music is common between the two," Dalal said. "We both have songs from the Kabbalah, the Psalms, from Shabbat and other holidays. The words are the same. It's just the melodies that changed."

Dalal said before arriving in Toronto, he and London had already started experimenting musically together and that at times the initial sonic experience sounded odd to him.

"It felt a little bit strange. But it felt like I was making peace between the Jews," he quipped. "There is the chassidic, klezmer, Babylonian and Moroccan [musical] traditions... and they don't come together often. When people around the world think about Jewish music, they think about klezmer and don't know about Middle Eastern Jewish music, which there is a lot of."

He said The Honeycomb Way concert provides a unique opportunity for the world to find out more about this rich side of Jewish musical equation.

Dalal said he's also excited to work with Lichtenberg, as the two are currently putting together an album called *Lullaby in Exile*, which will feature lullabies from both the Yiddish and Iraqi Jewish traditions.

"We've already recorded three songs. It's a very exciting project," he said.

For more information about The Honeycomb Way, visit www.kofflerarts.org or call 416-638-1881.

A chilling picture

Continued from page 55

Djamel, an older man with a calm and charismatic demeanour, claims the French are racist and won't give Arabs like Ali a fair chance to improve themselves.

Context is important. Before Ali comes under Djamel's influence, he beats up a "Frenchie" for having called an Arab boy a "dirty Arab."

Racism is a rampant reality in Lille, and Ali is affected by it. The cultural and religious gulf between Arabs and "Frenchies" is not only wide but also deep.

Having decided he will longer tolerate treatment as a second-class citizen, Ali is eager to listen to Djamel's incendiary philosophy of jihad. So are his friends, one of whom is a zealous French convert to Islam.

Djamel defames "infidels," denounces Israel and praises Muslim fighters in Afghanistan. Ali buys Djamel's propaganda line and becomes a pious Muslim, but Ali's brother – a secular person who has a Christian girlfriend and seeks assimilation – accuses Djamel of mixing fact with fiction.

Rejecting his brother's critique, Ali plunges deeper into Djamel's dark universe and joins a plot to bomb a NATO base in Belgium.

Ably directed and cast, *The Disintegration* paints a chilling and convincing picture of young Arab men whose minds are twisted in the service of a grotesque ideology.

Tahar Rahim in *Free Men*.

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EYE ON ARTS
By BILL GLADSTONE

ISRAELI MUSICIANS SET TO PERFORM A VARIETY OF CONCERTS IN T.O.

Several upcoming concerts in the Toronto area feature Israeli musicians, beginning April 1 with Jerusalem Makes Music, a special musical evening co-hosted by the German Consulate of Toronto and the Jerusalem Foundation of Canada.

Jerusalem Makes Music, a fundraiser for the Jerusalem Foundation, features three young musicians from Germany and Israel: **Tobias Baz**, a cellist from Germany studying in Toronto, Israeli clarinettist **Ido Azrad** and Toronto-born **Gili Loftus** on piano. A donation of $500 is required per ticket. April 1, 7 p.m. 2 Bloor St. E., 25th floor. 416-635-5491, ileventhal@jerusalemfoundation.ca

A week later, Israeli pianist **Ishay Shaer** performs a program of **Beethoven**, **Chopin** and Canadian composer **Harry Somers** in a Syrinx Sunday Salon concert. Heliconian Hall, 35 Hazelton Ave. Sunday, April 8, 3 p.m. Reception follows concert. $25, students $20. 416-654-0877, www.syrinxconcerts.org

And later still in April, Israeli master violinists **Gil Shaham** and **Itzhak Perlman** each have dates scheduled. Shaham performs **Bach** and Perlman performs **Mozart**, **Shostakovich** and **Mendelssohn** in concerts set respectively for April 21 and April 29 at Koerner Hall, Royal Conservatory of Music, 273 Bloor St. W. 416-408-0208, www.rcmusic.ca

* * *

Names in the News: *Servitude* is a new cinematic workplace comedy written and produced by Torontonian **Michael Sparaga**, who credits such Hollywood heavyweights as **Ivan Reitman** (*Ghostbusters*) and **Etan Cohen** (*Tropic Thunder*) for mentoring the project through its crucial early development.

The film is a semi-autobiographical comedy that follows a group of frustrated waiters who take over their restaurant for one final, glorious night when they discover they are all about to be fired. The cast includes **Joe Dinicol**, **Dave Foley**, **Enrico Colantoni**, **Lauren Collins** and **Margot Kidder**.

"The lead character is essentially me at age 25 – a young Jewish man at a crossroads, having to decide whether it's time to grow up and go to law school or continue to pursue his childhood dream of becoming a writer," Sparaga, a York University film department graduate, told Eye On Arts. Canadian release date for the film is March 30.

* * *

Film and TV

• The Toronto Workmen's Circle presents a screening of *Bundai'im*, a lively documentary about the Bund movement from its inception in Lithuania to its current status in Israel. In Hebrew and Yiddish, with English and Hebrew subtitles. 471 Lawrence Ave. W., Sunday, March 25, 2 p.m. Members free, guests $5.

• *The Thomashefskys: Music and Memories of a Life in the Yiddish Theater* is a celebration of Yiddish theatre pioneers **Boris** and **Bessie Thomashefsky** by their grandson, conductor **Michael Tilson Thomas**. It airs on the PBS network, Thursday, March 29, 8 p.m.

• Critic **Kevin Courrier** presents the final lecture, with film clips, in his series on American movies. The topic is the Obama era: *The Visitor, Rachel Getting Married, The Hurt Locker, No Country for Old Men* and more. Includes film clips. Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, Monday, March 26, 7 to 9 p.m. $12 at the door; students $6.

Janusz Makuch

* * *

Arts in Brief

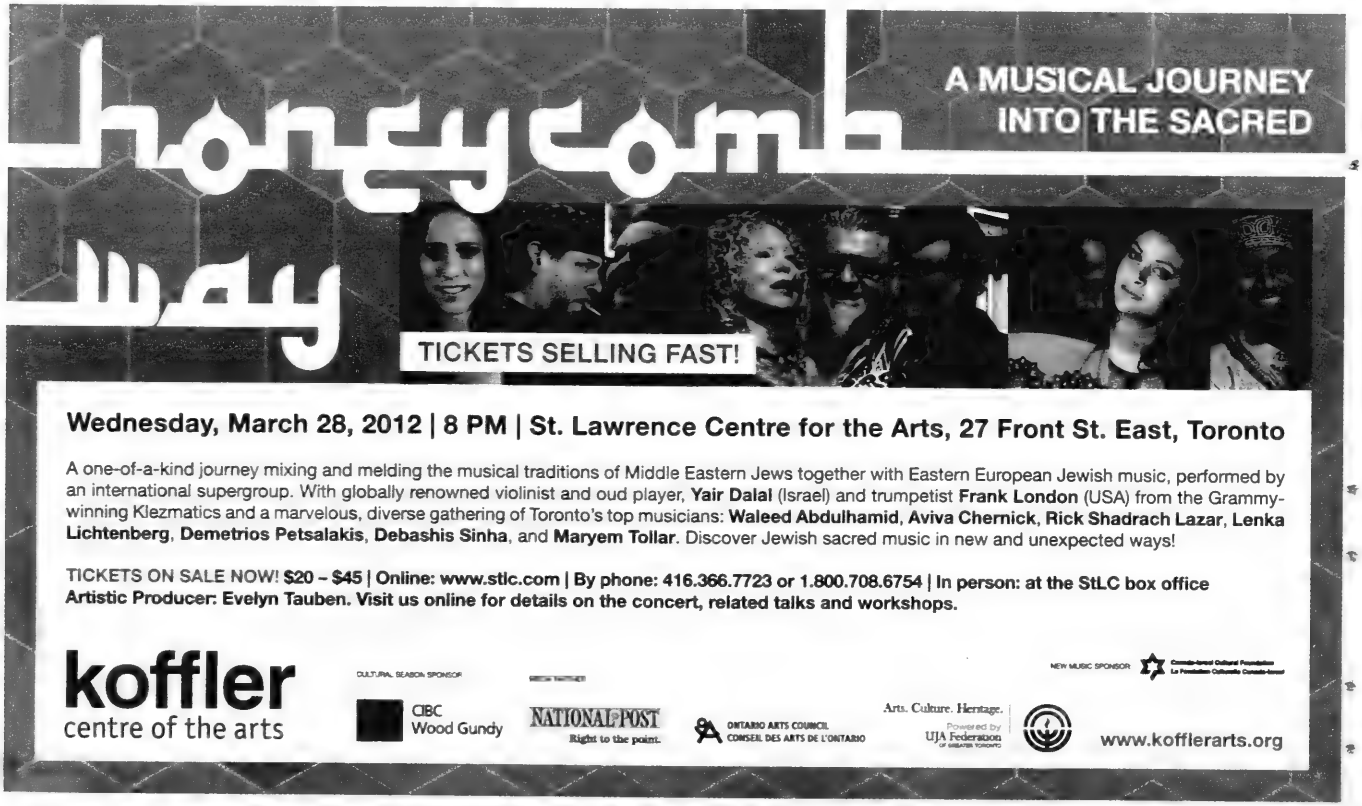
• **Liz Pearl**, editor of the Living Legacies series of creative non-fiction by Canadian Jewish women, is featured in the fifth annual Canadian Hadassah-WIZO Literary Levee, which includes a reading, discussion, light dinner and silent auction. Presented by Miriam and ATID chapters of CHW-Toronto Centre. $36. Reuben Cipin Healthy Living Community, 2 Neptune Dr. Thursday, March 22, 6:30 p.m. 416-630-8373, www.chw.ca/toronto

• Usher in the month of Nisan with Night without a Moon: Jewish Women's Cabaret. The evening of song and storytelling is hosted by **Annie Gilbert** and features the music of **Marcia Beck**, **Tova Kardonne**, **Marni Levitt** and **Ilana Newman**. $10 in advance, $15 at the door. Miles Nadal JCC, Saturday, March 24, 8 to 11:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 0, sharonis@mnjcc.org

• **Janusz Makuch**, director of the Krakow Jewish Culture Festival, presents a talk on Jewish culture in contemporary Poland. Miles Nadal JCC, Sunday, March 25, 2 to 4 p.m. Co-presented by Miles Nadal, Ashkenaz Foundation and Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation; $10 at the door. 416-924-6211, ext. 154, sharonis@mnjcc.org

• Four community leaders and philanthropists dance to raise funds for Baycrest's research on aging and brain health. **Andrea Martin** hosts the third annual Dancing With Our Stars in support of the Baycrest Foundation, with judges **Dina Pugliese**, **Rex Harrington** and **Jean-Marc Genereux**. Tickets start at $1,000. Allstream Centre, 105 Princes Blvd., Thursday, March 29, 6 p.m. www.baycrest.org

• *Elegy: Deborah Samuel*, an exhibition of a new series of images by photo-based artist Samuel, is on view in the Royal Ontario Museum's Hilary and Galen Weston Wing, Level 2, until July 2.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Orthodox hoops team reaches Texas finals

Uri Fintzy
JTA

FORT WORTH, Texas — In Texas, they say, high school athletics are a religion. But the saying took on a new meaning earlier this month.

The Robert M. Beren Academy, a small modern Orthodox school in Houston, captured national headlines during the week. Its boys basketball team earned a berth in the state tournament 2A semifinals, but would have been forced to forfeit because the games coincided with Shabbat.

An 11th-hour legal challenge convinced the tournament organizer, the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools, or TAPPS, to accommodate the team. And on Friday, March 2, hours before the Sabbath was to begin, Nolan Catholic High School was the place to be for Houston Jews who had made the four-hour trip to cheer on their boys.

Beren reached the finals on Saturday night but lost, 46-42, to Abilene Christian High School. But even after coming up short, the game's larger significance didn't appear lost on the players. For an hour after the final whistle, fans, friends and family lingered in the gym to support the players.

"I am proud to be here," said Beren guard Isaac Mirwis. "It's more than just basketball. It's about being true to who you are."

That would seem to be the lesson of the whole episode, which saw a little-known Jewish school in Texas cast into the national spotlight for standing firm on its refusal to violate its religious principles for the sake of a basketball game. After a refusal by TAPPS to accede to Beren's request to reschedule the games, the *New York Times*, ESPN and other national news outlets picked up the story, which was also much discussed on social networks.

After a second request to TAPPS was denied, it looked like Beren was going to have to forfeit. Playing on Shabbat was never considered.

"Our priorities were never shaky," said coach Chris Cole, who is not Jewish but has coached the Beren team for 10 years. "I learned very quickly that there is no compromise as far as upholding the religious faith."

On the morning of March 1, several Beren players and parents filed a civil rights motion in federal court accusing TAPPS of religious discrimination and asking for a temporary restraining order and a preliminary injunction. Before a judge had time to rule on the matter, TAPPS acquiesced and said it would reschedule the games.

"The experience gave us the opportunity to show how much we care about religion," said senior Isaac Buchine. "The way you make something special is to sacrifice something that is much greater for it."

With the scheduling victory, it was time for basketball, and the atmosphere in the Nolan Catholic gym was electric for the Friday afternoon semifinal game. Beren students who had been allowed to leave school early, families with kids, elderly couples, local basketball fans and rabbis crowded the bleachers. One young fan held a sign that read, "Be a mensch."

Beren also got some support from an unexpected source – members of the Burton Adventist Academy soccer team showed up to cheer them on. Burton had its own beef with TAPPS a few years before over a Saturday soccer game that TAPPS had declined to reschedule.

"The doors were blown wide off," said Kevin Klein, the Burton coach, of Beren's earning the right to compete. "Sabbath keepers across Texas don't have to fear not being able to play."

Dallas Covenant proved little challenge in the semifinals for the Stars. Led by junior Zach Yoshor, the Stars breezed to a 58-46 victory and a spot in the Saturday-night final.

"We kind of blocked everything out and focused on playing basketball," Yoshor said.

After the game, the Stars returned to their hotel to prepare for the final and observe the Sabbath, with special services hosted by the Dallas Jewish community. The next night, with the game set for 8 p.m., not long after Shabbat ended, the team didn't arrive until only minutes before tipoff.

In the locker room, Cole tried to fire up his players.

"Now there are no regrets," he told them. "You are representing your school, your family and your faith. Make everybody proud."

After a short prayer, the game began. It was a sloppy one for the Stars, with turnovers and easy shots missed. Beren seemed unable to cope with Abilene's defence.

Despite trailing through much of the first half, Beren managed to forge a 19-19 tie shortly before halftime. But a quick rally to start the second half pushed Abilene ahead for good. After the game the Beren players were left in tears, but they had inspired a community.

Robert Beren, the school's namesake, recognized the point wasn't the outcome of a basketball game.

"Win or lose," Beren said, "this whole experience was a victory for everyone."

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JERUSALEM RUNNERS: An Orthodox Jew, wearing regular street clothes, and other runners cross the finish line of the half-marathon race during the International Jerusalem Marathon last week. ***[Miriam Alster/Flash90 photo]***

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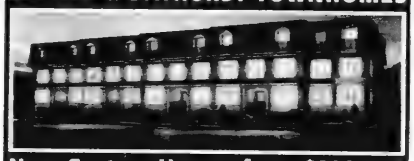

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Tweeting aboard the Queen streetcar

Participants will be able to ride the 501 streetcar and interact with their mobile phones.

Kathryn Kates
Special to The CJN

One performance sure to be on track at the theatre festival Free Fall '12: Performance Without a Net is *Route 501 Revisited.*

Participants are invited to hop aboard Toronto's 501 Queen streetcar, from Neville Park to Long Branch, for a guided tour, discussion and tweeting conducted by Toronto journalist Jonathan Goldsbie. The tweeting will revolve around the goings-on both in and outside of the streetcar.

Goldsbie, a journalist specializing in Toronto City Hall and municipal affairs, writes in the *National Post* and appears on TV station CP24 every Monday, although he's best known for his Twitter feed, where he breaks local news and gossip, and shares live tweets from political meetings and events.

Free Fall '12, presented by the Theatre Centre, features groundbreaking performance art by emerging and established artists from across Canada. The festival is co-curated by the Theatre Centre's artistic director Franco Boni and Praxis Theatre's Michael Wheeler.

"I got to know Michael Wheeler through activism, politics and through working at the Fringe Festival," says Goldsbie. "He and Franco Boni had been looking at what some performance arts companies in the States had done, in terms of using Twitter as a medium for performance arts, as a way to having it as the primary venue for a larger conceptual performance project. So, they approached me to come up with something using Twitter."

Jonathan Goldsbie

Having never been offered a budget for a project before, Goldsbie jumped at the chance to charter a streetcar, an idea he had had for a while. He was fascinated by the image you get when you sit [in the] centre back seat of a streetcar and get a perfect symmetrical view simultaneously of the outside and the inside.

"When Michael and Franco explained to me that their broad curatorial vision of the festival was around the topics of the interplay between private space and public space, I had this idea for a Twitter-based streetcar tour," says Goldsbie. "Inside no one would be actually interacting, just on their phones – commenting on the world outside in this digital, online, virtual realm.

"On one level, it is sort of a funny parody of the average commute anyway, in which people are crammed together in a public space, but very few people are interacting. They are all buried in their phones."

Goldsbie wants people to come away from the experience entertained as well as enlightened about the environment of Queen Street. He thinks the concept is strong, weird and funny enough, and hopes to be pleasantly surprised by the participants' reactions.

He is leading the event twice. On March 27, at 7 p.m., participants are invited to board a chartered streetcar at Neville Park, and then on March 31, at 1 p.m., participants will board at Neville Park, on a public ride.

For more information about Free Fall '12, including Route 501 Revisited, *call 416-538-0988 or visit online at www.freefall12.eventbrite.ca and/or www.theatrecentre.org. Goldsbie can be followed on Twitter at @ Goldsbie.*

Check out our blog @ heebonics.ca

HEEBONICS

NEW SOFTWARE FOR KIDS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

Cara Edell
Special to The CJN

Sara Winter has been an aide for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) at home and at school, including her own 11-year-old nephew, for over a decade.

A professional dancer, Winter had sustained a knee injury and was recovering from surgery shortly after her nephew was diagnosed. He needed a therapist, and working with him "was mostly a practical decision at first, but what happened was that I got to be with [my nephew] every day and see him navigate his life."

Winter, who worked as her nephew's educational assistant while he was a student at the Toronto Heschel School, said another perk to working with him was being able to experience a Jewish education, second-hand.

"I didn't attend day school... It was a gift to be able to explore Judaism through the kids I was in class with, and a very meaningful experience," she said.

Winter added that although her efforts were meant to help her nephew, she also benefited from and was inspired by his strength.

"I had no idea how much one little boy would change the way I looked at everything," said the 38-year-old Winnipeg native.

After a skirmish one day at recess that left her nephew upset, Winter encouraged him to type a note to his parents on her Blackberry to convey his feelings.

"I was completely astounded by the level of sophistication he was showing by expressing himself in this way. I realized in that moment that I had been underestimating him, and if I was underestimating him, who else in his immediate community was, and what opportunities was he missing out on as a result?"

As diverse as the challenges are that can accompany a diagnosis of ASD, Winter said she thinks the biggest challenge is that "these kids are often misunderstood because they communicate differently. Many environments are not conducive to receiving the information they're putting out."

It was then that Winter, who has been trained in the use of several therapies, realized there should be software for kids with autism "that isn't therapy and isn't gaming, but something in between. Something that took [her nephew's] communication style and sensory processing into consideration and made it safe for him to communicate not only with parents and peers, but with himself."

Sara Winter

She spoke to her family and "in a leap of faith," decided to create Squag – an innovative social platform designed specifically for tweens and teens (ages eight to 18) with autism.

The service, which includes a desktop application and a website, offers these children a safe and comfortable online space where they can practise their communication skills and gain self-confidence.

Winter said Squag was designed to build "organic relationships" driven by the kids and supported by their parents. As a social, recreational and creative outlet for these children, Squag gives users a chance to self-reflect before reaching out to their peers.

"We built this platform based on our loved one," Winter said. Squag was one of her nephew's first words (his word for "square" back in the early days of his diagnosis and treatment therapy).

"The word reminds us how far he's come and how far we know he'll go."

Once a parent registers and is approved to be part of the Squag community, their first task is to set up their child's Squagpad, Winter said.

"They curate content and post positive messages for their son or daughter to see when they arrive in their room. The Squagpad is a beautiful private space, with no file sharing of any kind."

When the users arrive in their Squagpad, they are surrounded by all of their favourite things. They can watch videos, browse photos and write in their journal. They can scroll over their room, see notes from their parents and brainstorm their own ideas to share with their peers, Winter said.

Still in its early stages, Squagpad is now in a testing phase before its wider launch this spring. Through a matching system monitored by parents, users are offered a small sample of Squaggers to connect with. If the other user accepts, their Squagpads pop up together and the original thoughts they've created about themselves become available to spark conversation.

"Squagging is always one on one, based on matching criteria set up by the user's parents. Users have an opportunity to reach out to their peers based on common interests and shared experiences. Squag offers kids on the autism spectrum a safe corner of the web, where they can self-reflect, break down the big idea of friendship and build confidence to take with them where ever they go."

Winter said one of the reasons she thinks kids with autism are often misunderstood is that they have trouble adjusting emotionally in their home or school environment.

"When kids are regulated, and out of fright/flight mode, they are available to learn and therefore connect. That's what we're out to do. To give them a place that's safe in every way, offering a little bit of extra time to respond and create original ideas."

Almost 300 families from 12 different countries are now testing Squag, Winter said.

Many of the children have given feedback on how the features work, and she is paying close attention to their input.

"The goal is to give them an opportunity to ask for what they need and want to see down the road. Some of the older teens do not like all the parent involvement, which is something to consider for this specific group of users only."

She said the children "really want to connect with other Squaggers. They want to be able to talk about their unique interests that aren't necessarily validated in their daily lives."

Creating a Squagpad can be done through a free trial offer, but there is a monthly fee of $7.99 to maintain the account. For more information, please go to www.squag.com.

Winter said she plans to donate 10 per cent of Squag's proceeds to special needs organizations.

As one of the first Certified B corporations in Canada – those that use business to solve social and environmental problems – Squag meets higher standards of social and environmental performance, transparency and accountability, Winter said.

More news for young Jews on heebonics.ca

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אז אני צפונית

נינה שנהב
nina.shenhav@gmail.com

"משהו עצוב מאוד התגלה לי בסוף השבוע שעבר. כשהיינו במלון". פותחת טלי. כשאנחנו מתיישבות לקפה השבועי. "הסתכלת במראות של המעליות? זו התאורה, ממי, את לא כל כך מקומטת". אני מנחמת. טלי: איזה מראות? לא, אני מדברת על משהו אחר. אני: עמדת רק עם חזייה ותחתונים והסתכלת במראה של האמבטיה? זו התאורה החולנית של האמבטיות בבתי המלון. את לא שמנה. טלי: תגידי, מה עובר עליך? אין לי בעייה עם איך שאני נראית. אני נראית טוב מאוד! אולי לא מאוד. אולי לא טוב...אבל עזבי, זה לא העניין. או שכן? (בוחנת אותי במתח). נו, אז את לא מתכוונת לשאול אותי כבר משהו?

אני (מהורהרת): כן. ניראה לך שהפעם זה רציני, החבר של ג'ניפר אניסטון?

טלי: מה? זה מה שיש לך לשאול אותי. אחרי הדקלרציה שלי, של משהו עצוב מאוד שהתגלה לי?! (ואחרי שתיקה קלה) ולך ניראה שג'ניפר וההוא מתאימים?

אני: סליחה, חומד. מה קרה לך? ולשאלתך-לא. אני לא חרשבת שהם מתאימים.

טלי (נאנחת): גילית שבן זוגי היקר בשום אופן לא מסוגל להיות רומנטי. הוא כבר לא עושה לי את זה, וחמור מזה: אני, כניראה, כבר לא עושה לו את זה.

אני: את צריכה להתרגל לזה שהוא גונב מגבות. תביני אותו - הן שם, יבחינם.

טלי: בארוחת ערב הוא בחר את היין הכי זול. וככה הוא גם אמר למלצר- תביא את היין הכי זול שלכם. את יודעת איך התביישתי מהמלצר? ובמעלית הוא הסתכל על איזו קנדית יפה, וקרץ לי. קרץ לי! מה. אני חבר שלו מהמילואים?!

אני: אידיוט! אנחנו אשמות שהקנדיות כאלה יפות? ועוד בתאורה של מעלית!

טלי: זה לא הפוינט, נינה. ואחרי המקלחת אמרתי לו בוא נראה הערב ביחד את השקיעה? ומה הוא אומר? עזבי, נחכה שזה ייצא בדי.וי.די. את קולטת?!

אני: ככה לא מתנהגים אליך! חוצפן עלוב. את צריכה לעזוב אותו מייד!

טלי (בוחנת אותי): מה לעזוב אותו?

אני: מה עוד הוא עשה, הפסיכי? בטח לא קנה לך אפילו פרח מהאלה שמסתובבים בין השולחנות, ומציעים לגברים לקנות ורד לאהובתן היקרה.

טלי: הוא לא פסיכי! הוא לא קנה לי פרח, כי הוא יודע שאני אלרגית לפרחים. הוא מכיר אותי. הוא יודע שאני אוהבת מגבות גבוהות וגם נייר טואלט ולפעמים מאפרות, ושאני שונאת לבזבז סתם על יין. וזה שהוא קרץ לי, אומר שאנחנו באדיר, שהוא סומך עלי. הוא משוגע עלי. פשוט קשה לו להראות, זה הכל.

אני: אז זה מה שאני אומרת, הוא אוהב אותך, תשמחי!

טלי (בחיוך): את צודקת בכל מילה. הוא באמת אוהב אותי, הטמבל. שנזמין?

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1/4 tsp ground black pepper
1 matzo cracker, crumbled

Preheat oven to 400°F. Oil a large baking sheet and set aside. In a small bowl, whisk together mustard and mayonnaise. Season salmon all over with salt and pepper. Brush top of each fillet with mustard mixture; sprinkle generously with matzo crumbs, pressing them down to form a crust. Transfer salmon, matzo side up, to prepared baking sheet and spray with oil. Bake until just cooked through, about 10 min.

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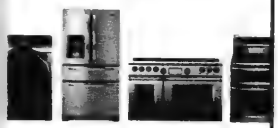

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On cjnews.com

The CJN's French-language reporter in Montreal, Elias Levy, writes about:

Moroccan filmaker Kamal Hachkar who talks about his recent film on the history of the Berber Jews from Tinghir, Morocco, who have immigrated to Israel.

Exclusive to cjnews.com

The CJN's Hebrew-language columnist, Yosef Tastassa, discusses whether withdrawal from the territories can bring peace.

The common experience of mass atrocity suffered by the Jewish, Rwandan, Cambodian and other communities living in Montreal is the subject of a yearlong exhibition at the Centre d'histoire de Montréal in Old Montreal.

After almost 60 years, Jews are gathering once again at the former Chevra Kadisha synagogue and community life is being revived with the influx of mostly younger people to the area. Here, Mile End Chavurah members light candles during a musical Kabbalat Shabbat service led by Rachel Kronick, right.

What's the big deal about hair?

Hair is neither inconspicuous nor insignificant. What other body part encourages such wonderment, gossip and instruction?

Actor Jennifer Aniston's various Hollywood hairstyles have been copied by many women, and long-haired singer Willie Nelson inspired seniors to grow their hair out. I once met a Breslever Chassid who had the traditional haredi buzz cut, but his payot (side curls) were coiffed and deliberately stylized – jet black and cylindrically curly like a tornado. Their hair speaks to us.

Urban Writer

Avrum Rosensweig

Hair is a big deal in the Orthodox world. There are many *halachot* (Jewish laws) surrounding it, such as how much hair is considered a barrier between you and your tfillin. There's also a tradition that requires a male child to wait until he's three years old before having his locks cut, while Jewish women are commanded to cover their hair, and some even shave it off.

According to Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch's (1808-1888) commentary on the Torah, our mouth and eyes represent the physical parts of our body, while our foreheads embody the intellectual.

Rabbi Hirsch states that the physical requires special supervision, so that we don't "slide into a pattern of self-destruction," and therein lies the significance of hair. It's a point we need to focus on in order to ensure that hair is used for good. This great sage teaches us that hair is about sensuality control, therefore a woman must wear a head covering. Men have payot (which separate the sensual part of the brain from the intellectual), and young boys have their first haircut at three as a way of instructing them to use their intelligence to control their deeds.

After reading Rabbi Hirsch's explanation, it begins to make sense why people seem to take great interest, and sometimes offence, in the length of other folks' hair.

Throughout my life, I've been approached by people young and old asking me why my hair is so long. "Why don't you get a haircut?" Nowadays, they ask the same about my son, Noah River.

(Since I was a child, having long hair meant a lot to me. I'm not sure why, but after getting haircuts, I would be petrified to return to school, fearing such epithets as, "Rosensweig, did you bump into a lawnmower?" Unfortunately, later on, having short hair was just as important to my father and the rabbis in my yeshiva as my long hair was to me.)

I tell hair-curious people that Noah and I love long hair, but they're rarely satisfied. A Jewish community leader once told me that I'd do better in life with shorter hair. I responded that I had just received a promotion. He rebutted, "You would do even better." I smiled at him. I had little to say. In his mind, my sensuality control was dialed too high, and it made him feel out of control.

I don't know what it's like to be bald. I understand that it can be very traumatic. I do know, however, the tribulations of having a thick mane of hair that symbolizes for many a lack of conformity, and perhaps even a lascivious nature.

While I understand the mystical view put forward by Rabbi Hirsch, it might serve us better to pay less attention to the crown of hair atop a person's head and more to the body that's carrying it and the soul that lies within it.

After all, do we really know what lurks in the nature of the finely cut?

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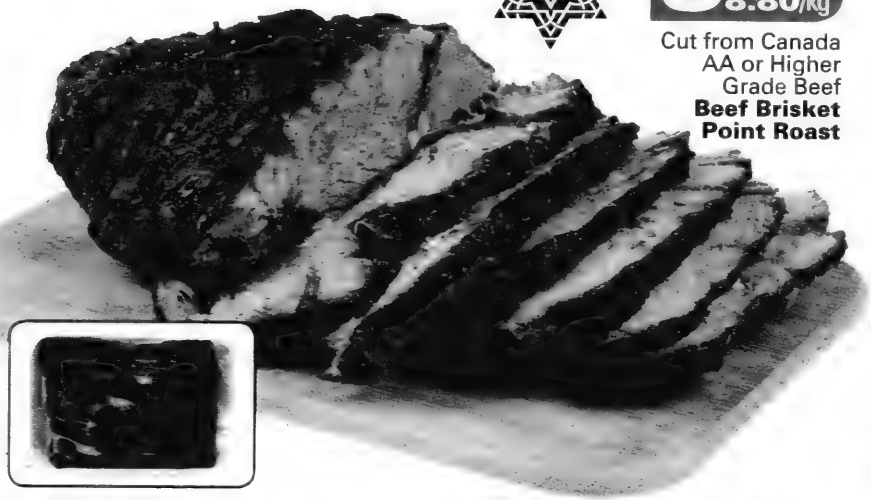

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Israel, Diaspora: ties that bind

Poll shows high level of concern for fellow Jews

Paul Lungen
Staff Reporter

Israel is known as the home of the Jewish People, but to what extent do Israelis concern themselves about Jews living outside their country?

Quite a bit, as it turns out.

A recent poll of 500 Israelis commissioned by the Jewish Agency found high levels of concern for Diaspora Jewry, with 76 reporting that they believe Israelis and Diaspora Jews are mutually responsible for each other.

The poll, conducted by the Dahaf Institute, also found that 91 per cent of Israelis believe the country should assist Jewish communities during crises, and 81 per cent believe Jews in Israel and abroad feel they are all part of a single people. Eighty-nine per cent agree that the relationship between Jews in Israel and the Diaspora contributes to the Jewish People's continued existence.

The findings vindicate the view that "Israelis are part of the Jewish world and that Israel is the state of the Jewish People," said Shoel Silver, a member of the Jewish Agency for Israel's executive and chair of its budget and finance committee. "It endorses the view we had that the Jewish Agency tries to be the bridge between the Diaspora and Israel that goes in both directions."

Continued on page 44

Jewish Agency chair Natan Sharansky

New NDP leader strongly backs Israel

Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf
Staff Reporter

Not only is Thomas Mulcair the new leader of the official Opposition, he's a strong backer of Israel and has many ties to the Jewish community.

The New Democrat MP for Outremont won the party's leadership race last Saturday.

Mulcair, 57, is familiar with the Jewish community, having served as Liberal MNA for the multicultural Montreal-area riding of Chomedey from 1994 to 2007 and as New Democrat MP for Outremont since the 2007 federal election.

Thomas Mulcair

In April 2008, Mulcair addressed a Montreal audience at a gala event hosted by *Tribune Juive* magazine – a French-language publication whose aim is to educate Quebecers about Jewish and Israeli culture – telling the crowd in French that he will always be a supporter of Israel for numerous reasons.

"My wife, Catherine Pinhas, who was born in France and whose family is of Turkish origin, is a descendant of the Sephardim who were expelled from Spain in 1492," Mulcair told the audience.

"When we here think of 1492, we think of Christopher Columbus and his arrival in America. But for Sephardi Jews, 1492 evokes their expulsion from Spain by the Catholic monarchs. One of the most gracious gestures I have ever seen in politics took place in 1992, when King Juan Carlos I of Spain went to a Madrid synagogue to ask for pardon."

He added: "My in-laws are Holocaust survivors. Their history is part of my daily life.

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CANADA

Deportation Fought

TORONTO — A Muslim lesbian couple who fear relatives will kill them if they're deported to their native Israel will get another refugee hearing, a Federal Court of Canada judge ruled. Iman Musa and Majida Mugrabi arrived in Canada in 2007 and had subsequent refugee claims rebuffed. They appealed, and were granted a new hearing based on new evidence that one of Mugrabi's cousins murdered his sister in a 2000 "honour killing," the *Toronto Sun* reported.

WORLD

Swastikas Found

BUFFALO — Swastikas directed against Jewish students were found at two U.S. universities. A swastika and an antisemitic epithet were scratched into the door of the campus Hillel at the University of Buffalo. The attack occurred earlier this month when students were away for spring break. Meanwhile, swastikas were scratched into two cars, and tires were slashed on two other cars, belonging to members of the historically Jewish Zeta Beta Tau fraternity at Washington University in St. Louis. The attack occurred March 15 or 16 and was discovered when students returned from spring break. A female acquaintance of one of the fraternity members confessed to the vandalism.

U.S. Burial Expected

MUNICH — Convicted Nazi war criminal John Demjanjuk will be buried near his home in Cleveland. The U.S. Consulate in Munich confirmed his body will be returned to his family. Jewish leaders are concerned his grave could become a neo-Nazi shrine. Demjanjuk, 91, died March 17 in a German old-age home, where he was free while appealing his May 2011 conviction for his role in the murder of 27,900 people at the Sobibor death camp. The Ukraine-born retired autoworker immigrated to the United States after World War II. In 1986, he was tried in Israel on charges of being the notorious Treblinka guard "Ivan the Terrible." He was sentenced to death, but Israel's Supreme Court released him due to reasonable doubt that he was Ivan while noting strong evidence emerged at trial that he'd been a Sobibor guard.

'Red Ken' At It Again

LONDON — Ken Livingstone, the former mayor of London seeking to reclaim his post, used language that was nearly "classic antisemitism" in a meeting with the city's Jewish leaders, the leaders said. Livingstone, of the Labour party, said Jews would not vote for him because "the Jewish community is rich," according to a letter about the March 1 meeting from the leaders to party leader Ed Miliband, obtained by the *Jewish Chronicle*. Livingstone met with the Jewish leaders to discuss his accepting money from Iranian state broadcaster Press TV and his support of a radical Muslim cleric.

Another Delay in Diab Extradition Case

Hassan Diab

OTTAWA — Justice Minister Rob Nicholson didn't give reasons why he has delayed for a second time a decision on whether to extradite a former University of Ottawa sociology professor in connection with a deadly 1980 Paris shul bombing.

Hassan Diab was committed for extradition to France last summer, and Nicholson was due to make a decision in the case by late February, but Diab's lawyer said then that the minister had asked for another month because of "new material and new assessment of the French case," the *Ottawa Citizen* reported.

Diab, 57, was arrested in Ottawa in 2008. The case hinges on controversial handwriting evidence linking him to the crime. The judge said it was enough to warrant extradition, but added the French case would likely be too weak to convict him in a Canadian trial.

Diab's lawyer will likely take the case to the Federal Court of Appeal if Nicholson rules against him.

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Schools review security after Toulouse attack

Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf
Staff Reporter

Local Jewish day schools have tightened security measures in the wake of the murders at the Ozar Hatorah day school in Toulouse, France, earlier this month.

Bialik's head of school Shana Harris said the school has reviewed its security protocols with all staff and beefed up security details.

"We have hired additional security, and informed parents of what we are doing," she said. The school has also sent a letter of condolence to Ozar Hatorah.

The Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School has also gone over its security protocols and increased vigilance among staff.

Principal Rhonda Rosenheck said her school's security is handled by the Miles Nadal JCC, where the downtown school is housed, but upon hearing of the shootings in France, she spoke with the security staff and the centre's executive director "for assurance that they were on heightened alert."

"They were and are. They had [also] received direction from the UJA Federation security advisory group. Our office personnel also have been keeping a sharpened eye at the school entrance area, which is well inside the JCC," she said.

In an e-mail sent to parents March 21, Associated Hebrew Day Schools executive director Elliott Brodkin said Associated decided to also follow advice it received from the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) and UJA Federation of Greater Toronto and "not hire extra security guards for each of our buildings."

He said CIJA and the federation indicated that the Toronto Jewish community "was not under any heightened or imminent threat."

However, Brodkin wrote that his school has elevated "the frequency and visibility" of its staff's external patrols and supervision, and that both the York Regional Police and the Toronto Police have agreed to "make additional visits and patrols to all our branches for the foreseeable future."

CIJA confirmed the community was briefed on security issues last week.

CEO Shimon Fogel said his organization had already been in ongoing contact with schools and institutions about such matters even before the tragic events in Toulouse.

Continued on page 7

Doron Horowitz

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Two new Haggadot

From the editor's desk...

It is my custom at this time of year to bring to readers' attention new Pesach Haggadot that have landed on my desk. It is a custom happily transforming into a personal pre-holiday tradition.

* * *

Every immigrant – especially moving from autocracy to democracy – to a new land, new society, new language, new home, to new-found freedom, will likely be sensitized to the story of the Exodus from Egypt.

It is unlikely however that any such modern immigrant would be as sensitized or as understanding of the Exodus story as the Ethiopian Jews who have arrived in Israel these past 30 years.

Their mostly heroic and heart-stopping stories are widely chronicled, but not perhaps widely known by the younger generation of Jews. Thus, the publication by Koren Publishers Jerusalem of the *Koren Ethiopian Haggada Journey to Freedom* is an exceedingly welcome addition to the already sizable bookshelf of Pesach Haggadot.

As we know, in the Haggadah, the ancient rabbis direct us to see ourselves as if we were the slaves actually exiting ancient Egypt. It is a deeply personal bidding that requires us to stretch our imaginations and feel from the touch of our own experiences, the epochal upheaval of trekking away from slave masters toward an unknown and unknowable future. It is not an easy thing to do for those of us born after the creation of the State of Israel in a land that has not known the falling of rockets and bombs since the War of 1812.

But the *Koren Haggada* helps us fulfil the rabbinic direction, helps us feel the essential seder command by lifting our thoughts from the realm of imagination to that of actual, recent history.

The *Koren Haggada* is edited by Rabbi Menachem Waldman, an activist for Ethiopian Jewry and a scholar of their history and folkways. He has compiled a richly informative anthology of original first-person testimonies and stories, documents and photographs, most seen for the first time, of variously poignant aspects of the Ethiopian Jews' experiences in Ethiopia and in the harrowing exodus to the State of Israel.

In the book's foreword, Rabbi Waldman explains his reasons for creating the *Koren Haggada*. Among his reasons for doing so was the desire "to help introduce Ethiopian Jewry and its particular traditions into the mainstream of Jewish communal heritage. There is nothing like the Haggadah and the seder night to unite all the Jews of the world around a singular experience of their Jewishness. From this point on, the heritage of Ethiopian Jewry will have its place at the Seder table."

Reading from the *Koren Ethiopian Haggada Journey to Freedom* adds a special dimension of comprehension, self-identification and empathy with the liberation from slavery that are the commanded core of seder night.

* * *

"A radical act of empathy" is how the acclaimed novelist Jonathan Safran Foer describes the seder night experience of reading the Haggadah.

"The Haggadah is our book of living memory. We are not merely telling a story here. We are being called to a radical act of empathy. Here we are, embarking on an ancient perennial attempt to give human life – our lives – dignity.

Safran writes these words at the beginning of the *New American Haggadah*, which he edited (Little, Brown and Company). The *New American Haggadah* is a thoughtful, imaginative, inventive collaboration among at least eight of the brightest, most creative young Jewish minds today.

The award-winning writer Nathan Englander provides the translations from the Hebrew and Aramaic text into English.

Oded Ezer is the book's designer.

Provocative, insightful commentaries are provided in the text by Nathaniel Deutsch, Jeffrey Goldberg, Rebecca Newberger Goldstein and Lemony Snicket. A historical timeline that appears throughout the Haggadah was compiled by Mia Sara Bruch.

New American Haggadah is a visually stunning work, with as much thought given to its esthetics as to its formidable text. It is a hugely intriguing and exciting effort by a younger, 30-something-plus generation of committed Jews to bring new, different perspectives to the ever-regenerating story of the Exodus.

As Foer notes, "The need for new Haggadahs does not imply the failure of existing ones, but the struggle to engage everyone at the table in a time that has not come before." With obvious deep respect and reverence for the traditions of our people and especially for the irreplaceable role of the Haggadah in enshrining and carrying those traditions forward, Foer, Englander, Ezer and company add immensely to the inter-generational vitality of this wonderfully "radical act of empathy" that we call the Pesach seder.

– MBD

SeeJN

Running in Jerusalem rain for charity

Rabbi Reuven Tradburks, former spiritual leader of Kehillat Shaarei Torah of Toronto and former president of the Vaad Harabonim of Toronto, recently ran in the Jerusalem Marathon, raising more than $2,000 for the Koby Mandell Foundation. Fifteen runners joined Team Koby Mandell and raised over $10,000 for the foundation. It rained and hailed on the runners, but they persisted nevertheless.

Catholic teachers pass resolution on Israel

Paul Lungen
Staff Reporter

The Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association (OECTA) recently adopted a statement calling on Israel to lift the "blockade" of Gaza and for Israel to remove the security barrier it constructed "to protect Israelis from acts of terrorist suicide bombers."

The document, passed at the organization's annual general meeting (AGM), held March 10 to 12 in Windsor, states that Israel's "occupation of the West Bank, the existence of illegal Israeli settlements there and their impacts on the lives of Palestinians...along with the siege surrounding Gaza" imposes severe hardships "for basic provisions of education in Palestine."

Although unduly critical of Israel, the resolution adopted by the 45,000-member union could have been worse, said Len Rudner, director of community relations and outreach for the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA).

Document calls for removal of security barrier, end of 'blockade' of Gaza

At one point, a resolution calling for boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) was being advanced by one of the union's locals, but it was sidetracked at the meeting and a less critical one was adopted, he said.

"The resolution is certainly an improvement over the one originally slated for discussion and debate," he said. "The fact that OECTA did not consider a BDS resolution can be seen as another defeat for the folks who say BDS is the only way to bring Israel to heel."

The document adopted by the teachers' group is a statement passed by the sixth World Congress of Education International (EI), a global federation of teachers' unions. The EI document in turn is based on a 2010 resolution of the International Trade Union Confederation.

OECTA president Kevin O'Dwyer said the teachers, in passing the statement, were "trying to find something balanced."

"I'm not sure what the membership will do with this document... It will be in the hands of the members to say where it will go and what we want it to do for us," he said.

At past AGMs, resolutions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict had been up for consideration but did not reach the floor for a vote. This one was passed by a show-of-hands vote of the 650 teachers attending the meeting, he said.

"This is all part of the ongoing democratic process our organization has been engaged in since 1944," O'Dwyer added.

Clauses included in the statement call on Israeli and Palestinian teachers to urge their governments to end violence and negotiate a settlement. It also resolves to lobby for creation of a Palestinian state, and it "rejects all curricular materials that incite racial and ethnic hatred."

Palestinian Media Watch and the Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education have reported on numerous occasions that school texts in the Palestinian territories routinely deny Jewish ties to the land, demonize Israel, reject peace, refer to Israel as occupied Palestinian territory, and urge jihad.

Asked why the resolution failed to single out Palestinian materials and blandly suggested both sides incite hatred, O'Dwyer said the union took a position on "where it wants to go."

He said the document "stands on what it stands on."

Rudner said the statement adopted by OECTA was based on a faulty understanding of history, and although it condemns Israel's West Bank security barrier, "there is no reference within the resolution to the reasons for the fence – 1,200 killed and more than 8,000 wounded in terrorist attacks since 2000."

The resolution refers to Israeli "occupation" but "occupation is not the cause of the problems, it's the result. The hostility of Arab states to Israel predates 1967 [when Israel occupied the West Bank]," Rudner said.

Adding to CIJA's concerns was that "this debate was going on the same time that terrorists in Gaza were pumping 200 missiles into Israel, each an attempt at murder." Some, Rudner noted, landed in Israeli schools.

"OECTA was in Windsor, but they were in a bubble," he said.

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Toulouse murders show why Israel is needed

In response to the horrific murder of three Jewish children and a rabbi earlier this month at a Jewish school in Toulouse, France, Eli Wiesel asked: "Will the hatred of the Jews ever finally vanish? Will Jewish children always be in danger?"

He observed: "When a blood-thirsty Jew-hater wants to kill Jews, he goes first to the Jewish schools. Jewish children are his primary target."

Yet speaking of the old, well-established and "dynamic" Jewish community of that city, Wiesel added: "In the streets, you can see Jews wearing yarmulkes. Nobody thinks of antisemitism. Spiritually, it is one of the richest Jewish communities in France."

Others, however, paint a somewhat different picture – describing Jews who are afraid to wear yarmulkes publicly.

Jean-Yves Camus of the Institute of International and Strategic Relations in France noted (in *Ha'aretz* on March 20) that "although the Toulouse killings are the most dramatic and deadly anti-Jewish action for decades, they are only the most shocking among the 400 antisemitic incidents that are recorded every year by the community's protection service, the SPCJ. Since the beginning of the second intifadah in 2000, the level of antisemitic attacks has been rising, with a peak of more than 900 in 2004. And regardless of the real efforts of the French government, police and justice authorities, the level of attacks remains much higher than in the 1990s."

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

The rise in antisemitism has been noted in a report by the Anti-Defamation League that was (coincidentally) released on March 20 and picked up by some major media outlets, including Reuters. According to the study, "pernicious antisemitic beliefs continue to be held [overall] by nearly one-third of those surveyed" – with levels up in nine of 10 European countries surveyed.

Nearly a quarter of French citizens hold antisemitic attitudes, an increase of 20 per cent since 2009. This compares with 63 per cent of Hungarians, 53 per cent of Spaniards, and 48 per cent of Poles. The lowest numbers in the study were found in Britain (17 per cent) and Germany (21 per cent). Indicators included whether respondents believe Jews have too much power in business, are more loyal to Israel than to their own country, or "talk too much" about the Holocaust.

"The survey is disturbing by the fact that antisemitism remains at high levels across the continent and infects many Europeans at a much higher level than we see here in the United States," warned Abraham Foxman of the ADL.

In the March 21 *Globe and Mail*, reporting from Toulouse, Doug Saunders observed that in response to threats from the far-right in France, the Jewish community had taken all sorts of security measures at the school, including security guards, iron gates, high walls and video surveillance. Sadly, no measure provides total protection against a determined killer.

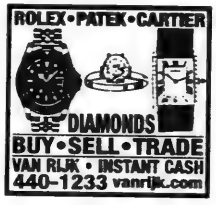
Saunders is right to point out Jew-hatred from the radical right, which also directs hatred toward Muslim immigrants. But as the Toulouse murders demonstrate, Jew-hatred from Muslim extremists is also a serious concern.

Antisemitism is spread not just by the violent ideology at the core of Jihadi organizations such as Al Qaeda, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad, but also among elements in even "moderate" Muslim states like Turkey.

As the Times of Israel reported last week: "In an unprecedented move, a bipartisan U.S. commission tracking global religious freedom has recommended that the State Department name Turkey on its annual list of 'countries of particular concern.' It marks the first time a NATO ally has been designated as a nation whose government has engaged in, or tolerated, systematic and egregious violations of the universal right to freedom of religion and belief... The commission also calls out Turkey – along with Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Venezuela – for its promotion and tolerance of antisemitism."

As last week's events confirm, antisemitism can rear its ugly head in any society – from advanced democracies to theocratic dictatorships. The need for a Jewish national home in Israel, as a beacon of hope and a guarantor of security for Jews everywhere, is as real today as it was in 1948.

Paul Michaels is director of research and media relations for the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs.



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CIJA liaises with communities

Continued from page 3

"We have undertaken a long and comprehensive process of ensuring a maximum level of security – not necessarily meaning a maximum amount of security – for the community," Fogel said.

Shimon Fogel

That process, he said, includes liaising with all communities, updating and upgrading security protocols, and auditing public institutions. It also involves ongoing communication with police and the recent launch of CIJA's "community security network" initiative, which aims to create a watch group made up of community volunteers.

"We communicated with the community... and indicated [there was] no change in the threat assessment level as a result of the Toulouse tragedy. We maintain that position, while providing information, reassurance and backup to communities or specific institutions requesting it," he said.

Doron Horowitz, CIJA's director of national security infrastructure, would not go into detail on how he is specifically advising schools on proper security protocols, but he confirmed that he had spoken to numerous day schools and fielded many calls last week from apprehensive community members and institutions.

"For obvious and justified reasons, people are extremely upset. But security is not emotionally driven. As a professional, my message [to schools] is always on emergency preparedness, to have measures in place to prevent such occurrences," Horowitz said.

"Schools, synagogues and other Jewish institutions already have guidelines, protocols and policies [on security]... any time there's an incident, it's another good time to review security measures."

A heartfelt plea for increased light

Chava (Eva) Sandler, the widow of Rabbi Jonathan Sandler, who was murdered during the attack on the Toulouse, France, school last week, released the following statement.

My heart is broken. I am unable to speak. There are no ways for me to be able to express the great and all-consuming pain resulting from the murder of my dear husband, Rabbi Jonathan, and our sons, Arieh and Gabriel, and of Miriam Monsonego, daughter of the dedicated principal of Ozar Hatorah and his wife, Rabbi Yaakov and Mrs. Monsonego.

May no one ever have to endure such pain and suffering.

Because so many of you, my cherished brothers and sisters in France and around the world, are asking what you can do on my behalf, on behalf of my daughter, Liora, and on behalf of the souls of my dear husband and children, I feel that, difficult though it may be, it is incumbent upon me to answer your entreaties.

My husband's life was dedicated to teaching Torah. We moved back to the country of his birth [from Israel] to help young people learn about the beauty of Torah. He was truly a good man, loving, giving and selfless. He was sensitive to all of God's creatures, always searching for ways to reveal the goodness in others.

He and I raised Arieh and Gabriel to live the ways of Torah. Who would have known how short would be their time on this Earth, how short would be the time I would be with them as their mother?

I don't know how I and my husband's parents and sister will find the consolation and strength to carry on, but I know that the ways of God are good, and He will reveal the path and give us the strength to continue. I know that their holy souls will remain with us forever, and I know that very soon the time will come when we will be together again with the coming of Moshiach.

I wholeheartedly believe in the words of the verse: "The Lord has given, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord." I thank the Almighty for the privilege, short though it was, of raising my children together with my husband. Now the Almighty wants them back with Him.

To all those who wish to bring consolation to our family and contentment to the souls of the departed: let's continue their lives on this Earth. Parents, please kiss your children. Tell them how much you love them, and how dear it is to your heart that they be living examples of our Torah, imbued with the fear of Heaven and with love of their fellow man.

Please increase your study of Torah, whether on your own or with your family and friends. Help others who may find study difficult to achieve alone.

Please bring more light into the world by kindling the Sabbath candles this and every Friday night. The holiday of Passover is approaching. Please invite another person into your homes so that all have a place at a seder to celebrate the holiday of our freedom.

Along with our tearful remembrance of our trials in Egypt so many years ago, we still tell over how "in each and every generation, they have stood against us to destroy us." We all will announce in a loud and clear voice: "God saves us from their hands."

The spirit of the Jewish People can never be extinguished. Its connection with Torah and its commandments can never be destroyed.

May it be God's will that from this moment on we will all only know happiness.

I send my heartfelt condolences to the Monsonego family for the loss of their daughter, Miriam, and I pray for the speedy recovery of Aharon ben Leah, who was injured in the attack.

Thank you for your support and love.

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PA's way a parody

Every now and then, at regular intervals of publicly bemoaned protestations of victimhood, the Palestinian Authority (PA) has demanded tangible displays of "confidence-building measures" from Israel. Occasionally, not always – usually when the United States privately echoes those PA protests – the government of Israel complies. It invariably releases Palestinian prisoners, decreases the number of roadblocks on roads from the West Bank leading into Israel or increases trade, commercial or other permits for Palestinian businessmen, entrepreneurs and merchants.

But the reverse has never happened – at least not since September 1993 in Washington, D.C., when a Palestinian leader actually signed a document witnessed by the president of the United States rejecting violence and committing his people to a peaceful resolution of their conflict with Israel. That leader, alas, soon proved himself to be a liar. And the Palestinians have seldom, if ever, extended any confidence-building measures toward the people of Israel since then.

In fact, the Palestinian leadership regularly does the opposite. It diminishes the level of confidence that the "ordinary" Israeli yearns to feel toward them.

Last week, we saw the latest dispiriting, confidence-destroying behaviour.

Following the precedent of the infamous Goldstone inquiry for which the PA clamoured after Israel's war with Hamas in Gaza in 2008, the PA sought and obtained last Thursday from the 47-member United Nations Human Rights Council the establishment of an "independent international fact-finding mission to investigate the implications of the Israeli settlements on the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Palestinian people throughout the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem."

Like the tainted, corrupt body that created it, like the discredited inquiry into Israel's conduct in the Gaza war, this latest UN inquiry of Israel conduct will be a travesty to truth, a sick parody and a wound to real concern over human rights abuses around the world.

In response to the council vote, Israel's foreign ministry said: "The Palestinians must understand that they can't have it both ways: they can't enjoy co-operation with Israel and at the same time initiate political clashes in international forums. Had the Palestinians wanted to solve the settlements issue, they would resume without delay a direct and unconditional negotiation on all core issues within the framework of a comprehensive agreement." Canadian Foreign Minister John Baird, in condemning the council vote, effectively agreed. "We continue to call for direct negotiations between the two parties without preconditions."

So do we. So should all governments and people who seek peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

25 years ago in *The CJN*

The CIA "ran" a high-level spy in Israel's military from 1982 to '84, senior U.S. official sources told the *Jerusalem Post*. The spy was reportedly unhappy with Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon and volunteered to give limited classified information. Minnesota Republican senator David Durenberger said the U.S. move prompted Israel to accept information from U.S. Navy analyst Jonathan Pollard.

Dry Bones MA NISHTANA
OBAMA WILL WATCH ISRAEL'S BACK!
WHO SAID THAT?
THE WISE SON, THE WICKED SON, OR THE DUMB SON?
IT'S THE FIFTH QUESTION AT THIS YEAR'S SEDER.
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If Israeli ambassador is expelled

The Obama administration has indicated that it is willing to do business with Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood. The Egyptian parliament, controlled by the Muslim Brotherhood, recently passed a resolution to the effect that Israel's ambassador to Egypt should be expelled. It would be interesting to see how U.S. President Barack Obama responds to this outrageous act, which violates international law and decorum, and contravenes the provisions of the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel. It may be time for Obama to suggest that if Egypt proceeds with this decision, the United States will cancel all military and economic aid to Egypt. That will be a true test to Obama's stated commitment to peace and security to Israel.

Bert Raphael
Thornhill, Ont.

* * *

Free day school tuition

Calgary's communal initiative to offer three years free day school tuition to incoming families will surely bear good fruit for many years in the city ("Day school tuition waived in Calgary," March 22). Each child who is enabled in this way to connect fully with our heritage is a new world in the Jewish universe. Jewish education is the greatest key to Jewish continuity and the ongoing strength of our community. So what are the rest of us doing? Especially in Ontario, where the majority of Jewish children are deprived of a Jewish day school education, largely due to the oppressive costs, how many myriad worlds are being lost? As a community we need to aggressively remove all barriers to Jewish education. Why are we not doing it? We don't have the resources? Is the issue not important enough? What issue is more important or has a greater impact on the Jewish community?

Michael Orr
Toronto

* * *

Potential for human destruction

I read the excerpts from the address by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu with dread in my heart ("We must remain masters of our fate," March 15). As a 99-year-old woman, I recall vividly the reports of nuclear attacks in Japan that flattened cities and killed thousands of people and contaminated all forms of life for miles around. A bomb such as those, if launched by Iran to destroy Israel, would wipe out entire countries in the Middle East. An Israeli attack that would destroy Iranian underground nuclear facilities would also destroy other nations and humanity far and wide. Surely, we cannot have forgotten Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the potential for human destruction that imperils us all!

Josephine Spencer
Toronto

* * *

LET THEM GO...

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz

Anu banu artza

On Daniel Pipes' website, there is a video of him in an Israeli Knesset committee meeting on Islamic immigration to Israel – a really interesting phenomenon. In it, he gives a survey of what is going on in the Middle East. He states that Egypt is an importer of food for some 80 million people. However, its foreign reserves, which are used to buy food, have declined by about two-thirds during the last year. This is a scary thought, in light of your comments about Israeli agricultural technology ("Inspired by a song," From the editor's desk, March 22). From Egypt's perspective, much of the solution to their forthcoming problem is right next door.

Regarding the song *Anu banu artza*, when I lived in Israel, I learned some other words to it that went like this: "*Anu banu artza, litfos kol banot bah.*" This roughly translates as: "We are coming to live in Israel, to catch all the girls there." I am sure there were many Zionist pioneers who adopted that approach as well as the traditional one, "*Anu banu artza, livnot* [to build] *u'lihibanot ba* [and be ourselves built as well in the process]."

Howard Mednick
Thornhill, Ont.

Survivor's view of antisemitism today

I am grateful to Ralph Schleichkorn for his letter to the editor about the Holocaust years in Romania, during which close to 400,000 Romanian Jews were murdered ("Remembering the Struma," March 15). Thank you for reminding *CJN* readers about the tragic fate of the vessels Struma (790 victims) and Mefkure (394 victims). The present waves of antisemitism, which often manifests as hate for Israel, reminds me, a Holocaust survivor, about the black years, 1939 to 1944.

Baruch Cohen
Montreal

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The spirit of Bin Laden lives

Avi Issacharoff
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There is no way of knowing for certain whether Mohamed Merah, the suspect in last week's terror attack in Toulouse, was in fact an Al Qaeda member.

He claimed to be, but both he and the organization had a common interest in saying so. Indeed, it is not clear how active Al Qaeda is at the moment, if at all, or whether Merah was a lone activist following the organization's ideology, but not its instructions.

The U.S. assassination of Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden last May seriously damaged the morale of his supporters, but not their motivation. Immediately after his death, his loyalists had a glut of plans to attack western targets. But they face more complicated issues than the killing of their leader – primarily, the fact that the United States and other nations have broken the organization's infrastructure in East Asia, South Africa and the Arab states. Thousands of Al Qaeda militants have been assassinated in the past few years, in countless operations.

Nevertheless, jihadis are undoubtedly still scattered around the world, including in Europe and the United States. In many European cities, Muslim neighbourhoods and slums have become fertile ground for extremist ideology, with some imams ranting against the West and Jews.

Merah apparently worked alongside his brother and perhaps with the knowledge of a friend, but Al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri probably knew nothing about his intentions. But ultimately, even if Merah "only" shared Al Qaeda's views and was not an integral part of the organization, it's clear that extremist Islam is trying to lash out in order to prove it is still relevant in the wake of the Arab Spring.

Merah, who died following a shoot-out with French police, was a "classic" candidate for Al Qaeda membership. He was 23 years old, of Algerian descent, and visited Pakistan and Afghanistan. In France, he joined the Knights of Pride, a radical Salafi group that France outlawed last January after it called for non-recognition of the country's secular, democratic regime. The French security forces had group members, including Merah, under surveillance, but he managed to give them the slip.

In many senses, the terrorist from Toulouse was a relatively small headache for western intelligence. He was a known target, they had information about him, and he was under surveillance. The more meaningful threat in Europe and the United States is from dormant, unknown activists, who are believed to be present in every major European city. Some were born there, others emigrated from Muslim countries.

The four people murdered last week in Toulouse, Rabbi Jonathan Sandler, his sons Arieh, 5, and Gabriel, 3, and eight-year-old Myriam Monsenego were laid to rest in Israel. ***[Israel Sun photo]***

Alongside the events in Toulouse, Egypt reportedly arrested two suspects last Wednesday in a plot to strike a Western ship entering the Suez Canal. The two, apparently Islamic extremists, wanted to hit both western targets and the Egyptian economy.

The extremists are displeased by Egypt's transformation and the growing strength of political Islam there, namely among the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafi Al-Nour party. In Iraq, Sunni organizations continue to launch terror attacks, and in Syria, a Sunni group claimed responsibility for recent car bombings in Damascus that left dozens dead.

Osama bin Laden may be dead, but his doctrine and ideas are alive and kicking.

Israel arrested Mohamed Merah in 2010: report

Anshel Pfeffer
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TOULOUSE, France — Mohamed Merah, the Toulouse shooter, was arrested by Israel Police in Jerusalem in 2010, after he was found in possession of a knife, the head of the French intelligence agency DCRI said in an interview last Friday. Bernard Squarcini told the French newspaper *Le Monde* that Merah, who killed four people in an attack on a Jewish school in Toulouse on March 19, was held by police in Jerusalem during his visit to Israel in 2010, but was released shortly after his detainment.

Squarcini said that Merah visited several other Middle Eastern countries during that trip, including Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Afghanistan. He said that French intelligence tracked him and investigated to see if he was suspicious, but found that he had not been engaging in any ideological activism or religious activity.

Squarcini responded to allegations about French intelligence services' failures during the hunt for Merah.

According to a report published in *Le Monde* last Thursday, Merah was not a member of any well-known Islamic terrorist organization, but did undergo a process of radicalization. Merah was also added to a "no fly" list maintained by U.S. authorities some time ago, two American officials told Reuters. The officials would not disclose when Merah was placed on the list.

Meanwhile, a little-known extremist group last Thursday claimed responsibility for a series of deadly shootings in France, saying they were in response to what it called "Israel's crimes" against the Palestinians.

Last Thursday, a 32-hour siege by French police outside the home of the suspected perpetrator of the March 19 Toulouse school shootings, ended when police raided the apartment, prompting the 24-year-old suspect to jump out a window and fall to his death.

In a statement made after the siege ended, French President Nicolas Sarkozy said that Muslim citizens of France are not responsible for the "crazy" actions of the perpetrator of the Toulouse shootings, and that all people who consult hate or terrorism websites will be punished by the authorities.

The French citizen of Algerian origin told negotiators he killed three soldiers two weeks ago and four people at a Jewish school in Toulouse on March 19 to avenge the deaths of Palestinian children and because of French army involvement in Afghanistan.

The huge operation, involving hundreds of investigators and police, started only in the afternoon of March 19, in the aftermath of the shooting at the Ozar Hatorah school in Toulouse, despite the fact that four days earlier, after the murder of two French soldiers, it was clear that the perpetrator was repeating himself, and that he was liable to attack again.

For a number of days, security forces believed that neo-Nazis were responsible for the killings, and dismissed other possible lines of inquiry, even though it seemed as if Merah was under the radar of the security forces, and that he was known to them as a radical Islamist operative.

Those slain at the Jewish school, Rabbi Jonathan Sandler, his sons Arieh, 5, and Gabriel, 3, and eight-year-old Myriam Monsenego, were buried in Israel last Wednesday.

Meanwhile, several French Muslim and Jewish leaders appeared united on French television after the attack in Toulouse, but officials within the Jewish community have no illusions: French Jews and Muslims are deeply divided.

"Don't tell me French Muslims appreciate Jews – 50 per cent of them hate Jews," Rabbi Michel Sarfati told *Ha'aretz* recently. The rabbi founded the Jewish-Muslim friendship group. "Many hate Jews because extremist imams denigrate Jews in their sermons. They say we're Israel's puppets. Moderate Muslims try to fight this hatred, but they're being threatened, and they get no support from the state."

The killing in Toulouse has not improved relations between the communities.

"Look at the Internet forums – some extremist leaders criticize the Jews for getting sympathy after the killing," said Rabbi Sarfati.

In response to the death of Merah, David Koschitzky, chair of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, released the following statement: "We are gratified that French authorities have acted with diligence to put an end to this sadistic individual's campaign of terrorism. As reports have revealed, the killer was inspired by a virulent anti-western ideology, which included but was not limited to a murderous hatred of Jews.

"It pains our community to know that those murdered at the Ozar Hatorah school were targeted for one reason – they were Jews."

All who hunger, let them come and eat

I want to share some fabulous news with you, and just in time for Passover: I'm about to become fabulously wealthy. It happened rather suddenly and through a series of wonderful e-mails cascading into my inbox.

It seem that a distant relative has passed away. Although I've never heard of him, I am – so I'm told – his nearest of kin, and poised to inherit a substantial fortune. I will receive the first instalment any day now, just as soon as I transfer a transaction fee into a Nigerian bank account. And by uncanny coincidence, I've been asked to help a widow in Somalia by depositing a large cheque into my bank account and wiring her a mere 20 per cent of that amount immediately.

While I don't have these funds in hand just yet, the prospect leaves me feeling flush enough to wire several thousand dollars to each of several friends in dire straits. Although I haven't heard from any of them in years, I received e-mails from them only yesterday. They each tell me they've been pickpocketed in London. Yes, they lost everything – cash, credit cards, passport, airline tickets. They're stranded without a sou. Tough place, London.

Those of you with e-mail accounts – and, really, is there anyone out there who doesn't do e-mail? – are surely nodding your heads. We all receive such scamming invitations in our inboxes. And even when we can't quite figure out how they work, we know enough (I hope) not to take the bait.

This week I received a particularly shameful variation on the theme. In it, someone claiming to work for a Swiss bank in charge of dormant accounts explains that he has uncovered a secret account that belonged to someone murdered in the Holocaust who has no living heirs. My correspondent is prepared to give me the information I require to identify myself (fraudulently, one presumes) as an heir to the "Holocaust Claims Processing Office" so that he and I collect and share $21 million.

My first thought was that the letter was disgracefully targeting Holocaust survivors and their families, who may indeed have lost all their possessions during the war. The language of the e-mail suggested that it involved a legitimate organization concerned with following through on such property claims. Perhaps I received it because the sender trolled various lists for Jewish names, hoping to reach someone made vulnerable and gullible by difficult personal circumstance.

As I reread it, however, it occurred to me that the target of the scam might fit an entirely different profile. The e-mail played, I think, on antisemitic stereotypes, and fantasies that the doomed Jews of Europe were fabulously wealthy – I mean, $21 million! And the (presumably) fabricated name of the bank employee was a

Sara R. Horowitz

in Toronto

German name, not a Jewish one. The offer tendered in the e-mail was not to repatriate the funds to their proper heir, but, in essence, to help someone pass himself off as an heir, even though he was not. In other words, for someone taken in by the e-mail and convinced of its accuracy, the goal was to defraud the family who had a legitimate claim to the account.

"Who falls for these things?" I hear you ask. The needy and the greedy, who both hunger, empty and vulnerable, but in different ways.

And as Pesach approaches, it occurs to me that our vulnerability to the fantasies inspired by such scams (if not to the scams themselves) comes from a kind of enslavement that the holiday pushes against.

Our seder ritual begins by announcing our responsibility for that hunger and emptiness. *Halachma anya*, we begin: this poor bread, our matzah, sign of both our enslavement and our redemption. However meagre it may be, we offer to share it. In giving away what we have to those whose neediness is a physical thing, a mark of poverty, we let go of a different kind of neediness – one that sometimes causes folks to hoard things for themselves alone, and to prize objects and acquisition more than people and values.

Let those who hunger come and eat. In feeding them, we nourish ourselves.

Rabbis then and now

Writing perceptively about Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut of blessed memory, Rabbi Elyse Goldstein concluded her last *CJN* column with a pertinent question: "Who would you consider a giant who can stand in the shadow that Rabbi Plaut cast?"

I'm between the generations of Plaut and Goldstein. In fact, as Rabbi Goldstein, just out of rabbinic school, became one of my colleagues at Holy Blossom Temple at the same time as I joined the congregation, I feel challenged to offer a response to her important rhetorical question.

Rabbi Dow Marmur

in Toronto

I believe that the time when rabbis cast shadows has passed. Although we may all remember the spiritual leaders we encountered in our youth as giants, in previous generations, such memories had some basis in reality. That's rarely, if ever, the case today.

Then they represented an age when hierarchy in worship services, in synagogues no less than in churches, could be illustrated by a pyramid, with someone high above who was well positioned to cast a shadow. Even the architecture of places of worship promoted it.

It was a time when scholarship was appreciated and active engagement in the community at large expected and applauded. Recent history can point to many examples across the denominational divide when rabbis seemed to matter more as leaders than as friends.

In our time, the pyramid has been replaced by a circle in which everybody is an equal. When all are on the same plane, casting shadows is well-nigh impossible. Rabbis aren't expected to be leaders in the traditional sense, but counsellors, facilitators, fundraisers and promoters.

Look at the way worship services are organized in many communities. A friend just told me of a debate in her church about whether to keep the pews or exchange them for movable chairs as a tangible way of replacing hierarchy with democracy.

Many rabbis are, indeed, still greatly appreciated, but not because they stand in the pulpit above the congregation to proclaim the Truth, but because they aspire to be lovable human beings and everybody's friends. That's not how I remember the rabbis of my early years and, I'm afraid, that's probably not the way I was perceived by many.

Yes, I, too, wanted to be loved, but I settled for being respected. My aim was to help Jews to know Judaism and sense the sacred by looking up to Heaven in awe, humility and gratitude. By contrast, in the modern synagogue, with or without pews, the intention is to look at each other in search of spirituality, which, however desirable, is very different from holiness.

Religious life has moved from the vertical to the horizontal, from the theological to the sociological. That's also why conventional sermons have ceased to be of much consequence.

Rabbi Plaut was a consummate preacher and a commanding personality. Some younger rabbis have recently speculated whether he, and rabbis like him, would find employment in today's congregations. The outcome was by no means conclusive.

What communities now seem to be looking for are individuals who can combine affability with pastoral skills and organizational acumen. When I started out in the rabbinate, people wanted to know the subject of my next sermon and what classes I was teaching, even how much I had published. Nowadays, I surmise, rabbis are asked at how many life-cycle events they've officiated and how much money they've raised.

When congregants believe that their rabbi hasn't visited them enough or see that the synagogue finances are down, they may decide to fire him or her. If you always fear that your job is on the line, you're not likely worry about how much shadow you cast but how to survive.

Before readers come to the erroneous conclusion that this is the rant of a disillusioned old rabbi, let me assure them, first, that I look back on my five decades of service to the Jewish people with humble gratitude, much satisfaction and totally without rancour.

Second, I'm by no means sure that the hierarchic system in which I was reared and which Rabbi Plaut reflected was preferable to the democratic nature of contemporary religious life that seeks to reach out and connect with individuals and thus find the presence of God.

Every age has its own way. The present way is appropriate for this time. I salute its exponents and celebrate with them, whether or not they cast shadows.

A beacon of hope in a land of gathering darkness

On July 13, 1933, about six months after Adolf Hitler ascended to power, William Dodd, 64, disembarked in Hamburg to take up his post as the first U.S. ambassador to Nazi Germany. He was accompanied by his wife and two grown children, Martha, who had been an assistant literary editor on a major metropolitan daily, and Bill, a history teacher.

For the Dodds, the posting would be a once-in-a-lifetime journey of discovery, transformation and disillusionment.

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

Dodd was in the process of writing a multi-volume history of the old American South when he reached out to his friend, the secretary of commerce in President Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration, for an ambassadorship in Europe. Dodd, the chair of the University of Chicago's history department, the biographer of former American president Woodrow Wilson and a Democratic party activist, sought out a quiet, undemanding sinecure that would enable him to finish his ambitious project. He was offered the ambassadorship in Germany, which had to be filled quickly.

Though not well versed in the niceties of diplomacy, Dodd was a respectable candidate. He had earned his Ph.D. at the University of Leipzig, spoke German and knew Germany.

When he had completed his mission 4-1/2 years later, he was thoroughly disgusted with the new Germany, as was his daughter. Their odyssey, a cautionary tale, is told in Erik Larson's captivating book, *In the Garden of Beasts: Love, Terror and an American Family in Hitler's Berlin* (Crown), which is due to be made into a Hollywood movie.

Dodd's mandate was to ensure that Germany did not default on its debts to U.S. banks and report on Germany's maltreatment of its Jewish citizens.

Prior to his departure, he met Roosevelt and consulted with government officials and Jewish leaders. Although the president was appalled by the growing antisemitism in Germany, he had not condemned it publicly, fearing the political costs. Isolationists, for example, maintained that Nazi oppression of Jews was a domestic matter.

Mindful of these considerations, Roosevelt acknowledged that Germany was treating Jews "shamefully," but instructed Dodd not to intervene in German affairs. Col. Edward House, Roosevelt's close adviser, urged Dodd to "ameliorate Jewish sufferings," but in a revealing caveat that implied that Jews were partly responsible for their troubles, he observed that German Jews should not be permitted "to dominate economic or intellectual life in Berlin, as they have done for a long time."

American Jews urged Dodd to press Roosevelt for official intervention. He promised to "exert all possible personal influence against the unjust treatment of German Jews."

As Larson suggests, Dodd himself was ambivalent about antisemitism. He decried "the ruthlessness that is being applied to Jews" in Germany, but thought that Germans had "a valid grievance" because Jews "held a great many more of the key positions in Germany than their numbers or their talents entitled them to."

Martha Dodd, 24, displayed ambivalence toward Jews, too, admitting that she was "slightly antisemitic" in terms of her acceptance of the pervasive American attitude that they were neither as physically attractive or as socially desirable as gentiles.

When Dodd landed in Germany, he was already certain what his role as ambassador should be. Rather than being a mere observer, he believed, he should try to exercise a moderating influence over Hitler and his regime.

In seeking out a residence in central Berlin, from which he could leisurely walk to the U.S. embassy, Dodd chose a property immediately south of the Tiergarten, a magnificent park that, in literal translation, means "garden of the beasts." Once a hunting preserve for royalty, the Tiergarten was and currently is a vast, peaceful preserve of woods, meadows, gardens and paths stretching from the Brandenburg Gate to the Charlottenburg district.

Dodd rented the house from its proprietor, Alfred Panofsky, a Jewish banker who reserved the top floor for himself and his mother, hoping that this arrangement would shield them from Nazi violence.

Dodd's tenure in Berlin was stormy from the outset. One of his first tasks was to issue a formal protest to the foreign minister over attacks by Nazi goons on American visitors. In what must have come as a surprising admission, the minister agreed that Germany's treatment of Jews was incorrect.

With the passage of time, Dodd's attitude to the regime grew more critical, likening the Nazis to "half-educated statesmen." In private, he was far more scathing, describing "the whole gang" around Hitler as "a horde of criminals."

Dodd's daughter, Martha, was not as critical. She was inclined to think the best of the new order in Germany and tried "to find excuses" for Nazi "excesses." Blonde, attractive and flirtatious, she had an affair with the first chief of the Gestapo, Rudolf Diels, but the man she loved was Boris Winogradov, a Soviet diplomat who doubled as an intelligence agent of the NKVD, the precursor of the KGB.

Dodd's outspokenness was less than appreciated in the U.S. State Department. His boss, William Phillips, urged him to keep a low profile and not "to give public expression to anything in the nature of criticism" of the regime.

In the first of his two meetings with Hitler, Dodd came away with the impression that he was sincerely peace loving. The embassy's consul general, George Messersmith, warned him that Hitler desired peace only on his own terms. Eventually, Dodd adopted the position that Hitler wanted peace to prepare for war.

Dodd's stance on the "Jewish problem" also evolved. Recalling a conversation with Hitler in which he threatened to "make a complete end to all [Jews] in this country," and observing the tide of antisemitism washing over Germany, he concluded that Nazi persecution was systematic. As for Martha, she would recognize that Nazi antisemitism was a national pastime and that "a heartbreaking system of terror ruled the country and repressed ... the people."

The Tiergarten in Berlin
[Sheldon Kirshner photo]

Morally repulsed by the regime, Dodd stopped attending Nazi party rallies in Nuremberg, a move that unnerved his superiors in Washington and prompted them to call for his removal. The Nazis, in turn, regarded him as an intractable opponent.

Bowing to State Department pressure, Roosevelt concurred that Dodd should be recalled. His replacement, Hugh Wilson, was a career diplomat who, writes Larson, "sought to emphasize the positive aspects of Nazi Germany and carried on a one-man campaign of appeasement."

Returning to the United States in January 1938, Dodd hit the lecture circuit, delivered speeches warning of Germany's hegemonic ambitions and of Hitler's intention to murder Jews. In his memoir, Rabbi Stephen Wise, president of the Zionist Organization of America, wrote that "Dodd was years ahead of the State Department in his grasp of the political as well as of the moral implications of Hitlerism and paid the penalty of such understanding."

In conclusion, Larson notes that he was "a lone beacon of American freedom and hope in a land of gathering darkness."

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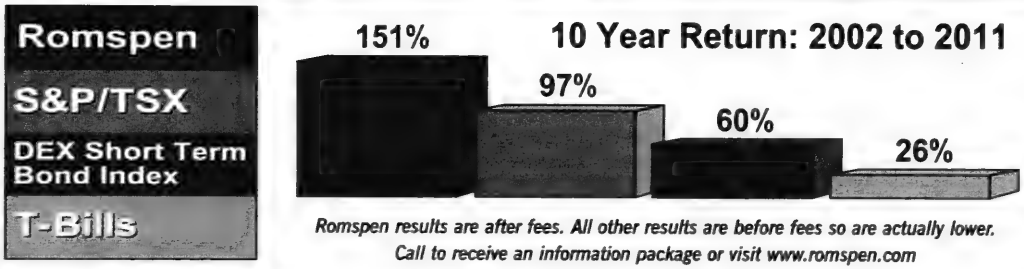

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Matthew Cooper teaches Grade 2 students about time zones at the Montessori Jewish Day School. *[Frances Kraft photo]*

Teacher's interests converge in his classroom

By Frances Kraft

Matthew Cooper – a 30-year-old American with a background in environmentalism and Israel programs – has taken a roundabout route to the Grade 1, 2 and 3 classroom at Toronto's Montessori Jewish Day School, where he began teaching this year.

In addition to a BA in philosophy, he has a diploma in elementary education from the Toronto Montessori Institute.

Before moving to Toronto, his wife's hometown, Cooper also trained as a wilderness steward with the Wilderness Education Association, and studied at the Eco-Activist Beit Midrash of Yeshivat Simchat Shlomo (inspired by the late Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach) in Jerusalem.

He has been married to Risa Alyson Cooper (formerly Strauss), director of Shoresh Jewish Environmental Programs and founder of the Kavanah Garden on the Joseph and Wolf Lebovic Jewish Community Campus, for the past year and a half. They met at the Tevá Learning Center, an outdoor education centre in Connecticut.

Cooper, who was born in Indianapolis and raised in Chicago, first realized his love of the outdoors as an undergraduate studying philosophy at Southern Illinois University. Although he had been thinking of a career in academia, his school's proximity to the Shawnee National Forest piqued his interest in the environment.

As part of his course work, he "explored lots of different religions," and later, in Israel, he studied informally in alternative Orthodox forums.

After university, Cooper travelled extensively, and made his first foray into young adult education helping to lead Birthright Israel trips. In 2006, he worked on the Hava & Adam Ecology Farm in Modi'in, which brought in school groups. It was his first experience working with younger children, and he loved it.

His interests, including music, all converge in the classroom. "I've never been formally trained, but I've been playing guitar since high school," he said. He often brings his guitar to school and leads the class in singing Jewish and/or environmental songs.

"I have a great song about composting," he added. It ties in to a recent initiative – bringing a worm-composting program into his classroom.

Music, Cooper noted, is "a powerful tool to bring people together and to learn things in a fun way."

A lesson from the teacher: ***"Children are given a lot of freedom here [at MJDS], and they're being entrusted with the responsibility to make wise choices... Where the bar is set is where they ultimately come to, so it's very important for that to be high, because each child's potential is limitless."***

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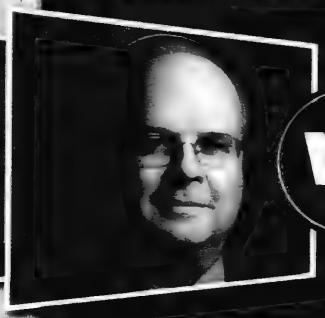

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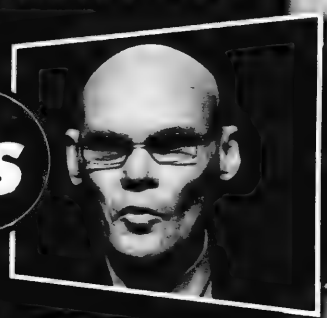

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Buhlers to be honoured at Winnipeg Negev Gala

Myron Love
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — This year's Jewish National Fund of Canada – Manitoba/Saskatchewan Region Negev Gala, on June 5, will honour philanthropists Bonnie and John Buhler.

"It is truly a privilege for the Jewish National Fund to pay tribute to Bonnie and John," said JNF regional president Mel Lazareck. "They have generously committed themselves to Manitoba and remain passionate leaders in philanthropy."

The Buhlers have always been modest individuals. This writer recalls an interview he did with John Buhler more than 25 years ago. At the time, he was the owner of a farm-equipment manufacturing plant with some 200 employees. Yet his office furniture consisted of a bridge table and chairs and some bookcases.

"We don't like a whole lot of attention," Buhler says.

He says that he and his wife are "humbled" by the JNF honour. "We couldn't fathom why the JNF chose us," Buhler says. "Our first reaction is that we are not even Jewish."

The Buhlers earned the honour, however – as with the many honorees both Jewish and non-Jewish – for their generous commitment to the people of Manitoba and their leadership in philanthropy.

In a sense, the Buhlers have picked up where the late Israel and Barbara (Babs) Asper – previous Negev Gala honorees - left off. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the Aspers and the Asper Foundation endowed numerous community institutions such as the I. H. Asper School of Business at the University of Manitoba, the Asper Clinical Research Institute at the St. Boniface Hospital, the Asper Jewish Community Campus and many others, culminating in the drive to open the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR) in Winnipeg.

Philanthropists John and Bonnie Buhler

In similar fashion, in the past few years, the Buhlers have contributed $4 million to the construction of the University of Winnipeg's Buhler Centre, $2 million to the Buhler Eye Care Centre of Excellence that is being built at the Misericordia Community Hospital, $800,000 to establish the Buhler Welcome Centre at the Manitoba Children's Museum – to mention a few – and more than $600,000 toward construction of the CMHR.

Also, like Israel Asper, Buhler is a self-made business success who hails originally from rural Manitoba.

Buhler grew up in Morden, a community about 200 kilometres southwest of Winnipeg. While he got his start in business working for his father-in-law, Buhler earned his reputation as a businessman through his ability to buy failing manufacturing enterprises and turn them into success stories. His career in manufacturing culminated with his purchase of Versatile Tractor, Canada's last remaining tractor manufacturer, in 2000. He sold the factory to a Russian buyer in 2007 and then retired to full-time philanthropic work.

Buhler credits his wife for steering him in a philanthropic direction. The couple works as a team to determine which projects to support. Five years ago, they received the Variety Club Gold Heart Humanitarian of the Year award. Last fall, John Buhler was awarded an honorary degree from the University of Manitoba.

The Buhlers have been to Israel a couple of times in the past but, Buhler notes, it has been many years since their last visit. "We are looking forward to our upcoming trip and will determine while there which project we want to support with the funds raised at the gala," he says.

Bonnie says that she and her husband are impressed with the contributions that the JNF makes to the people of Israel. "John and I greatly appreciate the JNF's commitment to enhancing quality of life by partnering with other organizations and local municipalities to provide employment and education opportunities, building reservoirs and agricultural infrastructure to bring economic viability to newly developed areas and generally improving the self-image of a community," she says.

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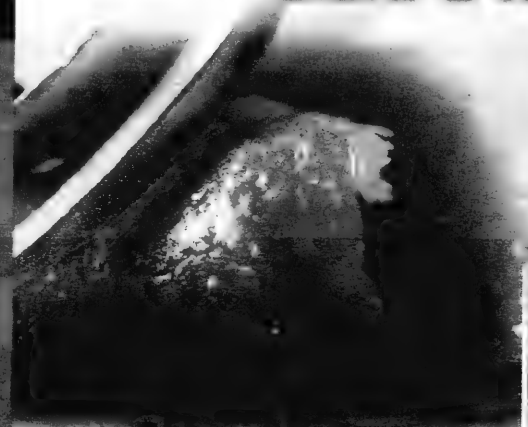

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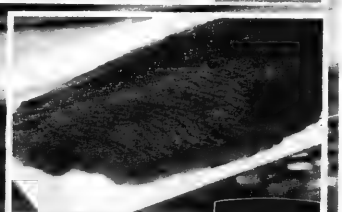

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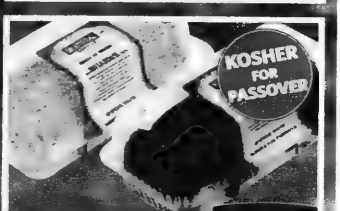

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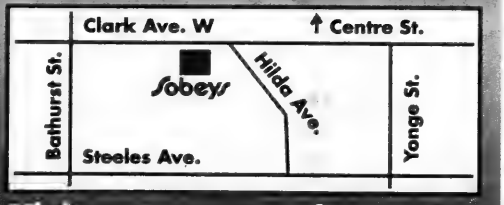

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The melody lingers: Remembering Srul Irving Glick

There have been many photographs taken of one of Canada's most celebrated composers, Srul Irving Glick, of blessed memory. He made a point of attending the numerous world premières of his works. And inevitably at every event, a photographer would capture the moment.

There are pictures of Srul receiving any of the seven Grand Prix du Disque awards and a Juno Award for albums he had produced over his 25 years with the CBC. There are formal photographs of Srul being awarded a Governor General's Award in 1992 and receiving the Order of Canada in 1994, and there are informal photographs of Srul by his piano or conducting the Beth Tikvah Synagogue choir. All the pictures taken of Srul share one thing in common: they show him smiling broadly.

Guest Voice

Rabbi Wayne Allen

I remember many things about Srul, with whom I worked for 15 years. There were the gatherings in his home where the greats of the music world would come to quietly socialize, spontaneously transformed into concerts. The European salons of the 18th and 19th centuries were reproduced in Srul's Toronto house.

There were the staff meetings at Beth Tikvah when Srul would argue that a religious service that does not bring worshippers closer to God is a failure. And music, he would insist, is the most effective vehicle for making the human-divine connection. There were the Shabbatot when he would escort his elderly father, once a cantor of note from whom he learned much, into the synagogue sanctuary with glowing pride. I remember hearing Srul's voice singing along with the choir he was conducting. But what I will always remember best is his smile.

Even when he was going through a series of debilitating treatments for the illness that claimed his life at the age of 77 he was smiling. Sitting with him in his hospital room, I asked him how he seemed so positive. His glib answer was that he had no alternative. His thoughtful answer was that throughout his life he never had any expectations. And without expectations, he never suffered disappointment. If disappointment is the source of unhappiness, he had no reason to be unhappy. His smile was the product of his outlook.

Srul was a composer of the first rank. He composed music of the highest calibre in almost every conceivable form. But he was also, I learned, a wise man, if not a bona fide philosopher. He was correct when it came to his assessment of the role of music in liturgy. And Srul was correct in his view of how to approach the vicissitudes of life.

Srul was not a champion of the kind of juvenile music heard in many synagogues today, reducing a serious prayer experience to a summer camp sing-along. Nor was he a champion of the breezy application of show tunes or popular melodies – from opera to pop – to the words of the prayer book. Instead, Srul advocated music that married the mood to the words and resulted in something sophisticated, majestic and even magical. In the words of the Yuval Award Srul received from the Cantor's Assembly in 2000, Srul gave us "music that touched the soul."

And when it came to life, I have learned, Srul was correct again. The more expectations a person has in life – whether about career, success, marriage or children – the greater the chance of being disappointed if those expectations go unmet. Given the unpredictability of life and the many unreasonable expectations people come to embrace, the likelihood is that they will go unmet. The only way to escape the inevitable disappointment and consequent unhappiness is to shed expectations. This does not preclude being ambitious. Srul's life was a testament to what can be achieved by those who are skilful and determined. And in the end, every good that is enjoyed is an unanticipated blessing.

Ten years have passed since Srul ceded his earthly choir for a heavenly one. I miss my friend and teacher very much.

Holy Blossom Temple presents the Srul Irving Glick Memorial Concert on April 22 at 8 p.m. The concert features the Holy Blossom Temple Choir and Singers, the Lachan Jewish Chamber and Beth Tikvah choirs, and cantors Benjamin Maissner, Tibor Kovari and Efraim Sapir. Tickets are $30 and can be purchased in advance by calling 416-789-3291, ext. 224.

Beth Tikvah Synagogue presents a memorial concert featuring works by Srul Irving Glick on June 7 at 8 p.m. Featured artists will be violinist Moshe Hammer, harpist Judy Loman, pianist Valerie Tryon, clarinettist Anthony Thompson and a 14-piece orchestra. Tickets are $36 and can be purchased in advance by calling 416-221-3433.

Rabbi Wayne Allen is the immediate past senior rabbi of Beth Tikvah Synagogue in Toronto and currently serves as the provost of the Canadian Yeshiva and Rabbinical School.

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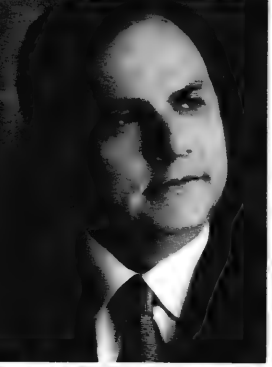

Tchaikovsky & Verdi
Wed, April 11 at 8:00pm
Sat, April 14 at 8:00pm
Gianandrea Noseda, conductor
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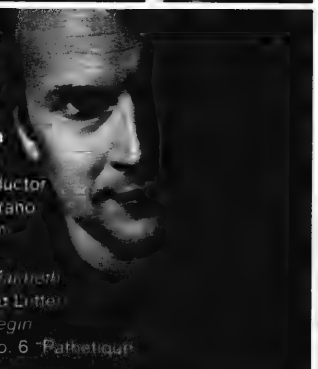
Verdi: Overture & Aria from *I vespri siciliani*
Verdi: Ballet Music from *Macbeth*
Tchaikovsky: Polonaise and Letter Scene from *Eugene Onegin*
Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 6 "Pathétique"



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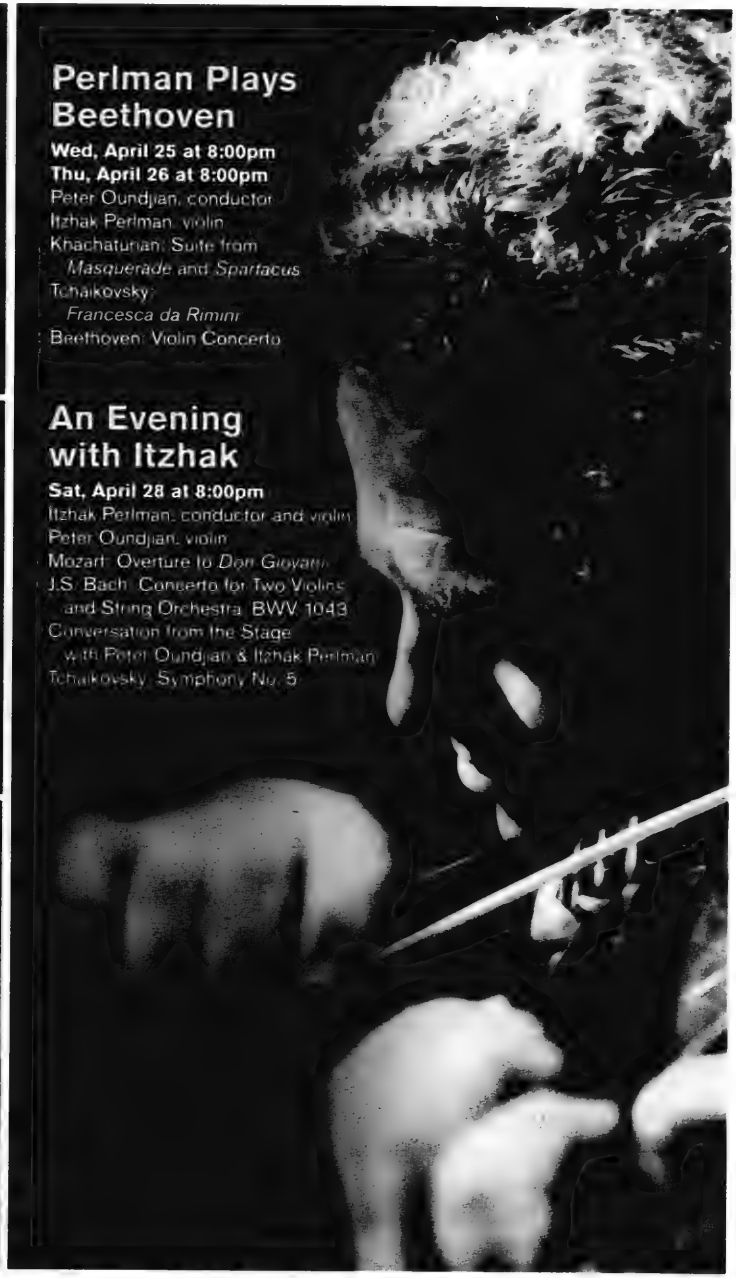
J.S. Bach: Brandenburg Concerto No. 6
Schubert: Symphony No. 3

Perlman Plays Beethoven
Wed, April 25 at 8:00pm
Thu, April 26 at 8:00pm
Peter Oundjian, conductor
Itzhak Perlman, violin
Khachaturian: Suite from *Masquerade* and *Spartacus*
Tchaikovsky: *Francesca da Rimini*
Beethoven: Violin Concerto

An Evening with Itzhak
Sat, April 28 at 8:00pm
Itzhak Perlman, conductor and violin
Peter Oundjian, violin
Mozart: Overture to *Don Giovanni*
J.S. Bach: Concerto for Two Violins and String Orchestra, BWV 1043
Conversation from the Stage with Peter Oundjian & Itzhak Perlman
Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 5



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Passover app-ticipation

Passover is on the way, but its iPhone and iPad apps are already here. You can learn about the holiday, brush up on the haggadah – and even keep the kids occupied while you try to get some cleaning done. Apps are free unless otherwise noted.

Passover Preparation

No Chametz – Sell, Search, Destroy: Learn the laws for ridding your home of leavened products – including how to search for chametz on the night before Passover and burn it the following morning. **[http://bit.ly/appesach1]**

Pesach Guide: An overview of holiday customs, stories and essays with Chabad commentaries. **[http://bit.ly/appesach2]**

Passover Food Street, $.99: Holiday recipes including Borscht Sorrel Soup, Classic Apple Charoset, Chipotle Orange Chicken and Low Carb Lemon Mousse. A convenient app, but you can save yourself the $.99 and search for those recipes online. **[http://bit.ly/appesach3]**

Games and Stories

Mash Passover: A holiday variation of "Mad Libs," in which you fill in the blanks with names, songs, gifts and matzah-ball types to generate a zany story that predicts who will find the afikoman. **[http://bit.ly/appesach8]**

Passover – The Journey to Freedom Story: Illustrated children's storybook that will read the text to you. Or switch off the narration and have your kids do it themselves. **[http://bit.ly/appesach13]**

iMahNishtanah, $.99: Learn all the words of *Mah Nishtanah* through flash cards. Play a game to make sure your children understand what they mean. Then listen to the Four Questions and have them record their own version. **[http://bit.ly/appesach11]**

Passover Trucks Game $.99: Hurry! Various kinds of food (fruit, donuts, milk, matzah) are rolling down the conveyor belt. Your mission: to load the food onto the appropriate transport trucks (Regular or Passover). **[http://bit.ly/appesach12]**

Passover Matzah Ball Builder $.99: Imagine a digital Mr. Potato Head but swap the potato with a matzah ball. Decorate with a crazy assembly of appendages. When done, mail your personalized Matzah Ball to your computer and print. **[http://bit.ly/appesach9]**

Jewish & Digital

Mark Mietkiewicz

Happy Matza $.99: Transform your iPad into a fairly realistic-looking piece of matzah. Use your fingers to coat it with (virtual) chocolate or jelly. Blow the mic to take a bite. Shake and start over. **[http://bit.ly/appesach10]**

Haggadot

Although these haggadot will help you prepare for the holiday, I am not recommending that the seder table becomes transformed into yet another high-tech venue. I'll be reaching for my well-thumbed, wine-stained, paper-based haggadah.

Haggadah for Passover $.99: Haggadah highlights in English, Hebrew and transliterated Hebrew. **[http://bit.ly/appesach5]**

The Union Haggadah $3.99: Edited by the Central Conference of American Rabbis with commentary and the haggadah text. (Oddly, the title page depicts a menorah, dreidel and Chanukah gelt!) **[http://bit.ly/appesach6]**

A Cantor's Seder $6.99: A bilingual haggadah, very nicely rendered with instructions and lovely singing by Cantor Emanuel Perlman of Chizuk Amuno Congregation in Baltimore. This app focuses on the songs and does not contain the entire text of the traditional Haggadah. **[http://bit.ly/appesach7]**

And Finally…

The ten Plagues of Egypt iPhone Apps **[http://bit.ly/appesach14]**: Not an app but a retelling of the story of the plagues if Moses had access to apps to help save the day, at least according to the students of the College of Management Academic Studies in Rishon LeZion.

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Reconstructing beginning-of-life rituals

For months leading up to our child's birth, I imagined her first moments. What would I feel? How would I react? What would I say? I ran through the scene in my mind countless times, I read others' accounts of that first instant, and I turned to the brachah: "Blessed are You God, our Lord, King of the universe, who is Good and causes good." During the weeks before her birth, I practised that line over and over, memorizing its sound and feel.

But when the moment came, I was silent. There are few moments that leave you speechless. The paralysis was not induced by shock or surprise, a lack of clear thought or a dearth of strong emotion, but by awe.

On TV, babies are born crying. In reality, there is a moment of silence before the baby finds her voice. There is nothing more pristine, more pure than that moment. It is a *kol demama daka*. Usually translated as "a still, small voice," *kol demama daka* often refers to the Shofar blast. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks offers a variant translation, "A voice that you can hear only if you are listening." Listening closely, the silence was filled by our child's still, small, silent voice. A few moments later, shaken back into the world with the wail of our baby's cry (and after my wife reminded me), we responded to her with the brachah.

Liturgy helps me put words to feelings I'm unequipped to articulate. This is as true in the apex of Yom Kippur as it was during the first moment of our child's life. And so, when we wanted to welcome her into our community, we looked to liturgy.

Class Act

Daniel Held

Without knowing if we were having a boy or girl, we planned for both – for a boy a brit milah and for a girl an equally joyous ceremony rooted in tradition.

For a boy, there's a strong framework of text and ritual. While the structure is helpful, it's sometimes conducted as a perfunctory task. To make the brit milah a meaningful ceremony welcoming the baby into the community and ushering the parents into a new phase of life, we must frame the liturgy with personalization.

For a girl, there's no standardized liturgy, yet. We started the overwhelming task of piecing together texts and ritual, but unlike the brit, the ceremony had little connection to the millennia of Jewish women born before her. A ceremony meant to connect our daughter to the community seemed isolating in its forced uniqueness. The gender imbalance is striking, but the imbalance in structured standardization versus personal meaning in both ceremonies needs to be addressed.

When we welcomed our baby girl into our community a few weeks ago, we chose to follow a Sephardi custom, the *Zeved Habat*, seconded by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks in the Koren Sacks siddur. The siddur offers a framework for a standardized text, which we embellished with personal blessings and traditions. Beginning-of-life rituals offer a profound opportunity for the child, parents and community. Mixing celebration, text, and ritual, it's time to ensure that both girls and boys are welcomed with the liturgy and personal meaning they deserve.

'Israel Loves Iran' goes viral

Abigail Klein Leichman
Israel21c.com

TEL AVIV — "Israel Loves Iran" may be the most unlikely title for a social networking campaign yet.

Whether in spite of its outlandishness or because of it, however, the movement has picked up an extraordinary amount of momentum in the short time since a Tel Aviv father and teacher, Ronny Edry, launched it on a whim with this opening salvo posted on Facebook in English: "To all the fathers, mothers, children, brothers and sisters: for there to be a war between us, first we must be afraid of each other, we must hate. I'm not afraid of you, I don't hate you, I don't even know you.

"I'm not an official representative of my country. I'm a father and a teacher. I know the streets of my town, I talk with my neighbours, my family, my students, my friends, and in the name of all these people... we love you. We mean you no harm. On the contrary, we want to meet, have some coffee and talk about sports."

This message accompanied two photo posters showing Edry and his wife and children alongside the words, "Iranians, we will never bomb your country, we [heart] you." Produced by graphic arts students at Pushpin Mechina, the posters have since been co-opted as a template for others to add their faces to the page. Within 48 hours, Edry began receiving messages

This poster was one of two that launched the campaign.

from Iranians, some of whom even wanted to "friend" him on Facebook. "We also love you. Your words are reaching us despite the censorship," wrote one of them, according to a report in the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*.

"The Iranian people, apart from the regime, do not hold a grudge nor animosity against anyone, especially not the Israelis... We never saw Israelis as our enemies... the regime cannot gain public support for war."

Another message called the Iranian leader "nothing more than an opportunist, and more than anything, an idiot. Everyone hates him. We love you, love peace. And thanks for your message."

Responses are rolling in from regular folks in a variety of countries, and even from some celebrities, including Pulitzer Prize-winning American author Alice Walker, who called Israel Loves Iran a "wonderful website."

On March 21, as Facebook tallied 7,399 "likes" for the page, an Israeli added this to the dialogue: "My name is Shmulik and I'm from Israel. I just want to tell you guys that the Israel citizens don't want to fight with you or anyone. We just want quiet and peace because we deserve that like everyone in this world. Let's stop together with all the hate. Let's stop with all the bad and negative propaganda. Let's create a better place to live."

To be sure, the idea that a Facebook dialogue can defuse the looming spectre of war seems far-fetched and possibly even ill-considered to many in Israel and abroad, who feel Edry's people-to-people approach fails to acknowledge that a military threat may be the only way to deflect a serious danger to Israel's existence.

But Edry is encouraged by the people power of his campaign. Here is his latest Facebook post: "Today we received and share[d] so many messages, from Iran and Israel of course, but also from the U.S., Germany, France, Italy, the U.K., Australia, Egypt, Lebanon, Sweden, Denmark, Bosnia, Monaco. Our message was broadcast in all these countries... We are reaching the heart of the world. I'm going to sleep tonight with a big smile on my face and I thank you for that."

How women saved our people

On Pesach, we recall the bondage of Israel in Egypt and the subsequent miraculous Exodus. We celebrate our survival and emergence as a people that had grown in number and strength, ready to serve God.

The Talmud demonstrates a correlation between the perseverance of our people, notably the women, and our departure from Egypt (Sotah, 11b): "Rav Avira expounded: In the merit of the righteous women who lived in that generation, Israel was delivered from Egypt. When they [the women] went to draw water, the Holy One, Blessed is He, would prepare fish for them in their jugs. And when they would draw them up, they would be half full of water and half full of fish. They would come and place two pots on top of the oven, one full of hot water and one full of the fish which they carried to their husbands in the field, and they would bathe and anoint their husbands, feed and give them drink, and have marital relations with them between the borders of the fields."

Sephardi Window

Rabbi Ilan Acoca

Concerned that our people would soon dominate the Egyptians, Pharaoh devised a scheme to ensure the Egyptian people would retain supremacy over the descendants of Jacob living in his land. The people were to be enslaved – broken in mind and spirit. They worked long hours, meaning a decline in the birthrate – as well as strength and resolve – would be inevitable.

The women of Israel, however, had a different plan in mind.

Drawing water, the Iyun Yaakov (1661-1773) notes, was a difficult task traditionally performed by men. The women, however, with the help of God, gave, as our Gemara recounts, food and water to their husbands through one act. Furthermore, by going out into the fields, the women made it possible to preserve the intimacy – and maintain the numbers – of the Jewish people.

The women, recognizing that their people's existence was in peril, took action to ensure that not only would the nation continue to exist, but that it would thrive. Without the valiant efforts of our women in Egypt, God's enterprise – a Jewish nation –would have met an early demise. Our survival depended – and still depends – on strength of both spirit and numbers. Devotion – to God, one's people, one's family, one's spouse – is essential to our survival, and there's no finer example of this understanding than the actions of the Jewish women in Egypt.

The Pesach traditions developed in Sephardi countries, be they songs, food, or the Mimouna, are ways by which we express our devotion to HaShem and to our fellow Jews. Our long history supports the idea that these customs are critical to our maintaining our identity. This year, when we sit down to the Pesach seder, recalling our enslavement and redemption, we would do well to contemplate the actions of our righteous women in Egypt in light of today's challenges.

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'Israel Truth Week' organized in London

Sheri Shefa
Staff Reporter

Civil rights activist Mark Vandermaas, organizer of a one-day London, Ont.-based conference meant to counter Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) events, wants Canadians to know the truth.

"We have to understand that the average person in Canada couldn't find Israel on a map, never mind understand all the intricacies and myths that are being [spread] by the IAW crowd. They're lying to you," said Vandermaas, who served in a United Nations peacekeeping force in the Middle East in 1978.

Vandermaas said his motivation to organize this event, called Israel Truth Week and held March 21 at the London Royal View Church, stemmed from a lesson he learned as a child.

"My parents lived under Nazi occupation in Holland, and they saw Jews taken away. They were not Jews themselves, but my father escaped from a Nazi war camp," he said.

"I grew up with an interest in the period and learned a lot about the Holocaust."

He said his research into the Holocaust taught him that it's important to speak out against injustice when the warning signs are present – especially when it doesn't affect you directly.

"In this world today, we can see grave dangers facing Jewish people. When the despots and the monsters of the world start coming for Jewish people, I'm not [safe]," he said.

Vandermaas publicly entered the Israeli-Palestinian debate last year after being an outspoken critic of the handling of protests that erupted in Caledonia, Ont., in 2006, when aboriginals demonstrated for nearly a year against a construction site they said was on native land.

He said he discovered that a London mosque had hosted a fundraising dinner to support a Canadian boat, called the Tahrir, that intended to breach the Israeli naval blockade on Gaza last July.

"I don't care whether it is a mosque or a United Church, but when a religious insitution is helping to raise money and support a project which, if successful, will enable more Jews to get killed and more Palestinians to die when Israel has to defend itself against war crimes, that's immoral," he said.

He said he spent an hour a day for 26 days standing outside the mosque, donning his UN blue beret, holding a sign that said Israel was created in part by a UN resolution that passed in 1947, and that the Hamas charter was condemned by the UN Human Rights Commission in 2006.

"When the vigil was over, I still wanted to do something to counter Israeli Apartheid Week, but I wasn't sure how to do it," he said.

When Vandermaas learned about a group of Jewish student at the University of Western Ontario (UWO) whose event that celebrated Israeli culture was shut down by anti-Israel protesters in February, he was galvanized into action.

"There was no way that these Jewish students should feel abandoned. I wanted to let them know they're not alone, and there were people who were watching," he said.

Vandermaas added that he was further motivated by a video he saw of UWO professor David Heap, who was aboard the Tahrir last summer.

Vandermaas said that when Heap was asked how he responds to the argument that Israel must defend itself against missiles from Gaza, Heap said that argument deflects attention from the real issue.

"That made me so angry because what that statement means... is that they deny the existence of the victims. When you do that, you deny the humanity of the victims," Vandermaas said.

Israel Truth Week organizer and civil rights activist Mark Vandermaas

His conference, which featured talks from such people as UWO political science professor Salim Mansur and Massachussetts-based Rabbi Jonathan Hausman, who was the keynote speaker, was meant to demystify the conflict.

"We're making the debate too complicated," Vandermaas said, adding that the basis of the Middle East conflict is antisemitism.

"We need to stop pretending that giving more land, surrendering land is going to bring peace to the Middle East... history has shown that it won't bring peace ever."

Vandermaas said he finds the oft-used argument that Israel is in violation of numerous UN resolutions to be ironic.

"It's interesting to me that pro-Palestinians seek legitimacy from the same organization that created Israel, but yet, deny [Israel's] legitimacy. It's hypocricy in the extreme," he said.

"If you won't even acknowledge that the United Nations voted to create a two-state solution in 1947 and the fact that Israel was attacked after declaring a state, I don't think I can go any further. That's the end of the discussion."

Winnipeg church hosts Dachau exhibit

Myron Love
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Nearly 100 people gathered in a historic Winnipeg church recently for the opening of an exhibition about the Dachau concentration camp.

The travelling exhibit *Names Instead of Numbers*, stories of former inmates – both Jewish and non-Jewish – of Dachau, is on display at Westminster United Church until April 14.

The 119-year-old Westminster United is the first Canadian church to house the exhibit. The exhibit grew out of the Dachau Remembrance Book project, which began in 1999, and was first displayed at the Protestant Church of Reconciliation at the Dachau site.

Names Instead of Numbers consists of 27 panels, including a history of Dachau and the Holocaust and biographies of 22 former Dachau inmates. Among them are Dutch, French and Austrian Resistance fighters, a Roma, German, Austrian and Polish Jews, eastern Europeans and anti-Nazi clergy, the best known of whom is Lutheran Pastor Martin Niemoller. One of the people whose story is told is that of Rabbi Emeritus Erwin Schild of Toronto's Adath Israel Congregation.

Rev. Robert Campbell, with Belle Millo, chair of Freeman Family Foundation Holocaust Education Centre, holds a copy of Millo's book, *Voices of Winnipeg Holocaust Survivors*.

[Myron Love photo]

"Dachau was Nazi Germany's first concentration camp," said Belle Millo, chair of Winnipeg's Freeman Family Foundation Holocaust Education Centre, at the exhibit's opening. "The camp was at first used to hold political prisoners. After Kristallnacht, a large number of Jewish prisoners were taken to Dachau. They were later joined by Seventh Day Adventists, Roma and common criminals."

Millo, whose father, the late Samuel Jarniewski, was a survivor of Dachau, is responsible for bringing the exhibit to Winnipeg. The Protestant Church of Reconciliation contacted her after the release of her book, *Voices of Winnipeg Holocaust Survivors*, two years ago.

Millo contacted Rev. James Christie, a professor in the theology department at the University of Winnipeg and director of the university's Ridd Institute for Religion and Global Policy, who is known as a friend of the Winnipeg Jewish community. Then Rev. Christie put her in touch with Rev. Robert Campbell of Westminster United.

"We saw this project as a wonderful opportunity to bring our two faiths together," Rev. Campbell told the audience at the opening. "We hope that as viewers study the panels in the display and the stories they tell, the viewers will be encouraged as citizens to be vigilant in the defence of freedom and the pursuit of justice."

Winnipeg Mayor Sam Katz praised Millo for her efforts to raise awareness of the Holocaust and keep the memory alive. His own parents, he noted, were survivors of the Buchenwald camp.

"Every year around this time, there are new names entered into the Dachau Remembrance Book," Millo said. "The Nazis tried not only to murder all the Jews of Europe, but also to erase their names and their memory. In the camps, they became numbers. This exhibition restores the names of some of the victims and rescues their memory."

The *Names Instead of Numbers* exhibit is sponsored by Westminster United Church, the Ridd Institute and the Freeman Family Foundation.

Edmonton Talmud Torah to celebrate 100 years

Lauren Kramer
Pacific Correspondent

When it opened its doors in a synagogue basement in 1912, Edmonton Talmud Torah became the first Jewish day school in Canada. As it prepares to celebrate its 100th birthday, the school is gathering stories and memories from its 2,000 alumni who now live all over the world.

"All of us were moulded and shaped by our experience at TT," says David Weisz, president of the Talmud Torah Society. "We're so excited to bring everyone together to reminisce, celebrate our school's longevity and talk about the future of Jewish education in Edmonton."

The celebrations will occur May 17 through 20, starting with a concert at the Royal Alberta Museum and culminating with a gala dinner on May 20 at the Westin. In between, there will be a welcoming reception at the Art Gallery of Alberta, a communal Shabbat during which old friends will be able to reconnect, tours of the old Talmud Torah School, in the city's Glenora neighbourhood, and an open house at the current school featuring students' art and performances.

Today, the school has 140 students ranging from kindergarten to Grade 9. It's a community Jewish day school and for the past 30 years has been an "alternative school" in the Edmonton Public School Board, which means it is funded like other public schools in the system, Weisz explains. "We provide secular instruction like other public schools in Edmonton for 60 per cent of the day and the rest of the day consists of a strong Judaic and Hebrew-language curriculum with content determined by the Talmud Torah Society."

After graduating from high school, he found his way to Toronto and started a family, enrolling his children at the Toronto Heschel School. "At around $10,000 per year per student, the cost of Jewish education in Ontario is prohibitive for many middle-class families," he says. "With my third child entering the system, I was wondering how I was going to afford Jewish education and still pay the mortgage."

A job opportunity returned him to his hometown, where tuition costs $4,500 per student to cover the Hebrew and Judaic portion of the program. "Edmonton Talmud Torah is a very unique public-private school hybrid model," he says. "The Edmonton Public School Board recognized that the public school system can and should contain specialized schools, including schools where religious observance is part of the program."

While ETT grew fast in its early years, with 52 children enrolled by 1915 and 250 kids enrolled in the 1990s, enrolment numbers have dropped since then, increasing slightly only recently with an influx of young Jewish families into the city. "They're drawn by our burgeoning economy and demand for highly paid professionals in medicine, research, IT, utilities, government and oil and gas industry," Weisz says.

Jay Palter and his family are among them, moving to Edmonton from Ontario in 2009 and enrolling his children in ETT. "This has been a great place for our family," Palter says. "Coming from the east, it was an excellent community for us to get involved in and that helped our transition a lot."

As it moves past its 100th birthday, the school is planning to double the size of its daycare/preschool as well as the size of classes going into kindergarten. "We currently have a waiting list in our preschool daycare, so the demand is there," says Weisz. "We are also implementing a digital learning pilot for our junior high students where they will have mobile devices and a wireless network at the school in order to use Google apps and other software as part of their learning."

Maintaining quality Jewish education in a city with a population of one million – Jews constitute 5,000 – is challenging, Weisz adds. "We're far from major Jewish population centres and don't have the breadth and depth of Judaic teaching resources that larger centres can draw upon. But we do have strengths. Our community has always supported Talmud Torah and millions of dollars were raised in the mid-1990s to buy the land and build the beautiful building we're in today. Parents and grandparents are always volunteering their time to help in the classroom or on school projects.

"We've also benefited greatly from the parents who have recently arrived from Israel, FSU [former Soviet Union] and Latin America who bring their energy and talents to the school," says Weisz.

If you attended Talmud Torah School and want to attend the 100th anniversary celebrations, go to http://tt100.ca/register-now.

Talmud Torah archival photos

James Pasternak
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Carleton grad students pass divestment motion

Cara Stern
Special to The CJN

OTTAWA — Graduate students at Carleton University voted in favour last week of ending investments in companies with connections to Israel in what may be the first time such a divestment motion has been passed in a student-wide election at a Canadian university.

According to unofficial results, which need to be ratified by the Graduate Students' Association (GSA) council next month, 72 per cent of students voted in favour of a non-binding plebiscite question that asked if they believe Carleton should adopt a socially responsible investment policy, which would require the university to stop investing in companies "complicit in illegal military occupations and other violations of international law, including but not limited to: BAE Systems, Motorola, Northrop-Grumman, and Tesco Supermarkets."

The motion – put forward by graduate students who support the Carleton chapter of the group Students Against Israeli Apartheid (SAIA) – didn't mention Israel by name, but the first three firms have contracts with Israel's military, while Tesco, a British grocery chain, stocks products made in West Bank communities.

Carleton invests in the companies as part of its pension fund.

The March 21-22 election had an eight per cent voter turnout, which led some to question the plebiscite results.

There were 204 votes in favour of the motion and 77 opposed. According to its website, the GSA represents some 3,000 full- and part-time graduate students.

Yaelle Gang, media and communications executive at Carleton's chapter of the Israel Awareness Committee (IAC), said she doesn't believe the vote represents the views of all graduate students.

"It was a certain group of people who turned out to vote, and they had their certain agenda and it passed," she said. "It's obviously problematic, but the university has been very clear they don't have the intention of divesting from those companies."

But Kelly Black, graduate student representative-elect and current vice-president of operations for the GSA, said all students were made aware of the questions being asked, and they all had the opportunity to vote.

Additionally, he said, the vote was a plebiscite, not a referendum, meaning it aimed to gauge student opinion and was not a vote on a binding action.

Zane Colt, undergraduate student representative-elect to Carleton's board of governors, said he opposed the wording of the question.

"It only promotes hate and really tries to gang up and demonize Israel, which the board of governors won't tolerate, because they recognize it won't promote dialogue," he said.

But Black said the question did create the opportunity for dialogue. As per election policy, students could register official "yes" and "no" committees on the plebiscite question, but in this case, Black said only the yes side registered.

Gang said most of the IAC's members are undergraduate students, and there wasn't a voice on the GSA council advocating for the pro-Israel side.

In contrast, when SAIA tried to get the same question on the ballot for this year's undergraduate students' association election, the undergraduate council voted in favour of amending the question to make it broader, removing the part that mentioned the four companies that deal with Israel, Colt said.

SAIA then withdrew the motion, saying the amended wording changed its spirit.

Colt, who is also a former communications chair of the IAC, said he believes the GSA election results mean very little.

In order for the university to divest, the students would have to bring the issue to Carleton's board of governors, which in the past has rejected such motions.

Last year, hundreds of anti-Israel students protested at a board meeting, which led to a controversial cancellation of the meeting and a closed-door discussion that concluded with the decision the university would not divest from companies that do business in Israel.

At the time, Duncan Watt, Carleton's vice-president of finance and administration, said the university already considers environmental, social, and governance factors in its investment decisions.

Black said despite the board of governors' past actions in refusing to consider divestment, he will take on the role of advocating for it.

"I think this is clearly a thing at least graduate students have been asking for, for quite some time," he said, adding that the GSA has passed motions showing its support for divestment in the past.

"Hopefully I can raise the issue and bring the plebiscite as an example of what the students are asking for."

In response to last week's GSA vote, the administration said in a statement that Carleton's "board adopted a responsible investing policy last year. This policy is based on the United Nations principles of responsible investing and is considered to be best practice. This policy has been incorporated into the statement of investment policies and procedures for the pension plan. No changes to the policy are contemplated at this time."

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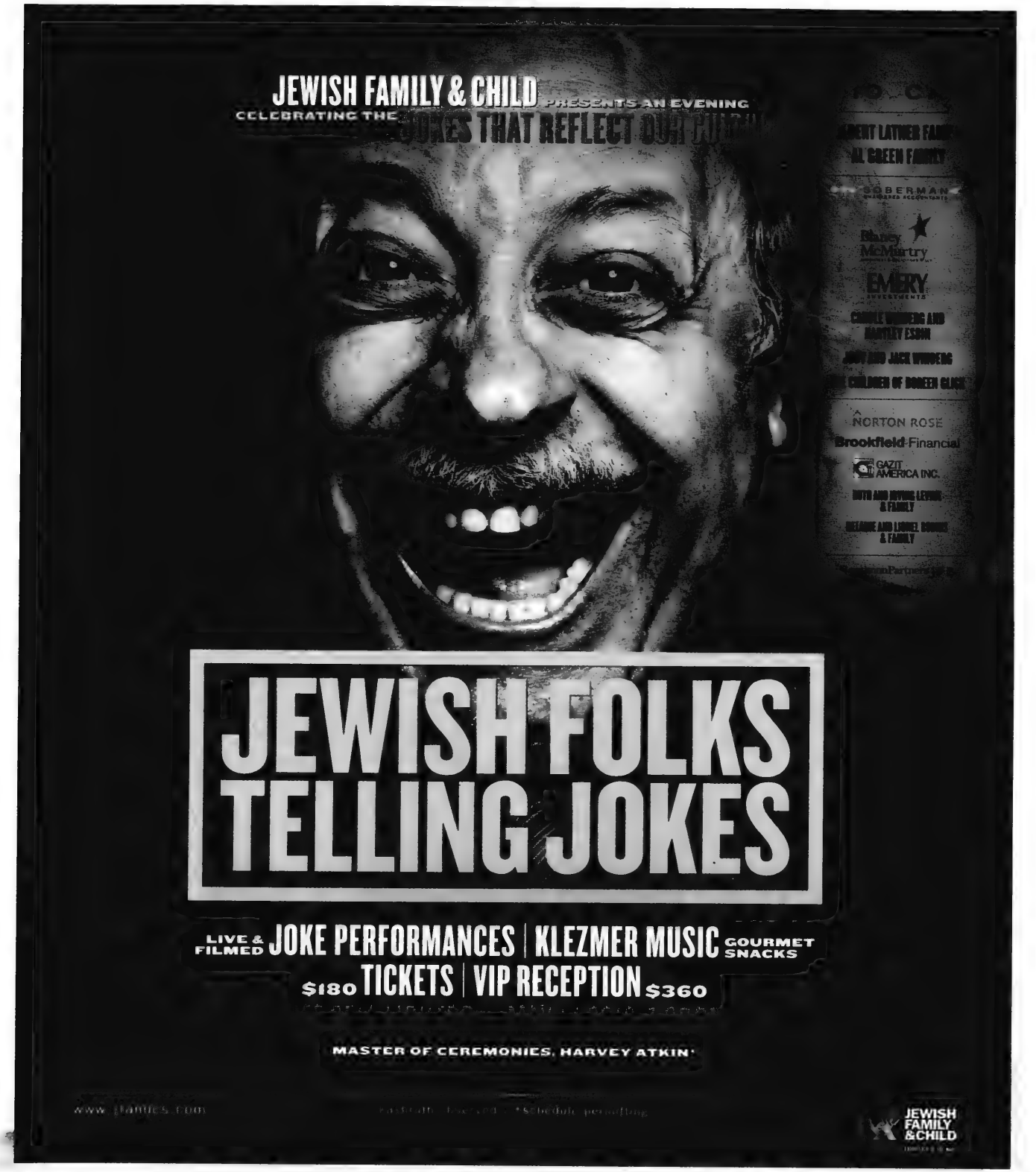
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ISRAEL EDUCATION: Grade 12 students at Bnei Akiva Schools took part recently in the final session of their "Hugging and Wrestling Israel" seminars with David Borzykowksi, centre, project manager for issues education at the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs. Pictured with Borzykowksi, from left, are Daniel Safran, Ben Adler, Gideon Blinick, Rebecca Gross, Shaili Perez and Elianna Sutton.

יום השואה

Yom Hashoah
Multi-Generational
Public Reading of

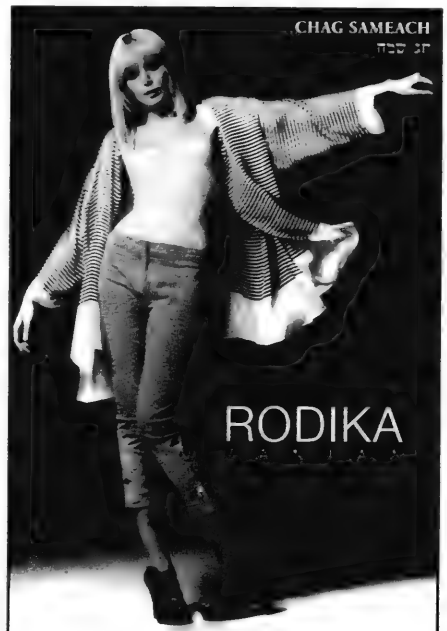
MEGILLAT HASHOAH:
THE SHOAH SCROLL

Community Commemorative Service
with
Community Leaders

Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am
55 Yeomans Road
Toronto, Ontario

Thursday, April 19, 2012 at 7:30 pm

Everyone is Welcome



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שישאר בינינו

גידי קורן וחברים

בואו לחגוג את בית החולים מאיר

בית החולים מאיר בכפר סבא איננו אולי הגדול או המפורסם שבין מוסדות מערכת הבריאות בישראל, אך למרות זאת, בין חוגי המקצוע הרפואי הוא נחשב לבית חולים מצויין, עם רופאים מעולים וסגל אחיות מובחר. אבל אולי הדבר הכי חשוב במושגים ישראלים- בית החולים מאיר הוא סמל הדו קיום בישראל. באזור נמצאים הכפרים של המשולש, ורבים מהאחיות ולא מעט רופאים הינם בני המיעוט הערבי. ממקור ראשון אני שמח לדווח שהיחס לחולים במאיר הוא מאוד שונה ממוסדות רבים אחרים בארץ. אין שם את הפלצנות שאופיינית לבתי חולים מובילים, בעוד שרמת הרפואה היא מן המובילות.

אגודת ידידי בית החולים מאיר בטורונטו חוגגת ב- 22 באפריל בבית הכנסת "בית אמת-בית יהודה" אירוע תמיכה בבית החולים, תוך הענקת פרסי הצטיינות לאישים קנדיים שתורמים לישראל ולאנושות בכלל. הדגש השנה הוא על בניית אגף ילדים חדש לבית החולים. הרוח החיה באירוע ובאגודת ידידי מאיר הוא אריה רייף, איש מסדרת מזיזי עולם- ענחן ואיש משרד החוץ לשעבר, שישראל בוערת בעצמותיו למרות עסקיו חובקי העולם.

"נרתמתי לעזור לבית החולים מאיר מתוך קשר אישי קרוב למנהלו הקודם, אומר רייף- מדהים אותי איך הם מצליחים לעשות כל כך הרבה למרות דלות האמצעים שעומדים לרשותם ומתקנים ישנים שזקוקים לחידוש דחוף". רייף, ידיד קרוב של הנשיא שמעון פרס, הוא גם מקימו של סניף טורונטו של מרכז פרס לשלום.

לקבלת פרטים על האירוע של בית חולים מאיר ב 22 באפריל התקשרו ל- T. 416.226.2970
meircanada@rogers.com •www.meirfriends.com

מה יהיה

חמש בבוקר בעיר פירנצה באיטליה. נהג מונית מסיע אותי לנמל התעופה כדי לשוב לטורונטו אחרי יומיים הרצאות. הוא מספר לי שמצבם של אנשים צעירים באיטליה הוא בכי רע, עם אחוזי אבטלה עצומים. אני מבקש דוגמא ספציפית והוא מספר לי שבעשר השנים האחרונות ירדה אוכלוסיית פירנצה משלוש מאות חמישים למאתיים חמישים אלף עקב העובדה שצעירים רבים אינם יכולים להרשות לעצמם לשכור דירה או אפילו חדר. "אנחנו הזקנים- כבר יש לנו מקום לגור, אבל הם? אין להם סיכוי". שיחה דומה היתה לי לפני שבועיים בסן פרנסיסקו, שבה קונים אנשי ההיי טק מעמק הסיליקון כל בית קיים, המחירים מרקיעי שחקים, ואנשים צעירים אינם יכולים להתקיים בה.

וכל זה מחזיר אותי למחאה החברתית בישראל, שבה צעירים בני המעמד הבינוני יצאו לרחובות למחות על חוסר יכולתם לקנות דיור ולהתקיים בכבוד. זה, בשילוב עם ממדי אבטלה מפחידים, מציירים מפה מפחידה. והתוצאות אינן מאחרות לבוא- ירידה מאסיבית בילדה ברוב ארצות העולם. באיראן נולדים 60% פחות תינוקות, ברוסיה ירידה האוכלוסיה בשישה מליון איש בעשר השנים האחרונות, וברבות מהמדינות המתועשות יש גידול שלילי של האוכלוסיה- מספר התינוקות הנולדים נמוך ממספר אלה שנפטרים. בסיאול דרום קוריאה סיפר לי רופא קוריאני על ירידה של כחמישים אחוז במספר היולדות.

הסיסמא "העולם שייך לצעירים" נראית פתאום תלושה ודימיונית. אבל שישאר בינינו.

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Happy Passover

Friday, March 30th to Thursday, April 5th, 2012 at these locations only:

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BAGS OF KINDNESS: Aliza and Yehoshua, junior kindergarten students at Eitz Chaim Day School's Thornhill campus, hold "bags of kindness" filled with non-perishable food to donate to needy families. The children and their classmates in teacher Mercedes Elmaleh's class undertook the project in association with the non-profit organization Ezrat Achim as part of their studies about the letter "K."

FOOD PACKING: Grade 8 mentors and their Grade 6 mentees from Associated Hebrew Schools' Danilack Middle School worked together March 20 to pack Passover food packages to be distributed by the National Council of Jewish Women.

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Pesach...it's almost here

All the students at Holy Blossom Temple Preschool took part in a Passover food drive. Proud of their purchases are, from left, Joey, Adam, Ben, Nathan, Ted and Rachel.

The senior kindergarten classes at Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School began preparing for Pesach by reviewing the order of the seder and creating their own Haggadot to include photos of all their classmates demonstrating the various parts of the seder. Here, Samantha Kronis and Reuben Piatigorsky-Roth conduct Barech, Birkat Hamazon and the blessing over the third cup of wine.

Grade 8 students at Leo Baeck Day School's Thornhill campus packed Passover food boxes at the National Council of Jewish Women for its annual food drive. Pictured, back row, from left, are Michelle R., Samantha S., Jordan G., Lexie L., Jake S., Jacob S., Ethan S., Erica L., Bailee K. and Lauren K., and front row, from left, Jessica B., Jennifer K., Chelsea W., Jonah S. and Zachary B.

Mazel Tov מזל טוב

Happy 104th birthday to Mama Rose a mom, grandma, aunt and friend. With love, the Goulds, Birnbaums, Blazers, Daiters and Glazers.

Happy 70th anniversary Harry & Shirley (April 5)! Love, the Farbstein family: Denis, Laura, Jeff, Linda, Billy, Jodi, Justin, Jillyan, Blair, Chase and Aubrey

Gillian Ship, Clifford Fellen and Maya announce Kyle's birth, Dec 16. Grandparents: Rickiee/Bernie Itovitch, Marlene/Jeff Fellen; great-grandmother Leah Gold. Missed, Andrew Ship.

Mazel tov to Max on his fifth birthday. We wish you the best of everything. Love you so much, Mommy, Daddy, Jeanettie and the entire family.

Colin & Anne O'Connor (née Jamieson) are thrilled to announce the birth of Harper Elizabeth, March 7. Proud Grandparents are Carol Jamieson, Patti LaBarre and Pat O'Connor.

Bris of Orrie Rothman was celebrated March 19 with parents Shayle & Noa Rothman and big brother Aedden. Mazel tov from family and friends.

Email your digital photos to cblackman@thecjn.ca or go online to www.CJNews.com and click the "Family Moments"

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What's New

By LILA SARICK

Social Networking @ The Canadian Jewish News
for the :-) generation
YT
BLOGS

Deadline reminder: April 2 is the deadline for the issue of April 12. April 9 is the deadline for the issue of April 19. Please note, all deadlines are now at NOON. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; e-mail whatsnewcjn@gmail.com, or fax 416-391-0829.

Thursday, March 29

IBERIAN JEWISH HISTORY

Rabbi Wayne Allan discusses "Persecution, Expulsion and Resurgence," 7:30 p.m., Beth David Synagogue. $15.

REDUCING CAREGIVER STRESS

The Alzheimer Society of Toronto presents a program on "Reducing Caregiver Stress," Pride of Israel Synagogue, 7 p.m. Call to register, 416-226-0111, ext. 10.

Friday, March 30

JEWS IN THE SOVIET UNION

Sev Perelman discusses his experiences as a Jew in the Soviet Union, following Erev Shabbat services, 8:30 p.m., Temple Har Zion, 7360 Bayview Ave., Thornhill.

SOULS ON FIRE

Chabad of Markham, 83 Green Lane, Thornhill, holds its monthly Friday night service, "Souls on Fire," 6:45 p.m. Call 905-886-0420.

SCHOLAR-IN-RESIDENCE

Frank Bialystock is the scholar-in-residence at Temple Kol Ami. He speaks tonight at 7:30 p.m. on "The Jews of Canada: Settlement, Adaptation and Diversity." He will speak March 31 at 9:15 a.m. on "Forging an Identity: Postwar Canadian Jewry" and at 7:30 p.m. www.templekolami.ca or 905-709-2620.

Saturday, March 31

TORAH CLASS

Lionel Sharp teaches the Torah class today at Beth Tikvah Synagogue at 9:45 a.m.

Sunday, April 1

FRIENDS OF YIDDISH

Sheva Zucker discusses "Secular Yiddish Schools: History and Heritage in English and Yiddish," 2 p.m., Beth Tikvah Synagogue. Call 416-736-8073, 416-458-1440 or e-mail yiddish18@yahoo.ca.

CHOCOLATE SEDER

Shaar Shalom Synagogue holds a chocolate seder, 1:30 p.m. RSVP 905-889-4975, ext. 62.

YIDDISH FOLKSINGER

Simcha Simchovitch discusses Yiddish folksinger **Mordechai Gebirtig**, 9 a.m., Lodzer Centre Congregation. 416-636-6665.

Monday, April 2

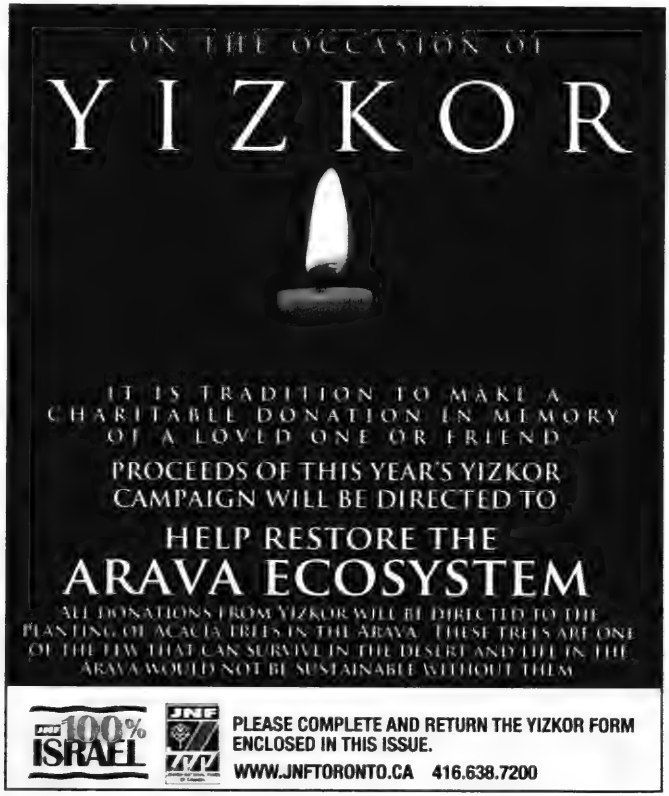
VISION IMPAIRED

The Jewish Club for the Vision Impaired celebrates Passover at the Prosserman JCC, 7:30 p.m. Call **Bess**, 905-508-2892.

IBERIAN JEWISH HISTORY

Rabbi Wayne Allen discusses "Spain, Portugal and Gibraltar in the 20th Century," Beth David Synagogue, 7:30 p.m.

Continued on page 27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Continued from page 26

Wednesday, April 4

JEWS FOR JUDAISM

Rabbi Michael Skobac discusses "Inside the Missionary Mind," Shaarei Tefillah Congregation, 8:15 p.m. 416-789-0020.

Other News

PASSOVER SEDERS

Chabad of Markham holds a seder April 6, led by **Rabbi Nachman** and **Aviva Forer.** RSVP 905-886-0420, ext. 221, or www.chabadmarkham.org.

Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism holds a seder April 6, led by **Barry Olshen** and **Sandi Horwitz.** RSVP 416-385-3910 or roby@oraynu.org.

The City Shul holds a seder April 6, at Mideastro, led by **Rabbi Elyse Goldstein.** Reserve in advance, 416-477-2427.

Chabad of Danforth-Beaches holds a seder April 6 led by **Rabbi Sholom** and **Devora Lezell**. RSVP 416-809-1365 or visit ChabadDB.com.

Temple Har Zion holds a seder April 7, led by **Rabbi Cory Weiss.** Reserve by April 2. 905-889-2252 or e-mail: thzpassoverseder@gmail.com.

Danforth Jewish Circle seder, April 10. RSVP info@djctoronto.com.

United Jewish People's Order sponsors a third seder with musicians **David Wall, Marilyn Lerner** and the Toronto Jewish Folk Choir, April 15. RSVP by March 30, 416-789-5502 or info@winchevskycentre.org.

SPRING LECTURE SERIES

Temple Emanu-El's spring lecture series features **Adam Chapnick, Arne Kislenko, Iain Scott** and others. Begins April 16. To register, 416-449-3880.

THEATRE TRIPS

Beth Emeth Synagogue's theatre group is offering transportation and tickets to summer theatre. First show is *The Matchmaker* at Stratford, May 23. Deadline for reservation April 16. Call 416-633-3838.

MELTON CLASSES

Yehudit Shier Weisberg teaches a nine-week class on Prayer: A Gift for Our Lives, starting April 18 at Beth Emeth Synagogue. Call 416-789-7400.

TIKKUN GUATEMALA TOUR

Spaces still available on the Tikkun Guatemala tour, teaching the Jewish community, building a school, April 20-29. 416-537-9459.

TORAH TOTS MUSIC

Chabad of Markham's Torah Tots offers a drumming class for children aged 6-24 months, starting April 20, 9:15 a.m. $40 before March 30, $50 after. Call 905-886-0420, ext. 227.

HARBORD REUNION

Anyone who taught or attended Harbord Collegiate Institute is invited to a reunion April 26-27. www.HarbordClub.com.

HELPING OTHER PARENTS

HOPE (Helping Other Parents Everywhere) is a support group for parents of acting-out youth. The group meets Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m. at Edithvale Community Centre, 131 Finch Ave. W. Call **Bernice**, 905-737-3403.

SCHWARTZ REISMAN CENTRE

The centre is open for daily tours. Register now for preschool and daycare. Call 905-303-1821.

JF&CS GROUPS

All programs require preregistration and are open to all members of the community. To register, call **Shawna Sidney,** 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or www.jfandcs.com. All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St., unless otherwise noted.

When You're About to Separate, What to Tell the Kids: A workshop for parents in the early stages of separation, March 29, 6:30 p.m.

Parenting the Child with ADHD: A 4-week session for parents. Starts April 3, 7 p.m. Call for pre-group assessment.

Younger Widow/Widower Bereavement Group: A 6-session discussion series for people 60 and younger. Starts April 10, 7:30 p.m.

Widows/Widowers 65+: A 6-session group for people over 65 who have recently lost a spouse. Starts April 18, 1 p.m.

Mind, Body Connection for Women: An 8-session group for women who want to learn mindfulness and meditation. Topics include stress and anxiety reduction, enhancing your self-esteem. Starts April 25, 3 p.m. at 35 Madison Ave.

One Family, Two Homes: A 6-session series for families experiencing separation and divorce. Children and parents participate in separate groups. Starts April 25, 6:30 p.m.

The Challenge of Anger for Women: A 6-session group for women to learn how to express their anger in an assertive, non-aggressive way. Starts April 26, 7:30 p.m.

Beyond the Chupah, Becoming a Couple: A 6-session marriage preparation group for couples, offered with the Rabbinical Assembly of Ontario. Starts April 26, 7:30 p.m., Beth Emeth Synagogue.

BEREAVED PARENTS

Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer** at JF&CS, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or bfeffer@jfandcs.com.

MILES NADAL JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org.

The winner of the 2011 Canadian Jewish Playwriting Competition, *Haunted* by **Daniel Karasik**, will be performed April 10, 8 p.m. Ext. 606 .

Mimouna will be celebrated with henna, cooking and belly dancing workshops, Middle Eastern music and food, April 15, 7 p.m. Ext. 0 for tickets.

Film critic **Adam Nayman** analyzes **Stanley Kubrick**'s films in an 8-lecture program, Mondays 7 p.m. starting April 16.

Classes in Hebrew literacy and conversation start the week of April 16. Ext. 154.

Tickets on sale now for Stars on Spadina Gala with **Theresa Tova, Moshe Hammer, Hilario Duran** and more, April 23, 7:30 p.m.

Reading Jewish, a class with **Rabbi Elyse Goldstein,** starts April 30, 8 p.m.

The Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursday at 7:15 a.m. and Sunday at 8 a.m. followed by a breakfast. Call **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200.

FOR SENIORS

Association of Jewish Seniors. Tammy, 416-635-2900, ext. 458. April 7, Passover seder, Bernard Betel Centre, 6 p.m. $20. Reserve by April 2.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park. (60+). **Valerie**, 416-395-7881. Casino Rama, April 18. Tuesdays, gentle exercise, 10 a.m.; Wednesdays, duplicate bridge, 12:30 p.m.; Thursdays, line dancing, 10 a.m.; social bridge, 12:30 p.m. Non-members welcome.

National Council of Jewish Women, Aviva branch, is looking for women over 70 for their group. Call 416-633-5100.

LZA Seniors Cultural Club meets Tuesdays, 10 a.m., Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell. 416-630-9444.

New Horizons is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club that offers kosher food, card games, casino trips. 416-256-1892.

Adath Israel Congregation. Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub. Refreshments $2. Call **Pearl**, 416-635-6317, or **Sheila**, 416-665-3333.

Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue welcomes new players for mah-jong and Rummikub Monday and Wednesday afternoons. 416-633-3838.

The bridge club at Forest Hill library has reopened and is looking for new members. Call **Lea** (evenings), 416-487-7630.

Bernard Betel Centre 416-225-2112. March 29, lecture on seniors personal safety, 1:30 p.m. April 3, lecture on "Obama: Challenges for the Next Election," 10 a.m.; April 5, **Sarah Dunford** discusses diabetes education, 1:30 p.m. Sign up now for trip to Europe, May 30-June 13.

Haverim at Beth Tzedec. Seymour Epstein discusses his book *From Couscous to Kasha* and his experiences working for the American Jewish Joint Committee, April 2, 1:30 p.m.

Seniors Gentle Fitness Club offers Tai Chi Chih classes, Wednesdays, 7 p.m., and Feldenkrais, Mondays, 10:30 a.m., Edithvale Community Centre. 416-665-9050.

Active Seniors, Miles Nadal JCC, 416-924-6211, ext.155. Psychiatrist **Lesley Wiesenfeld** talks about "Positive Aging and Adaptation: Challenges, Opportunities and Transitions" April 19, 1:30 p.m.

Active 55 Plus Fitness Training, Colin Blayney 416-924-6211, ext. 526. Golf conditioning starts April 12, 6:30 p.m.; Functional mobility starts April 16, 6:30 p.m.

PROSSERMAN JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com.

Tickets for spring/summer theatre trips are on sale now.

The spring/summer program guide is available now, ext. 4235.

Save the date for community bingo, April 7; computer animation classes, April 17; Shalom Sesame Pesach, April 4.

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WORRY FREE BRIDAL REGISTRY

Lawyer was 'genuinely committed' to human rights

Frances Kraft
Staff Reporter

Gerald Lorne Gall – local, national and international human rights advocate, University of Alberta law professor, and a *CJN* columnist from 2005 to 2010 – died March 18. He was 65, and had experienced serious health issues for the past year

A native of Toronto who received his BA from Queen's University and his LLB from the University of Windsor, Gall moved to Edmonton with his wife, Karen, 38 years ago to begin teaching at the law school there. They had been married the previous year on March 19 – ironically, the date of his funeral.

Among the honours listed on Gall's 38-page CV, he was appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada in 2001. In 1995, he was awarded the Alberta Human Rights Award, and in 2010, he received a Distinguished Service Award for Service in Legal Scholarship from the Law Society of Alberta and the Canadian Bar Association.

Gerald Gall

A key organizer of the 1998 International Conference on Universal Rights and Human Values and a founder of the John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights, Gall was the organization's president at the time of his death. The centre has set up a memorial fund in his honour.

Karen Gall told *The CJN* in an e-mail that her husband's Jewish values "guided his passion for equality, human rights and justice."

Their daughter, Wendy, said in a eulogy that her father would say, "'If it's a human rights issue, it's a Jewish issue,' meaning that a person could not ignore an injustice just because it didn't affect them."

Her brother, Andrew, also in a eulogy, recalled their father's playful side at home and spoke of his teaching style at the university. He called him a "committed educator" who lectured without notes or props and believed that lawyers needed strong language skills and an understanding of current events to be professional and effective.

Gall's book, *The Canadian Legal System*, was "an innovative text" that explained Canadian law in an accessible way, Andrew said.

Supreme Court Justice Rosalie Abella said, "Professionally, Gerry was genuinely and unwaveringly committed to the protection of human rights. Personally, he was a warm, wonderful and generous mensch".

Bernie Farber, former CEO of Canadian Jewish Congress, recalls Gall as "a man of great sincerity [who] had tremendous integrity, and it was really his fidelity to justice that singled him out as a special person."

Farber had a long association with Gall, who served as CJC's Edmonton representative and chair of its law and social action committee in the mid-1980s. "He was an eminently fair man who you could go to at any time, and you would get a fair hearing and very wise counsel," Farber said.

Rabbi Reuven Bulka, a former co-president of CJC, told *The CJN* in an e-mail that Gall "was a dedicated Jew. He was smart and humble. He always was full of great advice, but he was a gentleman who offered advice, and never imposed it. He was a pleasure to work with."

Gall is survived by his wife Karen; children Melanie, Wendy, and Andrew; and sisters Phyllis Elfan and Carole Robertson, both of Toronto.

Allan Raymond worked to preserve community's legacy

David Lazarus
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Allan Raymond was the type of fellow who might have loved to attend his own funeral.

He died March 9 at age 90, and as those who knew him attested, he would have made it a point to take note of everyone who was present and to exchange a friendly word or two, as was his style.

Prior to the funeral service, they spoke of how he considered the historical importance of every event he attended and picked up virtually every piece of material related to it: flyers, photographs, signatures and any other ephemera.

Those events included many a funeral.

To Raymond, it was all important, and vital to preserving the rich historical legacy of Quebec's Jewish community.

Raymond, they said, although a historian only by avocation, played a singular role in preserving that legacy.

For decades, he was a ubiquitous, endearingly quirky figure who showed up in a trademark hat at almost every community event, at every Jewish estate and garage sale, or at any other happening where there was a possibility of collecting another artifact.

"It was simple: he had a passionate love for Canadian-Jewish history," said Ron Finegold, a former director of the Jewish Public Library (JPL), where some 60 boxes of the Allan Raymond Collection are in the archives awaiting scrutiny.

About a decade ago, Raymond donated to the JPL thousands of images he had taken or collected over the years, many of them "incredible," said JPL archivist Shannon Hodge.

A proud veteran of World War II – Jewish war vets stood in formation at his funeral – Raymond became a successful insurance broker and started "collecting Jewish history" in 1953 while researching a McGill University paper on the roots of Montreal Jewry.

Over the decades, Raymond was a frequent community lecturer and was very involved with the now-defunct Jewish Historical Society of Montreal, as well as the Westmount Historical Association, St. James Literary Society, Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Congregation Shaar Hashomayim and other institutions. At the funeral service at Paperman and Sons, attended by about 75 people, Raymond's son Gary and nephew Neil described Raymond's "boundless energy," his generosity of spirit and his qualities as a "lovely, wonderful human being."

Raymond is survived by his wife, Bess, children, Glenda and Gary, and brother, James.

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I stand with Israel

Earlier this month, I attended the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) Policy Conference in Washington, D.C.

As a member of the six-person delegation from the Canadian Federation of Jewish Students (CFJS), meeting and sharing the experience with the other delegates from Canada was unforgettable.

AIPAC is America's pro-Israel lobbying organization, and in fact one of the largest lobbying committees in the United States. Its mission is to strengthen U.S.-Israel ties, and it works to conceive and implement policies that enhance the two nations' vital relationship.

Given the latest news in Middle Eastern affairs, namely, allegations surrounding Iran's development of nuclear weapons, the AIPAC conference arrived at a critical time.

One of the most enlightening aspects of the conference was being exposed to an immense pro-Israel community that is not Jewish.

Growing up in a predominantly Jewish community and attending day school up to university, I never even entertained the idea that non-Jews could be as passionate about the State of Israel as I am.

Campus Life

Jessica Pollock

I assumed that given the lack of a Jewish heritage and history, they could not possibly feel the connection I inherently possess. I was wrong.

Despite my preconceived notions, many delegates and even political figures who spoke at the conference, such as U.S. Defence Secretary Leon Panetta and House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi, who are not Jewish, work hard to strengthen the U.S.-Israel relationship.

This reaffirmed to me that religion should not be a barrier that prevents people from supporting Israel. Aside from Israel's status as a Jewish state, it requires our support as a sovereign entity, irrespective of religion.

Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East and that renders its security essential to any western nation. President Barack Obama, one of the several leading speakers at the conference, said it best, "There will be no lasting peace until Israel's security concerns are met."

For the vast global village that seeks peace in the Middle East, it is only natural to support Israel, given many countries' contemporary outlook of taking any action or pursuing any interest that could result in securing universal harmony.

Moreover, Israel is the only state in the Middle East that currently recognizes 15 different religions, giving its citizens complete freedom of religion. Thus Christians, Muslims, Jews and others are free to practise their faiths in whatever capacity they desire.

Furthermore, women in Israel exercise equal rights to men, can dress how they like, obtain a comprehensive education and participate in the community. Israel was the third country in the world to elect a female leader when Golda Meir became the prime minister in 1969.

These are some of the shared values that compel us to stand with Israel.

Now, you may ask how a delegation of Canadian university students could benefit from a conference focused on the U.S.-Israel alliance.

Well, being in attendance among 13,000 pro-Israel advocates was itself exceptionally empowering. Given the volatile state of affairs in the region, the conference served as a warm cover of reassurance, as participants witnessed and took part in the vast gathering.

Moreover, the conference took place from March 3 to 6, during the same week as the annual Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) was held on campuses throughout North America. Although it was difficult to miss the beginning of IAW at my school, the University of Western Ontario, I felt my attendance at the conference was imperative.

It was in Washington that I realized the importance for Canada to mirror AIPAC's actions and institute a large-scale conference for Canadian pro-Israel advocates.

Arguably referred to as "Israel's best friend," it seems only natural and essential that Canada should host a conference to encourage and inspire its politicians and citizens to confirm Israel's very existence and security.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressed the AIPAC attendees, promising that "[he] will never let [his] people live in the shadow of annihilation."

By virtue of Israel's hostile neighbours and enemies, it is apparent that Netanyahu should not act alone in protecting and defending Israel.

Now more than ever, Israel needs our support to defend its right to survive and thrive. Present-day students are the future generation that can either perpetuate Middle Eastern conflicts and animosity or work to secure a lasting peace.

Jewish and non-Jewish pro-Israel young adults must continue to take this responsibility seriously by further educating themselves, staying informed about Middle Eastern affairs and advocating for Israel on their campuses and in their communities. It is crucial that we as young adults accept this challenge and continue to represent and properly dignify our indispensable Israel.

Canadian Federation of Jewish Students delegates, from left, Elana Moscoe, Alexandra Lulka, Josef Bader, Zack Silverberg, Emile Scheffel and Jessica Pollock, attended the American Israel Public Affairs Committee Policy Conference in Washington, D.C.

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Researchers target genes that regulate lifespan

Abigail Klein Leichman
Israel21c

RAMAT GAN — All the anti-aging potions, lotions and notions on the market and in development add up to a very pretty penny. Maybe some of them actually work. Yet the biology behind aging, and how to slow its effects, has never been well understood.

Now, seven years of Israeli researchers have revealed that it may all come down to a specific gene called Sirtuin 6, or SIRT6 for short. They described their study in the Feb. 22 online issue of the popular science journal *Nature*.

SIRT6 is one of seven sirtuin genes that encode a class of proteins found in every species from single-celled yeast to complex humans. For years, scientists had zeroed in on SIRT1. When they removed SIRT1 from yeast, worms and flies, these creatures aged faster and died sooner. When they transplanted a copy of SIRT1 into the three species instead, their life expectancy increased.

But yeast and flies aren't mammals. So molecular biologist Haim Cohen of Bar-Ilan University instead turned his attention to a 2006 study involving SIRT6, which showed that mice lacking this gene aged more quickly, developing spinal curvature, calcium deficiency, osteoporosis, immune system problems and diabetes – just like humans.

"People were mostly interested in SIRT1," Cohen said. "So I thought it might be better for us as a new lab to work on something that is less crowded."

His Bar-Ilan graduate student, Yariv Kanfi, spent more than five years breeding mice that would receive an extra dose of SIRT6. Most of the lab work was done in Bar-Ilan, the pathology at Hebrew University's Hadassah Medical School and the bioinformatics by Ziv Bar-Joseph, an Israeli professor at Pennsylvania's Carnegie Mellon University.

Cohen's hunch proved to be a good one. His team demonstrated that extra SIRT6 increased survival rates in their male laboratory mice by as much as 15 percent above normal.

They're not sure why it didn't have a similar effect on the female mice, but since females of this strain tend to live 15 per cent longer than males, the boost of SIRT6 may simply have allowed the guys to catch up with the girls.

"Females have different hormone levels that affect metabolism and lifespan," explains Shoshana Naiman, a doctoral student from Chicago who joined the study four years ago. "SIRT6 perhaps caused the males to be a little more like the females. I'm now heading the project on researching the gender difference and exactly how the lifespan extension occurs, so we can try to transfer it to humans."

Cohen tells Israel21c that the team also wants to determine which body tissues are most critical to longevity by injecting SIRT6 selectively rather than generally. In addition, they'll be searching for molecules that can mimic the results in mice.

"If we want to translate this to human therapy, we must find molecules that activate the protein. Once we have that, we can go to clinical trials," he says.

Even without yet understanding every piece of the puzzle, the results are quite significant, Naiman tells ISRAEL21c. "*Nature* is one of the top journals, and only one per cent of total submissions get accepted. This was the first from Bar-Ilan in about 30 years."

CARE BEARS: Teens For the Community (TFC), a weekly program that involves more than 100 teens who volunteer in the community, recently joined hands with the Friendship Circle, a city-wide organization that caters to special-needs children. TFC volunteers lovingly created bears for Friendship Circle kids, carefully naming and personalizing each one. Pictured is volunteer Daniel Gordon, right, with his buddy Alex at Friendship Circle.

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Women's group aims at renaissance in values

Paul Lungen
Staff Reporter

Visiting Jerusalem is a highlight of Jewish Women's Renaissance Project trip to Israel.

These days, in the era of social media and the Internet, when things go viral, they really go viral.

Take the Jewish Women's Renaissance Project (JWRP) for instance. Four years ago, eight women led by Toronto native Lori Palatnik gathered at a resort in Utah to brainstorm ideas "to do something for the Jewish people around the world."

They came up with the idea of creating "a Jewish women's movement that inspires a renaissance of positive values that transforms ourselves, our families, and our communities."

The flagship activity adopted by the JWRP was a subsidized trip to Israel, a sort of "Birthright for women," Palatnik said, referring to the subsidized free trips to Israel for Jewish young people.

It was a big idea designed to address a really big issue, and word spread quickly. They told some friends, who told other friends, who used Facebook, e-mail and other social media to spread the concept. "It took off like a rocket," said Palatnik, founding director of JWRP.

In 2009, JWRP's first year of operation, 300 women participated in a nine-day visit to the Holy Land. In the second year, the numbers doubled to 600, and in 2010, JWRP took 1,000 women in five groups to Israel. Palatnik expects another 1,000 will make the trip this year, and in 2013, the number is expected to swell to 1,200. The 2,000 women who have taken part so far hail from seven countries, including Canada, the United States and Mexico.

The trips have been so exciting and enriching that demand far exceeds supply. At an information session in Los Angeles not long ago, 30 prior participants brought 200 friends with them, even though only 40 spots were available. Toronto women likewise have made the trip, often recruited through partnering groups at a number of Aish HaTorah-affiliated synagogues. Palatnik and her husband, Rabbi Yaakov Palatnik, founded Toronto's Village Shul, which is Orthodox, although she said the trip is geared to non-Orthodox women.

Lori Palatnik

Palatnik acknowledges that many women are enticed by the low cost of the trip. Participants are asked to pay only for airfare, while JWRP picks up the remaining $1,800-per-person tab. Subsidies are available through partnering groups, including synagogues, and some federations, but it's a small group of well-to-do supporters who provide the financial muscle that makes JWRP trips a possibility.

While cost is certainly a consideration, it's the nature of the trip itself that has proven the real enticement, Palatnik said. "It's well thought out." It balances visits to tourist destinations such as Jerusalem and the Dead Sea with a spiritual dimension. "We make it special and meaningful."

In Jerusalem, the women enjoy a Shabbat dinner with a view of the Kotel (Western Wall), while hosting one or more lone soldiers, those who have no family in Israel. The soldiers tell about their experiences, and the women get a chance to "mother" the young men and women, Palatnik said.

At Masada, participants enjoy a unique naming ceremony. "One-third don't have Jewish names, so they get [one] in a 2,000-year-old shul at the top of Masada. It's the oldest shul in the world.

"They dance, they cry, and every day is like that, special and meaningful," Palatnik added.

JWRP organizes speaking presentations that examine the Jewish contribution to civilization. Palatnik, herself an accomplished public speaker, discusses the application of the practical wisdom of the Torah to everyday issues such as raising children and ensuring a successful marriage.

In addition, there are fun activities such as camel riding, white water rafting and swimming in the Dead Sea.

"The women have the time of their lives. They laugh. They shop. They shop a lot." Merchants in places like the artist colony in Safed lick their lips in anticipation of their visit, Palatnik quipped.

"They have a ball," she added. "It's so much fun. It's like summer camp for moms."

Ann Weiszmann, a mother of two from Toronto, said, "It really has changed my life... For somebody who is open-minded and who wants to learn more about their heritage, this is a great way to do it."

Weiszmann learned about the trip through a friend. Although she had been to Israel to celebrate her older son's bar mitzvah, she saw the JWRP tour as a chance to get a different perspective on the country.

"This was my big opportunity. It really took me to see places I hadn't been to on our family trip."

On top of that, "the learning was really incredible."

Weiszmann was part of a group of 18 mostly "secular" women from Toronto on the July 2011 visit. From the first lecture on lashon hara (gossip), Weiszmann found the perspective offered to be enlightening.

"For me, the learning part of it was really integral. It exposed me to things I had not been exposed to," she said.

Since her return, she's continued her Jewish education by studying with Gail Michalowicz, the rebbetzin at the Westmount Shul. She now bakes challah for Shabbat and lights Shabbat candles, two mitzvot she adopted on her return.

"I'm 100 per cent recommending it to others," said Weiszmann, a geologist who is a senior policy adviser with Ontario's Ministry of Northern Development and Mines.

Weiszmann's response is exactly what the organizers say they are looking for. At the heart of the project are Jewish values and continuity.

"Jewish women create community," Palatnik said. "They set the spiritual tone of the home and they are the main deciders of the direction of the family: for example, the schools, the neighbours we socialize with, what camps the children will go to, how we support our husbands in the evenings.

"If you inspire a Jewish woman with Jewish values, then the decisions she will make are through a Jewish prism."

To increase the benefits of the trip, JWRP set some conditions: participants must have children at home under age 18, and they are ineligible if they observe the Sabbath. That would ensure the benefits are passed down to the next generation, while including women who are shomrei Shabbat would be like preaching to the choir. It's women who are unaffiliated that "are in danger of falling off the Jewish map," Palatnik said.

She said most of the participants are not affiliated with Jewish organizations. In addition, 63 per cent have no connections to their local federations.

So far, JWRP's internal research suggests the program is making a difference. Polling past participants in 2010, JWRP found:

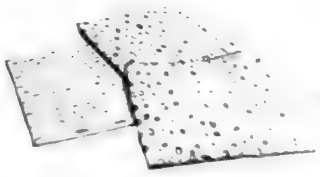
- 86 per cent said being Jewish was now more important to them;
- 41.5 per cent subsequently put their children into Jewish youth groups;
- 43.2 per cent increased their volunteer activities within the Jewish community;
- 97 per cent had encouraged family and friends to visit Israel;.
- 76 per cent increased their attendance at Jewish services;
- 90.3 per cent increased their Jewish learning;
- 75.4 per cent increased their observance of Shabbat;
- 96 per cent said the trip had been a life-changing event.

Palatnik said the Utah 8 identified a big problem and agreed to avoid half-hearted measures. Its mandate was always to "think big."

She points with pride to what she considers the JWRP's most significant accomplishment: 25 per cent of participants had "pulled their children out of public schools and put them into [Jewish] day schools.

"That's a game changer," she said.

Fun times in the Holy Land



Passover Food Ideas

Pan pals offer their holiday favourites

Norene Gilletz
Special to The CJN

I have a Facebook group where people love to share their favourite recipes and treasured food memories – it's called Norene's Kitchen! Sometimes people ask a cooking question or post a last-minute request for a recipe for tonight's dinner. Others want to know how to cook with an unfamiliar ingredient.

I communicate regularly with my Facebook "pan pals" online in Norene's Kitchen! I've even met many of them in person. They form a diverse group, with members from all over the world. I'm amazed at how technology has connected us, regardless of distance, age or gender, through our love of food. My motto is: "There's always room for one more in my virtual kitchen!"

I've asked some of my Facebook pan pals to share a treasured Passover recipe with you, my readers. Enjoy in good health!

* * *

I first "met" Gloria Kobrin of New York on Facebook where we quickly became virtual "friends." Last October, we met face-to-face in New Jersey at Kosherfest and we connected immediately, as if we had known each other forever.

Gloria has been married to her husband, Richard, for 40 years and they have two children and two grandchildren. She has cooked almost her entire life for groups ranging from four to 100 people. She is the author of the Kosher Cookbook App for the iPhone and iPod. Gloria shares her recipes and cooking tips on her Kosher Cookbook page on Facebook, her blog at www.koshercookbook.blogspot.com and on Twitter.com/Koshercookbook/. She's an active member of Norene's Kitchen! where she shares many of her wonderful recipes and her culinary knowledge.

Gloria wrote: "Strange as it may seem, when it comes to Passover, I prefer that the food I'm preparing should not be based on matzah – especially dessert! My Fudgy Flourless Chocolate Cake satisfies that requirement. It is rich, dense and fudgy, without a hint of flour or matzah meal, so it is gluten-free. This is a wonderful dessert for Passover and all year round."

GLORIA KOBRIN'S FUDGY FLOURLESS CHOCOLATE CAKE (Pareve)

This cake is for the real chocolate lovers amongst you. It is best when made one or two days in advance of serving it. This is a relatively flat, moist, dense cake that packs a lot of flavour.

7 ounces semi-sweet pareve chocolate
1/2 cup very strong coffee, divided use
1 cup non-dairy margarine, room temperature
1 cup sugar
4 eggs
fresh berries to garnish

Preheat oven to 350. Spray an 8-inch spring-form pan with nonstick spray. Wrap foil around the bottom one inch of the pan. Set aside.

Place chocolate and 1/4 cup coffee together in a microwave-safe bowl. Place in microwave and heat for 2-1/2 to 3 minutes or until you can stir the coffee and chocolate together and they are completely smooth. (You can also melt chocolate and coffee together in a double boiler.) Add remaining 1/4 cup coffee and stir again. Let chocolate cool for 5 minutes.

Beat margarine and sugar together in bowl of an electric mixer until light. Add eggs, one at a time, to margarine and sugar, beating well after each addition. Add chocolate mixture and beat again until all ingredients are well blended.

Pour into prepared pan and bake for 45 minutes. The top will rise and separate from the rest of the cake.

Remove cake from the oven and cool on rack. The top will fall after some time out of the oven.

When the cake has completely cooled, unsnap the spring form pan and push the bottom through the ring. (The cake is so moist that I don't even try to take it off the bottom of the pan!)

Put it on a beautiful serving platter and surround it with berries. Yield: 10 to 12 servings. Serve small slices as it is very rich.

***

Ruth Heiges of Elkins Park, Penn., and I correspond regularly but we have never met – yet! She lived in Israel for many years but decided to move back to the United States to be closer to her aging parents.

Ruth is looking forward to launching her new website, www.informedkosher.com right after Passover. This comprehensive website will "aggregate the most useful kosher resources of the web into one convenient collection, from kosher food delivery to recipes, all current cookbooks, and restaurants."

She chose to share her Passover sponge cake recipe, as it has special meaning for Ruth and her family. She wrote: "This recipe hearkens back to when I was in grade school and the measure used by all Jewish homemakers was a "glezel" (i.e., a *yahrzeit* glass, which evidently was equivalent to a cup). My mother, z'l, didn't have or need an electric mixer, because she had me there to whisk the whites by hand.

"For my family, having this sponge cake is not a tradition – it's an imperative."

RUTH HEIGES' PASSOVER SPONGE CAKE

10 eggs, separated
pinch of salt
1 cup sugar
grated zest of 1 orange
1/3 cup cake meal
1/2 cup potato starch
juice of 1 lemon

Cut a round of baking parchment or waxed paper to fit the bottom of a 10-inch tube pan. Preheat the oven to 350.

Add the pinch of salt to the whites. Beat the whites in a large mixing bowl until stiff peaks form. Then, gradually beat in the sugar (several tablespoons at a time). The rest should be folded in by hand.

Lightly beat the yolks with the orange zest and add to the whites. Fold carefully to combine.

Alternating, fold in the cake meal and potato starch (a few tablespoons at a time). About half-way through this process, add the lemon juice.

Pour into the ungreased tube pan. Bake at 350 for 45 to 50 minutes.

Remove from oven and invert pan until cooled. Yield: 12 servings.

Continued on page 36

Family food traditions continue

Continued from page 35

Notes:

Cake can also be baked in a 13 x 9 x 2-inch baking pan for about 30 minutes. Check to see that the top is golden brown and springs back when touched.

During baking, tread lightly and avoid opening the oven. This kind of cake can "fall." It often sinks somewhat during cooling.

* * *

Brina Sachs Gonzales loves to cook. She posts regularly on Facebook and her Shabbos menus are always amazing. On her blog www.mikoshercocina.wordpress.com, she explains her culinary philosophy about family meals and memories: "Many of my memories came from preparing food and around the dinner table. Now I let my kids look at food books and magazines and allow them to choose one dish for Shabbos. Food is the universal language. If you're not dining as a family, then there are no food memories to pass down."

Pesach preparations are very hectic for both Brina and her husband, Elazer, as he is the kosher food manager at a Cincinnati supermarket and works 13-hour days at this super-busy time of year. With four young children, Brina has learned how to pace herself and deal with the challenges.

Brina wrote, "We don't use processed foods at Pesach in our house – that's our minhag (custom), so we have to get creative. Our main ingredients are fruits, vegetables, meat, fish, eggs and potatoes – nothing else. My kids live for fruit smoothies for dessert. We eat so healthy at Passover that I always say that I'm going to continue when it's over, but I get so tired of peeling that the moment that Passover is over, I'm done!"

BRINA SACHS GONZALES' SWEET & SOUR MEATBALLS

1 ripe pineapple
1 large or 2 small onions
1 carrot
4 to 6 tomatoes
salt to taste
2 to 3 tbsp. oil (to taste)
3 to 4 lb. chopped meat

Peel all produce (pineapple, onions, carrot and tomatoes). Remove the core from the pineapple. Cut all produce into chunks. Purée in the food processor using the steel blade. Transfer mixture to a large pot. Add salt and oil and bring to a boil.

In the meantime, roll the meat into balls (no additives are needed). Place meatballs in sauce. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 2 hours. Yield: 10 to 12 servings.

* * *

Faith Kramer cooks and writes about food in Oakland, Calif., but is a born and bred New Yorker. She serves up "deliciousness" on her delightful blog at www.clickblogappetit.com/, Cooking Local, Eating Global.

Faith sent me the original version of her matzah brei (below), although every time she makes it, she keeps refining it. Feel free to make your own variations. She makes a huge batch and reheats it on school mornings.

Faith says, "You'll have to make it and decide for yourself if this sweet brunch or dessert version of the classic Jewish Passover favourite is really the best in the world or just the best my kids have ever tasted. They claim it is the best and other relatives concur. My father-in-law has me make it for him even when it is not Passover. A cousin's son made his family travel from Los Angeles to my home in Oakland for Passover one year just so he could eat it.

FAITH KRAMER'S WORLD'S BEST CUSTARD MATZAH BRIE

"I admit this can be a very rich dish if you make it with whole milk, but you can cut some of the fat by using fat-free milk (which is what I usually do). You could also replace the eggs with egg substitute (which I don't)."

10 whole matzot
4 eggs, beaten
1/4 to 1/2 cup sugar (or more or less to taste)
2 cups of whole, low fat or fat-free milk
1 tsp. vanilla (kosher for Passover)
2 tsp. grated orange rind (optional)
1/4 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon
grating (or dash) of nutmeg
1 tbsp. unsalted butter (or more as needed for the frying pan)
cinnamon sugar (optional)

Dip whole matzot into warm water until wet on both sides. Drain well and break into small pieces in a large bowl.

In another bowl, combine eggs, sugar, milk, vanilla, orange rind, salt, cinnamon and nutmeg and beat to mix well.

Pour over drained matzah and let sit for 10 minutes to allow matzah to absorb some of the custard mixture. Stir the mixture occasionally.

Heat butter in a very large frying pan over medium heat. Add matzah mixture and fry in butter, adding additional butter as needed. (If you have too much for one pan, cook in batches and keep cooked matzah brei warm in a 250-degree oven. Be sure the matzah brei has room to fry, not steam in the frying pan. If you will be holding the matzah brei for any time, slightly under cook it so it won't dry out.)

Let the matzah brei mixture set in the hot pan for a minute or two and begin to brown, then use your spatula to break it into chunks and turn it over. Keep turning and breaking up the matzah brei every one to two minutes for a few more times until the custard mixture is absorbed but the matzah is still moist and the outside of the mixture is browned and slightly crisp.

Sprinkle with cinnamon sugar, if desired. Serve with syrup, jam or other toppings. Yield: 4 to 6 servings.

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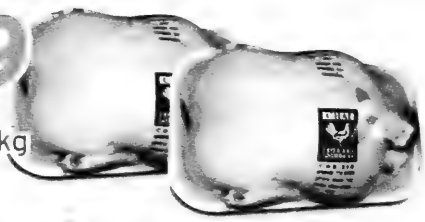

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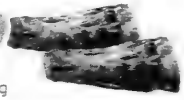

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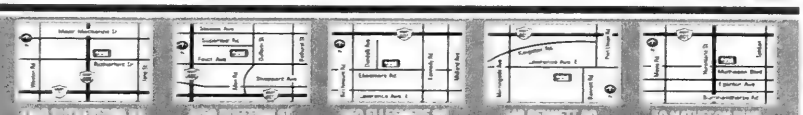

More delicious food for youngsters

Lauren Kramer
Special to The CJN

No doubt about it, Passover is a difficult time to feed kids, many of whom subsist on eight days of stomach-wrenching matzah. For my kids, the Pesach menu is matzah with jam, matzah with cheese and a few reluctant bites of fish and meat at my insistence. Like many parents anxious to ensure that kids have nutritious meals, I try to turn the other cheek during Passover and resolve to get them back on schedule as soon as the last matzah box has hit the recycling bin.

In an effort to do better this year, I asked a couple of kosher chefs for recipes and tips on the Passover feeding of smaller humans. "Stay away from almost all the fake stuff in boxes and mixes," cautions Susie Fishbein, author of the Kosher By Design series of cookbooks. She's referring to the just-add-water, ready-to-go mixes that are a pantry staple for many of us during Passover. "I'm talking about things that are completely fake, like mustard, soy sauce and pasta," she adds. "The flavours are so off, they're not worth working with."

Fishbein says Parmesan Quinoa was a huge hit with her kids last year, a recipe her daughter made for a dairy Passover meal. "We loved it so much, we started making it all year 'round," she says. "Quinoa is a seed, not a grain, and know what a great favour you are doing your body by eating it, as it contains all essential amino acids, something few meatless proteins contain." The Passover Popovers she served with strawberry butter were also a popular dish.

Toronto cookbook author Norene Gilletz is another woman with experience feeding fussy kids. She suggests a healthier version of ice cream for breakfast. "Combine yogurt with frozen chunks of banana and strawberries in the food processor to make an extra-thick smoothie," she says. Her go-to recipes for kids' Passover meals include Cheese Latkes, Soup Dumplings and Wacky Franks.

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SUSIE FISHBEIN'S PARMESAN QUINOA

1 cup quinoa
2 cups water
1 tbsp. butter
1/4 tsp. fine sea salt
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Rinse quinoa in a medium bowl, covering with water, swishing it around and then draining it in a strainer.

Place drained quinoa in a medium pot, adding water, butter and salt. Bring to a boil, lower to a simmer and allow the quinoa to bubble and cook for 15 minutes until all the liquid is absorbed. The outer germ layer will separate and the grains will look shiny. Stir in the Parmesan. Serve warm or at room temperature.

From *Kosher By Design: Teens and 20-Somethings*

SUSIE FISHBEIN'S PASSOVER POPOVERS

nonstick cooking spray
1 cup water
1/3 cup unsalted butter or margarine
1/2 cup matzah meal
1/2 cup matzah cake meal
1/2 tsp. fine sea salt
2 tbsp. sugar
6 large eggs

Preheat oven to 450. Grease the top and inside cups of a nonstick popover tin with cooking spray.

In a medium pot bring water and butter or margarine to a boil over medium heat. Add matzah meal, matzah cake meal, salt and sugar. Continue cooking, stirring until the batter no longer sticks to the sides of the pot.

Remove pot from stove and transfer dough to the bowl of an electric mixer. Beat at high speed for one minute, adding eggs one at a time and continuing to beat after each addition. Beat another 1-2 minutes, then transfer batter to a large measuring cup for easy pouring.

Divide batter among popover compartments and bake for 20 minutes. Without opening oven door, reduce heat to 325 and bake another 30 minutes or until puffed and golden. Remove from pan and serve with butter, honey or jam.

From *Passover By Design*

NORENE GILLETZ'S QUICK SOUP DUMPLINGS

These are an easy alternative to matzah balls. Kids love these!

2 eggs
2/3 cup matzah meal
1/2 tsp salt
dash freshly ground black pepper
1/2 cup water

Using a food processor with a steel blade, process all ingredients until smooth, about 10 seconds. Drop from a teaspoon into simmering soup. Cover and cook for 4 to 5 minutes. Yield: 8 to 10 servings. Do not freeze.

From *The New Food Processor Bible*

NORENE GILLETZ'S PASSOVER WACKY FRANKS

Hot dog and bun, all baked in one!

1/2 cup oil
1 cup water
2 cups matzah or cake meal
1 tbsp. sugar
1/2 to 1 tsp. salt (to taste)
4 eggs
12 hot dogs, frozen (beef, chicken or veal)
12 wooden skewers

Preheat oven to 375. Combine oil and water in saucepan and bring to a boil. Add matzah or cake meal, sugar and salt and mix well, until mixture pulls away from sides of pan. Transfer mixture into processor bowl.

Using the steel blade, process mixture for 5 seconds. Add eggs one at a time through feed tube while machine is running. Process 30 to 40 seconds longer, until smooth.

Mould mixture around frozen hot dogs, oiling hands slightly for easier handling. Place on sprayed foil-lined baking sheet. Bake for 50 minutes. Remove from oven and insert wooden skewers. Yield: 12 hot dogs.

Keeps 2 days in the refrigerator. Reheats and/or freezes well.

From *The New Food Processor Bible*

NORENE GILLETZ'S PASSOVER CHEESE LATKES

1 cup dry or pressed cottage cheese
3 eggs
1/4 cup sour cream
1 tbsp. melted butter or oil
1/2 cup matzah or cake meal
2 tbsp. sugar
1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
1/4 tsp. salt
2 tbsp. butter or oil for frying

Using a food processor with a steel blade, combine all ingredients except butter or oil for frying and process until smooth and blended, approx. 25 seconds. Heat butter or oil in large nonstick skillet. When bubbling drop cheese mixture from large spoon into skillet.

Brown on medium heat on both sides until golden. Repeat with remaining cheese mixture, adding more butter or oil to skillet as necessary. Yield: approx. 12 latkes.

Keeps 2-3 days in refrigerator. Reheats and freezes well.

From *The New Food Processor Bible*

The challenge: feeding your allergic child

Shayla Gunter-Goldstein
Special to The CJN

Having a toddler with multiple food allergies is challenging at the best of times. Since my son is allergic to nuts, eggs, fish and sesame, I am often at a loss to know what to feed him beyond the "regulars." I am thankful during the year for kosher chicken nuggets, soy nut butter, cream cheese and, of course, pasta.

But come Passover, it's another story. Mealtimes are frustrating and often confusing. However, I've learned – with the help of some excellent websites, vegan cookbooks, Internet allergy groups, and a little creativity – that there are options for my son, ones that the rest of the family will also enjoy!

The Kids with Food Allergies website (www.kidswithfoodallergies.org) – an informative resource from a dedicated group of parents – has a Passover resource guide that includes seder tips and recipes. It suggested our family's new practices of using an avocado pit on the seder plate instead of an egg, and serving mini-red potatoes in salt water. My son adored those! Find the resource at bit.ly/azjXXq.

For charoset, a traditional Ashkenazi recipe may be used, omitting the nuts. Adding raisins, or some crushed Passover O's breakfast cereal (that look like Cheerios) helps add crunchiness and texture. There's an extensive index of intriguing nut-free charoset recipes to be found at http://bit.ly/Glz3ch.

Dinners and lunches during Pesach tend to be simple in our house. We stick to cooked meats and fresh vegetables, matzah pizza or matzah lasagna, lots of cheese, cream cheese, jam – and matzah, of course. Give my son matzah and cream cheese, and he's a happy camper. Add nut-free, pareve chocolate spread, and he'll help with the housework! The brand in Toronto-area stores that is nut-free is Hashahar H'aole, from Israel. It is available year-round, and is a staple in our house, as a treat.

Since my children live on pasta, I've succumbed and bought a Passover version. We've found one that – if not overcooked – is not completely inedible with lots of cheese and some tomato sauce. An alternative to pasta, if your children will eat vegetables, is spaghetti squash, or zucchini ribbons. The latter is made by using a vegetable peeler and peeling ribbons of zucchini. Lightly sauté, and toss with sauce and cheese for a healthy supper. Vegetable pancakes are also another standby. We like carrot pancakes made with the recipe below.

Breakfast during Pesach is tricky. We can't have our egg-free waffles, so again, we eat matzah with all the toppings, plus yogurt. Omitting the nuts from a Passover granola recipe also makes a great breakfast cereal or a satisfying and crunchy snack for weekends. Recipes aplenty may be found on the Internet.

I make eggless pancakes every weekend during the year. Last year, I experimented with my recipe, and came up with a respectable Passover version. A bit chewier than regular ones, the kids nevertheless gobbled them up. My recipe is below. I've also learned that you get decent results from adding one cup of applesauce, one tablespoon of oil and three tablespoons of water or milk to one cup of Passover pancake mix. I may get lazy and try that this year, too.

Continued on page 40

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Keep kids meals simple

Continued from page 39

Matzah brei isn't popular in our house, but there is a vegan recipe on the Internet, by Nava Atlas (http://www.vegkitchen.com/). It contains quinoa flakes, which I've yet to find in Toronto.

Passover wouldn't be Passover without homemade desserts. Chocolate-dipped fruit is always a winner. We love Norene Gilletz's Chocolate Blueberry Blobs (recipe below). A vegan baking practice is to substitute for eggs by using a variety of other liquids or binders. Commercial egg-replacer is cornstarch-based, thus kitniyot, and not allowed for Ashkenazim during Passover. Potato starch is a comparable alternative. For example, in cake recipes (from scratch or boxes), mixing 1 tablespoon of water with 1 tablespoon of potato starch and 1/4 tsp. kosher for Passover baking powder (if you use it in your home) per egg called for in the recipe works well. I find this works best with recipes calling for only 1 or 2 eggs. Another egg replacer product is ground flax. Flax is considered to be acceptable by some rabbis, but kitniyot by others. When in doubt, consult your local halachic authority.

Using bananas, applesauce and potato starch in Passover baking can yield some nice results. An added bonus is you get some fruit into your kids if they are picky eaters. My pancake recipe uses both. For flour substitutions, I like to use the recommendations by the Vegan Resource Group (www.vrg.org). One cup all purpose flour = 1/4 cup matzah cake meal and 3/4 cup potato starch; 1/2 cup all-purpose flour = 2 tbsp. matzah cake meal and 6 tbsp. potato starch.

Unfortunately, many Passover prepared products do not include allergy labelling, so it is wise to spend some time calling manufacturers to determine what's safe for your child and to gain some peace of mind.

Don't be afraid to experiment with traditional recipes if you have the time. While preparing allergy-friendly foods can be challenging during Passover, it will let your little ones experience the freedom that is the spirit of the holiday. Chag Samayach!

CARROT PANCAKES

From *Vegan Passover Recipes: Eggless and Dairy-Free Dishes* by Dr. Nancy Berkoff. Published by the Vegetarian Resource Group www.vrg.org. Used with permission. These pancakes are colourful, tasty and good for you.

1 1/2 lb. coarsely grated carrots
1/4 cup coarsely grated onion
2 tbsp. carrot juice or finely grated carrots
1/2 tsp. white pepper
1/2 tsp. chopped fresh parsley
4 tbsp. matzah meal
vegetable oil spray.

In a large bowl, mix together carrots, onion, carrot juice, pepper and parsley. Add matzah meal slowly, mixing well. If mixture is not stiff (think lumpy cookie dough), add a bit more matzah meal.

Continued on page 41

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Blueberry blobs a real treat

Continued from page 40

Spray a large frying pan liberally with oil. Drop about 2 tbsp. of carrot mixture at a time into the pan. Flatten and allow pancakes to cook over medium heat until golden, about 3 minutes. Turn and allow other side to become golden.

Remove pancakes from the pan and place on a plate or tray that is lined with paper towels. Serve immediately or place on oil-sprayed baking sheet and hold in a warm oven (275 degrees) for 15-20 minutes. Serves 4.

SHAYLA'S EGG-FREE PASSOVER BREAKFAST PANCAKES

1/4 cup matzah cake meal
3/4 cup potato starch
1/2 cup matzah meal
2-1/2 tsp. Passover baking powder
1-1/2 cups milk
1 small ripe banana, mashed
1/3 cup unsweetened applesauce
optional: 1/4 cup sliced berries or chopped apple and/or 1/4 cup chocolate chips

Mix together all dry ingredients. Stir in milk, banana and applesauce. Add fruit or other add-ins if desired. If too wet, add cake meal a teaspoon at a time. If too dry, add a bit more milk.

Heat an oiled griddle over medium heat. Drop batter by tablespoons onto griddle. Cook for 2-3 minutes or until surface has bubbles. Flip and continue cooking until lightly browned. Serve with jam, yogurt, honey or Passover syrup. Makes about 25 silver-dollar sized pancakes, or about 15 larger ones.

CHOCOLATE BLUEBERRY BLOBS

Source: *Norene's Healthy Kitchen* by Norene Gilletz. Whitecap Books, 2007. Used with permission.

These are amazing and rich, and the blueberries burst in your mouth. My kids love them!

2 cups fresh blueberries
8 oz. good-quality dark chocolate, broken into chunks

Line a baking tray or sheet with parchment paper. Rinse the blueberries well, and pat COMPLETELY dry. If there is any water on them, they will seize the chocolate and make it unusable.

Meanwhile, microwave the chocolate in a bowl on medium until melted, about 2 minutes, stirring every minute (or use a double boiler on the stove).

Remove the chocolate from the microwave. Let cool to lukewarm before gently mixing in the blueberries with a rubber spatula. Gently mix until the berries are well-coated with chocolate. Drop teaspoonfuls of the mixture onto the lined tray, about 2 inches apart. Refrigerate until firm, about 1 hour.

Notes: Keeps about a day in the refrigerator. Don't freeze. Yield: 30 pieces.

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OR
Homemade matzo ball soup
CHOOSE ONE
Farm fresh baby spinach salad with red onions, toasted almonds, mandarin oranges, topped with a citrus vinaigrette
OR
Traditional coleslaw
CHOOSE TWO
Brisket served with gravy au jus
OR
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OR
Baked salmon with an orange miso glaze
OR
Grilled salmon with a sweet teriyaki glaze
CHOOSE ONE
Garlic infused mashed potatoes with caramelized onions
OR
Farfel with sautéed button & shiitake mushrooms
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CHOOSE ONE
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Gluten-free sweets

Nadene Gilletz
Special to The CJN

Passover seems to strike a sense of panic in Jewish homemakers worldwide. Cooking and baking can be a daunting task, especially with dietary restrictions, endless meals to prepare and special family customs. But not anymore!

With *A Taste of Tradition: Pesach - Anything's Possible!* author Tamar Ansh presents an excellent collection of 350 wheat-free, gluten-free, non-gebrochts recipes, along with stunning, full-colour photos, truly proving that "anything's possible" when it comes to Passover baking and cooking.

Pesach- Anything's Possible! is available in Jewish bookstores or online at www.menuchapublishers.com. The new eBook version is available from Jewish E-books: www.jewish-e-books.com.

CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

Ansh writes, "I got this amazing recipe from Mrs. Rikva Thumim of Golders Green, London."

2 cups sugar
2 eggs
1 cup oil
2 packets, about 2 tbsp. vanilla sugar
3-1/4 cups very finely ground almonds (almost flour consistency)
1 cup potato starch
1-1/4 cups chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 350. Cream together sugar, eggs, and oil. Add in vanilla sugar, almonds, potato starch, and chocolate chips and mix well.

Freeze batter for 10 minutes to make it easier to form the cookies. It will be oily, but this is normal.

Make small balls out of the batter using your hands or a mini ice cream scooper. Place on a parchment paper- lined tray. DO NOT flatten cookies at all. They spread a lot in the baking process so leave lots of space between cookies.

Bake them for 12 minutes, until they are lightly browned and crinkled. Let cool a bit on the paper and then remove. Makes about 45 cookies – or so (hard to tell, as they get eaten very quickly!). Hide them quickly if you want some for later, and yes, these do freeze well!

INCREDIBLE APPLE MUFFINS

4 cups Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored and diced very small
1 cup sugar
2 tsp. ground cinnamon
2 large eggs, beaten
1/2 cup oil
2 tsp. vanilla
1-1/4 cups potato starch
2 tsp. baking soda
1 cup white raisins (optional)
1 cup chopped walnuts

Preheat oven to 325. Toss apples with sugar and cinnamon. Set aside. Whisk eggs with oil and vanilla by hand.

Combine dry ingredients in a separate bowl. Set aside. Add apples to egg mixture. Stir in mixed dry ingredients by spoonfuls until well-combined. Mix in raisins and walnuts at the end.

Line muffin pans with baking paper muffin liners. Spray top of baking tins with non-stick spray if you have it. Fill each cup with batter almost until the top.

Bake 25-30 minutes until tester in centre comes out clean and muffins are light brown on top. Fluffy and scrumptious! Muffins fall slightly after they cool down. Freezes well. Makes 16 muffins

FAMOUS BROWNIES

6 eggs
2-2/3 cups sugar
1-1/2 cups potato starch
3/4 cup cocoa
3/4 cup oil
1 tsp. Passover vanilla
1 cup walnuts, coarsely chopped
1/2 cup coconut, optional

Chocolate Glaze:

1 cup powdered sugar (Passover icing sugar)
2 tbsp. oil
2 tbsp. hot water
2 tbsp. cocoa

Preheat oven to 350. Place eggs, sugar, potato starch, cocoa, oil and vanilla into a large bowl. Mix together until smooth. Add nuts and optional coconut.

Line a 9 x 13-in. pan with parchment baking paper and pour batter into pan.

Bake for 30 minutes, or until cake tester inserted into brownies' centre comes out mostly clean, and the top is light brown and crispy. Do not overbake, as brownies will become too dry; they should remain moist, although not mushy, in the centre.

Remove pan from oven immediately and cool completely.

In a separate small bowl, mix glaze ingredients with a spoon until smooth. Spread over cooled brownies. Allow to set for a few minutes, then slice.

Optional: Decorate each brownie with a walnut half. Makes 24 to 36 brownies.

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Israeli technology helps Canadian farmers

Viva Sarah Press
CJN Israel Bureau

KIBBUTZ AFIKIM, Israel — Canadian farmers are turning to an Israeli company to help them increase the milk production of their cows.

Israel's SAE Afikim, better known as Afimilk, is a world leader in computerized systems for dairy farm and herd management.

Across Canada, there are some 100 farms already hooked up to the Israeli dairy system. A team from Kibbutz Afikim is now shooting a film at Summitholm Holsteins farm in Lynden, Ont., to try to expand its activities.

"We found out that dairy farmers are most convinced by what their neighbours or friends or colleagues say," said Noa Yonish, Afimilk's marketing communication and market study manager.

"We are in North America to shoot a testimonial movie of real farmers who use our system successfully and are not shy about telling other people that it is good and works well," he added.

Bjarne Rune, vice-president of sales at Afimilk said, "The average Israeli cow will produce 12,000 litres per year. For comparison, in the U.S. and Canada, it's around 10,000 litres. The Israeli cow is significantly better, and it's not because of the cow, it's because of management. It's technology, knowledge – and we really have made a difference."

The sprawling kibbutz of Afikim is just south of the Sea of Galilee. The kibbutz has a few factories on site, but it is beside the small dairy shed that most of the action takes place.

It is here that R&D experts create hardware and software to monitor and direct the cows' performance. Machines beep, cows moo, and the radio pumps out soothing music (to keep the cows happy).

"Our company was founded because of one man's dream," Rune said, referring to his mentor, Eli Peles.

Peles, a self-taught engineer, came up with the world's first electronic milk meter some 25 years ago. It was a simple but revolutionary idea.

"Eli Peles decided to help his friends in the dairy farm," Rune said. "He wanted his friends to be able to do a better job and applied his engineering mind, and basically founded this company, all because of specific needs of the kibbutz."

Today, the Afimilk name is synonymous with dairy farm and herd management excellence. Afimilk's computerized milking systems can be found in more than 50 countries.

There's the AfiLab system – a small machine that analyzes the milk in real time, letting the farmer know the fat content, protein content and lactose content as the milk flows from the cow's teat.

Continued on page 45

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Canada

Israel cuts contact with UN rights council

Barak Ravid
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

Israel decided Monday to sever contact with the UN Human Rights Council after the international body decided to establish an international investigative committee on the West Bank settlements.

The council voted last Thursday to appoint a panel charged with evaluating the effects of Israeli settlement construction on Palestinian human rights in the West Bank and east Jerusalem.

The Foreign Ministry ordered Israel's ambassador to Geneva, Aharon Leshno-Yaar, to cut off contact with the council immediately, instructing him to ignore phone calls from the council's chief commissioner, Nabi Pilawai, a senior Israeli official said.

According to the text of the decision, the UN will "dispatch an independent international fact-finding mission, to be appointed by the president of the Human Rights Council, to investigate the implications of the Israeli settlements on the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Palestinian people throughout the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem."

The committee's mandate will be to submit a report on the topic to the council. The decision also called on Israel "not to obstruct the process of investigation and to co-operate fully with the mission."

On Monday, Israel said it will bar the fact-finding team dispatched by the council from entering Israel and the West Bank to investigate settlement construction.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reacted harshly to the decision, calling the body a "hypocritical council with an automatic majority against Israel." He added that the council "should be ashamed of itself, and has nothing to do with human rights."

Netanyahu added that out of 91 decisions made by the UN body to date, 39 dealt with Israel. "Only three of the decisions dealt with Syria, and only one with Iran. It was enough to hear the Syrian ambassador speaking today about human rights to understand the extent which the council is out of touch with reality."

Thirty-six states voted in favour of the decision, while 10 states abstained, including the Czech Republic, Romania, Hungary, Poland, Costa Rica, Italy and Spain. The United States was the only country to vote against it.

Palestinian ambassador to the UN Ibrahim Khraishisaid said Israel's occupation should be condemned as a violation of human rights.

"We don't want to isolate Israel, but when we see that Israel hasn't stopped taking over our lands, we must act. If this situation continues, how will we be able to apply a two-state solution? The occupying power is violating international law," he added.

Canadian Foreign Minister John Baird said it was "incredibly disappointing" that the UN council had again singled out Israel for condemnation.

"Canada has stated on numerous occasions that final status issues need to be negotiated between the two parties, not by the United Nations," Baird said in a March 23 statement.

Aharon Leshno-Yaar

"This resolution is biased against Israel and doesn't address the complexity of issues in this region. This undermines the honest efforts to bring about a just and lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians. We continue to call for direct negotiations between the two parties without preconditions."

Betty King, the U.S. ambassador to the UN in Geneva, said that the decision harmed efforts to restart negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians and would not help protect the human rights of Israelis and Palestinians. "We don't accept the legitimacy of construction in the settlements, but we are disturbed by this one-sided and biased decision," she said.

"Anyone who supports the creation of an independent Palestinian state must support efforts to renew negotiations and refrain from taking steps that harm this effort... This won't promote peace. It will only push the sides further away from one another," the ambassador added.

Syria's ambassador accused Israel of accelerating settlement construction, which he deemed a violation of the Geneva Conventions and an "act of piracy."

The decision was one of five approved by the council last Thursday that were critical of Israel.

Israel's Foreign Ministry said in response, "The Palestinians must understand that they can't have it both ways – they can't enjoy co-operation with Israel and at the same time initiate political clashes in international forums. Had the Palestinians wanted to solve the settlements issue, they would resume without delay a direct and unconditional negotiation on all core issues within the framework of a comprehensive agreement."

The Israeli official said: "The secretariat of the Human Rights Council and Nabi Pilawai sparked this process by establishing an international investigative committee on settlements, and we will thus not work with them anymore and will not appear before the council."

Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman said Friday that the move by the UN body proves that the Palestinians do not want to renew negotiations with Israel. "We are dealing with Al Qaeda terror on the one hand and diplomatic terror by Abu Mazen on the other," Lieberman said, referring to PA President Mahmoud Abbas. Israel is also considering sanctions against the Palestinian Authority in response to the human rights council decision.

With files from Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf

'A strong bond, a connection and commitment'

Continued from page 1

In Israel, politicians and Jewish Agency chair Natan Sharansky pointed to last week's terrorist attack in France as reinforcing the view that Jews in Israel and the Diaspora are connected.

"Jewish children were attacked in Toulouse solely because they and their parents sought to maintain their connection with Jewish tradition and the Jewish state," Sharansky said. "The enemies of the State of Israel and of the Jewish People are one and the same."

According to the Jewish Agency, the poll was conducted to ascertain the ties between Israeli and global Jewish communities and to determine the significance of those ties to Jewish unity. Its release coincided with the launch of the Jewish World Caucus, a group of 40 members of the Israeli Knesset.

The caucus "will strive to strengthen ties between the Jewish Diaspora and Israel through legislation and the increased dialogue on the subject of Diaspora-Israeli relations," the Jewish Agency said in a news release.

"A particular emphasis will be placed on deepening the bonds between young Jews abroad and in Israel, such as the connections engendered by programs including Birthright Israel and the Jewish Agency's Masa initiative" in which Diaspora Jews volunteer in Israel, study at Israeli institutions or experience professional internships. Some 10,000 Jews from around the world take part in Masa each year.

Silver suggested creation of the caucus should sensitize Israeli parliamentarians to the impact Israeli legislation has outside the country.

"Some of the policies... have to be looked at not just as Israeli issues, but issues that Jews care about," Silver said.

The poll supports the Jewish Agency view that ties between Israeli Jews and Diaspora Jews benefits both, Silver said.

"The programs we are trying to carry out, with the support of local federations, [such as] sending camp or campus mentors from Israel, or teachers as shlichim, or other programs that bring Jews to Israel, are intended to cement the relations between Jews here and Jews there. If anything, the poll substantiates that," Silver stated.

Aviva Zeltzer-Zubida, director of research, evaluation and measurement for the Jewish Agency, said the poll shows that Israelis "deeply value the Jewish family."

"There is a strong bond, a connection and commitment," between Israelis and other Jews, she said.

Zeltzer-Zubida said the Jewish Agency is running a pilot program aimed at building on the success of trips such as Birthright, which brings young Jews to Israel for 10 days for free.

Called Onward Israel, it will see young people spend four to eight weeks in the country, leading to a more "in-depth" experience, said Zeltzer-Zubida.

Onward Israel includes academic programs, internships or volunteer service, she added.

Joshua Berkman, associate director of communications for the Jewish Agency, said the organization is expecting 100 participants from Toronto in the inaugural cohort. They will participate in internships or community service projects in Bat Yam, while those taking the academic track will study at Ben-Gurion University's Eilat campus, he stated.

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Impressive numbers

Continued from page 43

Then there's the Pedometer Plus that measures performance and behaviour changes in the cows.

And there's AfiWash – a programmable device for controlling the wash and disinfection system in milking parlours. Rune said Israel's lack of farming tradition gives it an edge. "Farmers are usually third, fourth, fifth, 10th generation farmers. And often they do what their fathers did and grandfathers did," he said. "Here, there is no tradition. When you take people from a different environment and drop them into farming, they have to look for tools that they don't have, and then they look to technology."

The numbers are impressive. Since 1977, AfiMilk has installed more than 5,500 management systems worldwide, more than 130,000 milk meters and more than five million ID tags.

Afimilk entered the Canadian market in 1995.

"I can go anywhere in the world – China, North America, Holland, Denmark –and everybody has heard about Israeli agriculture," Rune said.

Ardent supporter of Israel

Continued from page 1

That's why I am an ardent supporter of Israel in all *instances* [French for the different institutions that make up a country] and circumstances."

Mulcair's outspoken support for Israel was cited as a reason why some prominent New Democrats wouldn't support his leadership bid, but shortly after winning, he signalled his intention to keep Vancouver East MP Libby Davies as deputy party leader, despite her outspoken criticism of Israel and their previous clashes on the party's position on the Jewish state. The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) congratulated Mulcair on his victory and said it looked forward to working with him.

"Mr. Mulcair has enjoyed a strong relationship with the Jewish community, through his work at both the provincial and federal levels of government, and I am confident that under his leadership the friendship between the NDP and the Jewish community will continue to strengthen over the coming years," CIJA chair David Koschitzky said in a statement.

Mulcair beat out rival Brian Topp, the former party president, after receiving more than 57 per cent of the vote at the leadership convention in Toronto.

He now follows in the footsteps of the late Jack Layton and assumes control from interim leader Nycole Turmel.

The CJN hopes to have an interview with Mulcair in an upcoming issue.

On cjnews.com

The widow of Rabbi Jonathan Sandler, who was murdered along with his sons, Arieh and Gabriel, and Miriam Monsonego, daughter of the principal of Ozar Hatorah in Toulouse, France, speaks out.

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Anne's sapling to Yad Vashem

A sapling from the chestnut tree that Anne Frank wrote about in her diary will be planted at Yad Vashem. The sapling, donated by the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, was taken from the 150-year-old tree that was toppled by a storm in August 2010. A fungus and insect infestation had weakened the tree. At Yad Vashem, the sapling will be planted near the Children's Memorial and International School for Holocaust Studies. Saplings have been sent to institutions around the world, including to Montreal. The young Frank made several references to the tree in her famous diary, which she kept for the two years she and her family hid in the attic. She died at Bergen-Belsen in March 1945.

Israel helps Gazans with fuel shortage

Israel sent 450,000 litres of gasoline and diesel fuel purchased by the Palestinian Authority into the Gaza Strip through the Kerem Shalom border crossing on March 23. The shipment is meant to provide temporary relief for the fuel shortage in the Gaza strip, which started after Egypt cut off all shipments of fuel to Gaza. Senior Hamas officials blamed Egyptian intelligence services, claiming they were behind cutting off fuel to Gaza, in order to force the Hamas government into a deal with Fatah. Hamas ceased importing fuel from Israel more than a year ago.

With files from JTA

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Investors urged to consider Israeli infrastructure fund

Paul Lungen
Staff Reporter

Pinchas "Pinny" Cohen has been to Toronto before, so he's got a good idea of the lay of the land when it comes to private equity investments.

Years ago, when he headed his first "big project," planning Highway 6, Israel's first toll road, he came to Canada to witness first hand the way Highway 407 was being run. The Canadian-built thoroughfare had a good reputation internationally, as it was the first to calculate and collect fees electronically, without the need for traffic-slowing stations at regular intervals.

It was the first place "I came to see, to meet and to know," Cohen explained during a recent visit to Toronto.

Aecon, a big player in infrastructure engineering, which upgraded Highway 407, went on to own a one-quarter interest in the Israeli highway. Though that financial connection has ended, Cohen believes Canadians will again be interested in Israeli projects.

During his 2-1/2-day visit last week, he was touting the Israel-based NOY Infrastructure and Energy Fund as an attractive – and lucrative – way for Canadians to invest in Israel.

The fund, he said, is relatively new. It was launched in May 2011 with 570 million shekels ($160 million US), and since then, it has raised another 1.6 billion shekels. The fund took a 49 per cent stake in Highway 6, a 140-kilometre road that runs more or less from Haifa to Be'er Sheva and bypasses the more congested routes near Tel Aviv. It has been "very profitable," he said.

That investment has generated between 11 and 13 per cent annual return, while the fund's other four investments are also doing well.

Noy focuses on Israeli infrastructure projects, which Cohen believes is something that should interest high-worth Canadian investors. Israel is experiencing a growing economy and the country's infrastructure – its roads, power plants and energy sector – have to be upgraded to keep up, he said.

The government is putting a lot of money into infrastructure and is encouraging public and private partnerships, so the road is open to build upon Noy's current roster of successful investments, Cohen said.

In addition to Highway 6, Noy has put its money into a light rail system in Israel's north, it has invested in two substantial solar energy projects, and it is involved in a large "campus" in the Negev Desert for the Israeli military that will be used to train soldiers.

Noy has a couple of crucial selling points, Cohen explained. It already has an impressive list of well-known Israeli investors, including individuals and institutions who have put their money into the fund; its investment team is experienced and respected; and it has a record of successful ventures so far.

According to *Ha'aretz*, "Along with Pinny Cohen two investment managers with experience in infrastructure were to head the fund as partners: Ran Shelach, a consultant at TASC Strategic Consulting and a former credit manager at Bank Leumi, and Gilad Boshvitz, who had been an investment manager at the Amitim consortium of pension funds and business development manager at Etgal Holdings, a company that develops and manages infrastructure investments. For all three, Noy has provided a new experience."

Cohen, an attorney by profession, served as CEO of tycoon Lev Leviev's Africa Israel Investments from 1998 to 2006, as chair of Tshuva Holdings between 2006 and 2009, and in 2009, became a partner in the privately run America Israel real estate firm along with Migdal Group and Israel Discount bank.

Pinchas "Pinny" Cohen

Noy itself was created by Poalim Capital Markets, a subsidiary of Israel's Bank Hapoalim, and Clal Insurance, an arm of IDB Holdings Group.

Cohen expects the fund will attract mostly Jewish investors in Canada, who already have an affinity for Israel.

Toronto, he said, "has a strong business community with a strong relationship with Israel."

Investors are being asked to look at long-term investments of more than 10 years, but he expects "people will get a nice return on their money, more than Canadian returns on infrastructure." He suggests that will be in the 12 to 15 per cent range.

High net worth individuals will be asked to put $1 million or more into the fund; institutions and corporations, $10 million.

Noy is exploring new projects, Cohen said, including a new power station running on natural gas largely extracted from Israeli sources, a desalination plant and a Jerusalem to Tel Aviv "fast lane," in which motorists pay for the privilege of avoiding traffic.

The desalination project has the added benefit of promoting peace, Cohen stated. Fresh water is a major challenge in the Middle East, and if the supply is increased, fresh water becomes less of an issue in peace negotiations.

But that's merely an added bonus. For Noy, it's the quality of the project that counts.

"It's not a charity," he stressed. "It's a good investment opportunity."

The Saul & Claribel Simkin Centre is searching for an experienced and dynamic

Chief Executive Officer

The Saul & Claribel Simkin Centre is a 200-bed Jewish Personal Care Home operating under the auspices of the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority.

The Centre is a not-for-profit organization committed to serving the elderly of all backgrounds with skill and compassion.

Reporting to the Board of Directors of the Centre, the Chief Executive Officer provides leadership to accomplish the vision, strategy, and priorities established by the Board and in accordance with relevant legislation; manages the day-to-day operations of the Centre ensuring a high quality of care to those being served; develops positive relationships with all stakeholders; and encourages innovation and system improvements that address current and future needs of the residents, their families, and the community.

Above all, we are looking for a dynamic leader who will harness the skills and energy of our exceptional staff and volunteers to deliver optimal care to our residents; compassionate support to their families; and superior ambassadorship of the Centre throughout the community.

Qualifications:

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- At least 5 years senior administrative experience in health care
- Proven ability to build collaborative relationships with internal and external stakeholders and to create a positive climate in the workplace
- Demonstrated understanding of financial/resource management principles and the impact of decisions on resident care
- Understanding of Jewish culture and traditions is an asset
- Experience with Boards and not-for-profit organizations is an asset.

Please submit resume in confidence before April 16, 2012 to:

CEO Search Committee
The Saul & Claribel Simkin Centre
1 Falcon Ridge Drive, Winnipeg MB R3Y 1V9

For further information about the position or to email a confidential application, please use: info@sharonhome.mb.ca

Where community lives; where Jewish life thrives.

Israel, EU sign 'open skies' agreement

Zohar Blumenkrantz
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

TEL AVIV — Israel and the European Union (EU) last week concluded an "open skies" aviation agreement aimed at reducing airfares to and from Israel and increasing competition. The head of the Israel Civil Aviation Authority, Giora Rom, signed the deal after three days of negotiations with EU representatives.

The two sides have been discussing such a deal since late 2008. If approved by Transportation Minister Yisrael Katz, it will take effect on April 1, 2013.

The deal will be phased in over a five-year period, with each new phase going into effect in late March.

The new agreement will replace existing bilateral agreements between Israel and each EU nation, which specify the destinations and frequency of flights as well as the airlines permitted to fly them.

A set number of weekly flights to certain destinations will be added every year. At the end of the five-year period, there will be full competition on all routes between Israel and the EU, and every airline from the EU or Israel will be allowed to fly to any destination within the region as many times as it wants.

The agreement distinguishes between flights that terminate in Israel or the EU and that continue on to a final destination. Such traffic using a European airport as a connection to farther destinations, such as the United States or the Far East, has become quite common in the past decade. This has hurt Israeli airlines, as they're not members of any international airline alliances.

The EU is Israel's most important destination for flights, with 57 per cent of all Israeli international passenger flights going to the EU. There are now direct flights from Israel to 16 EU nations.

Another section of the agreement addresses harmonizing aviation laws between Israel and the EU, such as the implementation of procedures before flying disabled persons. The new agreement will force Israeli airlines to comply with European rules, which will entail significant spending.

Katz will meet next week with representatives of Israeli airlines to discuss the agreement.

Mapping the suburban moment

Montreal holds a mythic status in the minds of many Canadian Jews, representing what would once have been called the *hoipt shtot* – the capital city – of the country's Jewish literary tradition. Although economic power and the power of numbers were ceded years back to other centres, the literary life of the city retains its own unique character.

Of writers who came of age after World War II, Nancy Richler is among the most compelling. Her breakthrough book, *Your Mouth Is Lovely*, takes place in pre-revolutionary Russia, and explores a mother's loss and self-transformation in the era of the gulag. Canada presents itself, as an American with Canadian roots once put it, as "little more than a sea of meaningless mist."

Richler's new novel, *The Imposter Bride* (Harper Collins), puts her back on home ground – a Montreal native who lived in Vancouver for many years, she moved back to the city shortly before the new book's release. The novel's distinguishing characteristic is its *moment* – the postwar years when the large, increasingly successful Jewish community received a substantial group of Holocaust survivors. These people were *greene* to long-time Montrealers – a source of both pride and shame, in their cultural accomplishments and dark history.

Reviewed by

Norman Ravvin

This period is largely a blank in mainstream Canadian literature, including its Jewish English-language component. Major Yiddish writers and their counterparts in the visual arts captured the era, but most great Yiddish postwar work went untranslated.

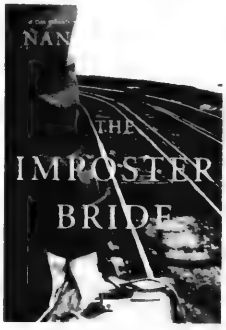
A younger generation, best represented by Nancy Richler's cousin, Mordecai, abandoned ship, making careers for themselves in Toronto, with the CBC, the major newspapers, the National Film Board, or further afield in England and New York.

The Imposter Bride fills in the gap caused by a dearth of fiction about the postwar years.

The novel rests on a neat narrative turn: the arrival of a female survivor named Lily Azerov, whose identity includes a mystery, and whose actions in her short time in Montreal leave great upheaval in their wake. We receive her story from the daughter she abandons, and it is through Ruthie that Richler moves her story to a later decade of Montreal Jewish life, which has itself been little explored. This is the moment after the wholesale abandonment of the old downtown neighbourhood, in favour of modern flats and work in the western suburbs. Without didacticism, Richler conveys the shifts in the 1950s that presented new social and economic possibilities for the city's Jews.

Irving Layton, who himself lived in Côte Saint-Luc, treated the area to some of his characteristic dark satire. His monuments to suburban life include the "steam shovel" as it "prepares an accommodation/ and an easy way out/ for excrement." But Richler tells her story from Ruthie's youthful point of view, and she is a curious rather than corrosive observer of her surroundings.

Among the fine surprises in *The Imposter Bride* is Richler's easy, detailed way with time and place, whether the postwar downtown or suburbia of a later decade. As a newly arrived immigrant with a secret past, Lily Azerov is in constant retreat from her new husband's family. Before her well-meaning mother-in-law she



struggles with a feeling of "strangeness that overwhelmed her" when she tried to "interact as a person normally would when buying bread in a store, or talking to her mother-in-law in the kitchen or going about any other business of daily life."

When Lily suddenly disappears, the focus of the narrative shifts to Ruthie, Richler's representative of the postwar generation. Where Mordecai Richler's *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* sketched the life of the downtown quarter – its economic struggles and wartime enthusiasms – *The Imposter Bride* depicts the suburban chapter that follows it. In a wonderful vignette set in Ruthie's Jewish day school, the portrayal of one of her teachers, himself a new European arrival, allows Richler to trace the fault lines of a community that is assimilating and abandoning much of its ethnic, even its local prewar heritage. Mr. C's angst troubles the mothers of Ruthie's friends, but Ruthie acknowledges his strength, "a hard, dry strength." The newcomer-establishment divide inevitably erupts, as the children make their teacher "aware in countless other ways how little we respected him, how unpopular he was as a teacher, referring to him by initial only when we were talking amongst ourselves, as if he didn't even have a name."

By the novel's close Ruthie looks back on these childhood experiences from a position of understanding, as she recovers key elements of her mother's story. *The Imposter Bride*'s take on these themes is unfailingly thoughtful and revealing. It offers a window on a place and time not so far removed from us, which is exceedingly hard to find between the covers of a book.

Norman Ravvin's recent books include a novel, The Joyful Child *(Gaspereau) and* Failure's Opposite: Listening to A.M. Klein, *co-edited with Sherry Simon (McGill-Queen's).*

Breaking away from the Satmar

Sheldon Kirshner
Staff Reporter

Deborah Feldman, 25, considers herself a new and different person today, cut from the template of rebellion.

Born into a haredi family in Williamsburg, a Satmar enclave in Brooklyn, New York, she spurned her childhood values and beliefs and embraced modernity.

"I'm an outspoken woman with feminist and liberal politics," she said in an interview to promote her memoir, *Unorthodox: The Scandalous Rejection of My Hasidic Roots*, which was published last month by Simon & Schuster. "There is no room for me in a fundamentalist Jewish community. I rebelled so I could achieve authenticity and self-determination."

Having jettisoned ultra-Orthodoxy for a secular lifestyle, Feldman knows very few people like herself. She not only tilted at windmills by breaking out of the Satmar cocoon, but had the audacity to go public about her spiritual journey.

Feldman was raised by strictly religious grandparents after her parents parted ways and her mother abandoned the community. She was never close to her mentally disabled father, who played a minimal role in her upbringing.

None too happy with her restrictive and cloistered existence, Feldman broadened her horizons with visits to a public library. Novels such as *Pride and Prejudice* and *Anne of Green Gables* touched a chord, refining her imagination and fostering a spirit of rebelliousness.

At 17, she found herself in an arranged marriage, wed to a man whom she barely knew. Dysfunctional on all levels, the marriage produced a son when she was 19,

Deborah Feldman

but broke up under the pressure of incompatibility.

Feeling trapped but not helpless, she summoned up the courage to break away from the Satmars. "I think I always knew I couldn't make it work," she said. "Mentally and emotionally, I was leaving the community from a young age."

Feldman objected to every conceivable aspect of the Satmar regimen. "Gender roles. Restrictions in education. Racism. Homophobia. Anti-Zionism. And more."

Asked what kind of a person she would have been had she stayed within the Satmar fold, she said, "I wouldn't have been alive."

She added, "I feel very liberated. I feel joyful and lucky."

Not surprisingly, Feldman's mother supported her decision to leave. When asked about her father's attitude, she replied, "He has never been aware of any aspect of my development."

Now a single mother, she lives in New York City with her six-year-old boy and attends Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, N.Y.

She began thinking of writing a book about her experiences after enrolling at Sarah Lawrence College. "But it took a lot of convincing on the part of my professors and fellow students to get the courage to write it," she noted.

Continued on page 48

'KOSHER' LABEL IN ADVERTISING

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency Guide to Food Labelling and Advertising reads as follows:

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The terms "kosher style" and "kind of kosher" are not allowed, unless they meet the requirements of the Kashruth. "Jewish-style food" or "Jewish cuisine" are not objected to, although the foods may not necessarily meet the requirements of the Kashruth.

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The CJN makes no representation as to the kashruth of food products in advertisements.

EYE ON ARTS

By BILL GLADSTONE

AUSLANDER, LANDSBERG TO HEADLINE NEW TORONTO JEWISH BOOK FESTIVAL

Shalom Auslander

American author-essayist **Shalom Auslander** and Toronto writer-activist **Michele Landsberg** have been chosen to headline the new Toronto Jewish Book Festival in early June, the hosting Koffler Centre of the Arts announced last week.

Auslander is an ironic and irreverent American Jewish writer whose religion-bashing memoir *Foreskin's Lament* (2007) first catapulted him to international prominence. He is coming to Toronto to speak about his recent first novel, *Hope: A Tragedy*, which brings diarist **Anne Frank** back to life as a crotchety old woman hiding in an attic in New York state.

Auslander is iconoclastic and wickedly funny. Earlier this month, when CBC Radio asked him what prompted him to reinvent Anne Frank, he quipped, "A lot of very good marijuana and prescription medication." On a more serious note, he explained that writing the "darkly funny" novel "was my way of taking a flashlight and shining it in the dark corners to see what's there."

Landsberg, feminist icon and former columnist for 25 years for the *Toronto Star*, will speak on her new collection of essays, *Writing the Revolution* (published by Second Story Press). She launched the book last fall with her son **Avi Lewis**, daughter-in-law **Naomi Klein** and city alderman **Kristyn Wong-Tam**.

The festival will also feature recording-industry legend **Bernie Finklestein** on his new memoir *True North: A Life Inside the Music Business*; a tribute to Canadian cultural icons **Celia Franca** and **John Hirsch** by authors **Carol Bishop-Gwyn** and **Fraidie Martz**; and programs with authors **Seymour Mayne**, **B. Glen Rotchin**, **Sara Tauben**, **Morley Torgov**, **George Jonas**, **Nora Gold**, **Lilian Nattel**, **Anne Dublin** and others.

The festival succeeds the 34-year-old Toronto Jewish Book Fair and culminates in the Helen and Stan Vine Canadian Jewish Book Awards. Bram and Bluma Appel Salon, Toronto Reference Library, June 4 to 7. Admission free, everyone welcome. Full details soon at www.kofflerarts.org.

* * *

Winning Play Gets Reading: *Haunted*, the play by **Daniel Karasik** that won the 2011 Canadian Jewish Playwriting Competition, tells the story of a university professor, recently widowed, who enters a romance with a rabbi as her daughter claims to see her father's ghost. A reading, directed by **Alisa Palmer**, features **Sascha Cole**, **Rosemary Dunsmore**, **Sarah English** and **Jordan Pettle**. Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, Tuesday, April 10, 8 p.m. Suggested donation, $10. 416-924-6211, ext. 606.

* * *

Jews in the Red Army: The exhibit *Lives of the Great Patriotic War: Untold Stories of Soviet Jewish Soldiers in the Red Army during WWII*, is on view at Congregation Darchei Noam, 864 Sheppard Ave. W., until April 4.

* * *

Names in the News: Carl Reiner, the celebrated American writer, actor and comedian, marked his 90th birthday last week. The Bronx-born son of a Jewish watchmaker from Romania, Reiner worked with **Mel Brooks**, **Neil Simon** and other writers on **Sid Caesar**'s *Your Show of Shows*, developed and acted in television's *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, and performed with Brooks in *The 2,000 Year Old Man*. Among many other career credits, he also appeared in *The Russians Are Coming* and *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*.

* * *

Kat Goldman plays at Hugh's Room

Musical Notes

• **Kat Goldman**, who lives both in Toronto and Cambridge, Mass. (where she studies at Harvard University), launches her third CD, *Gypsy Girl*, with **Kevin Hearn** of **Barenaked Ladies**. Her music is "a distinctive blend of coffee-house comfort and snappy pop pertinence." Hugh's Room, 2261 Dundas St. W. Tuesday, April 10, 8:30 p.m. $20 advance, $25 at the door. 416-531-6604, www.hughsroom.com.

• The World's Greatest Cantors in Concert, Toronto Centre for the Arts, Wednesday, March 28, 7:30 p.m. www.greatestcantors.com

• Encore Entertainment presents Songs in the Key of Stephen, a celebration of the songs of **Stephen Sondheim** and **Stephen Schwartz**. Toronto Centre for the Arts, George Weston Recital Hall, North York. March 31, 8 p.m. and April 1, 2 p.m. www.encoreshows.com, 1-855-985-2787

• Intercultural Journeys presents a concert featuring **Udi Bar-David**, **Daniel Hass** and **Tobias Baz** (cellos), **Hafez El Ali Kotain** (percussion), **Hanna Khoury** (violin), **Youssef Kassab** and **Cantor Beny Maissner** (vocals) and orchestra members from the Glenn Gould School. The program includes songs by **Moshe Vilensky**. The series was conceived as a means of bringing Israeli and Arabs together through music. Royal Conservatory, Koerner Hall, 273 Bloor St. W. March 31, 8 p.m. www.rcmusic.ca

* * *

At the Galleries: *The Self-Portrait Show*, featuring 17 works of art by **Alex Colville**, **Lucian Freud**, **David Milne**, **Mary Pratt** and other celebrated artists, is currently on view (until April 21) at the Mira Godard Gallery, 22 Hazelton Ave. The catalogue for this major exhibition, which marks the gallery's 50th anniversary, was written by Toronto-based collector **Eva Seidner**, whose critical insights are as robust and luminous as the exhibition itself. 416-964-8197, www.godardgallery.com

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Author broke with Satmar community

Continued from page 47

Unorthodox has been praised by critics, with *Publishers Weekly* having described it as "engaging" and *Library Journal* having called it "quite absorbing."

Much to Feldman's satisfaction, her mother is a fan. "She has been incredibly supportive and helpful," Feldman said.

As expected, she has been vilified in Satmar circles.

"Rage is an understatement. I believe the fury comes in part from the fact that I'm a woman. Speaking out is always forbidden, but from a woman it is considered unacceptable. Much of the hate is coming from men, some of whom even have pretended to be women."

With the publication of *Unorthodox*, Feldman has completely angered and alienated all her Satmar friends and acquaintances. She sees no way back, saying it would impossible to maintain such bonds today.

Far from being intimidated by their ferocious response, Feldman is currently writing a sequel.

She looks forward to improving her skills as a writer and hopes to establish an organization that provides help and resources to women like herself.

Photographer portrays Israel in all its shades

Sheldon Kirshner
Staff Reporter

The photographs of Harel Stanton portray Israel in all its moods and permutations.

"My photos are not postcards," said Stanton, an Israeli on the staff of *Masa Acher*, Israel's version of *National Geographic* magazine. "They show daily life in Israel and the diversity of Israel's population."

Harel Stanton

Stanton, whose work is currently being exhibited in New York City, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Philadelphia, will be in Toronto from April 1 to 4.

Although he will not be exhibiting in Toronto, copies of his prints will be available for purchase during his visit.

On April 2 at 7:30 p.m., he will deliver a lecture at Ulpanat Orot School.

An eclectic photographer, he specializes in an array of topics ranging from Israel's landscapes to faith and culture in the Jewish state.

When possible, he likes to reach beyond clichés about Israel.

"Photography has been my passion and my dream since I was a boy," said Stanton, who was born in 1968. "From a social point of view, I regard it as a medium to bring awareness and sensitivity to cultures."

After graduating from the College of Art and Design in Tel Aviv, he worked as a press photographer for *Hadashot* and *Ha'aretz*.

Photographer Harel Stanton specializes in portraying Israel's diverse population.

For the past number of years, he has taught photography in Israel and gone on lecture tours in Europe, the United States and Latin America.

A contributor to foreign publications running the gamut from *Geo* to *National Geographic*, Stanton is also known for his multimedia presentations and workshops.

Putting a Smile on seniors' faces for 40 years

Kathryn Kates
Special to The CJN

Smile Theatre Company, a troupe of actors who perform at seniors facilities throughout the Golden Horseshoe and beyond is celebrating its 40th anniversary with a special evening on April 16.

"When actors Tom Kneebone and Dinah Christie started the company four decades ago, I do not think they could have imagined the impact it would have on the lives of the hundreds of thousands of individuals who have shared in the joy of the inspiring productions that have been created for Smile Theatre Company," current president Briane Nasimok says.

Nasimok, an actor, writer and director, who sat on the Factory Theatre board for three years before taking up the position at Smile Theatre, started his career as an operatic mute for the Canadian Opera Company and then became a standup comic before becoming a writer and producer for both television and theatrical events including the highly successful Gilda's Club Gala.

After paying his mortgage off, he was able to come back to his first love: theatre. When encouraged to run for president of Smile Theatre, he did, and he hasn't looked back.

He said he is quickly learning how hard it is to raise money for theatre, especially when you are talking about theatre for seniors. What they have been good at is attracting respected actors including seasoned veterans Susan Cuthbert and Paula Wolfson and up-and-coming theatre stars such as Gabi Epstein, who was nominated for a Dora Mavor Moore Award last year. The company prides itself on hiring actors who are sensitive to their audience and spend time talking with them after the show.

On April 16, to celebrate their 40th anniversary, the company is presenting *A Taste of Smile Theatre* – an evening of music, good food and fun beginning at 6 p.m. with cocktails followed by a dinner and show

A scene from *Lavender Blue* starring Sara Farb and Bruce Tubbe and written by Dinah Christie.
[Warren MacDonald photo]

"Members of the Smile troupe will be performing excerpts from some of our productions at First Canadian Place," Nasimok said. "BMO Financial Group will open its exclusive 68th floor venue for this special occasion and co-founder Dinah Christie will be joining us."

In fact, the current show, *Lavender Blue* starring Sara Farb, was written by Christie. The company does three shows a year, the next being *The Shooting of Dan McGrew* based on the poem by Robert Service.

Smile Theatre was incorporated as a registered charity in 1972. Over half a million seniors have seen the 160 productions that tour 38 weeks a year. Nasimok said the company develops and produces work principally from a musical theatre tradition with Canadian themes, which resonate with their target audiences by dignifying audiences with professional quality entertainment that engages, rejuvenates, rekindles the imagination and encourages positive transformation.

"All our performers and stage managers will attest to the extraordinary moments that can occur both during and after the show: someone who hasn't spoken in years will suddenly try to speak to the performers, or will suddenly begin to sing along; someone who can no longer speak can still laugh; someone else who has virtually lost the ability to move will attempt to reach out; someone will "applaud" by waving their one usable hand in the air."

The company has been going to Baycrest for years. "Baycrest is doing some research on how music affects the cognitive abilities and memories of the elderly. So, our artistic director Jim Betts is going to work with Baycrest on this," Nasimok said.

Tickets for the April 16 fundraising event are $125. For more information, visit www.smiletheatre.com.

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Boys of summer gearing up for new baseball season

Harvey Rosen
Special to The CJN

WINNIPEG — The weather is changing and once again it's time for the Jewish boys of summer to turn their backs on winter and prepare for a new baseball season.

The regular season commences March 28-29, when Seattle plays Oakland in a pair of games in Tokyo.

But the Milwaukee Brewers are already winners upon learning in late February that "The Hebrew Hammer," left-fielder Ryan Braun, last year's National League MVP, had his 50-game suspension overturned by baseball arbitrator Shyam Das.

Shockingly, last fall in one of those "Say- it-ain't-so, Joe" moments, the now-28-year-old highly regarded star tested positive for a performance-enhancing drug. What a relief for a club which had already lost Prince Fielder to free agency for the princely sum of $214 million (all figures US) to Detroit.

The son of an Israeli-born Jewish father and a Catholic mother who made his fourth consecutive NL All-Star team when he hit .332, smacked 33 taters, drove in 111 runs and stole 33 bases is now the fourth Jewish player to capture the MVP award. He joins all-time greats Sandy Koufax of the Dodgers, Hank Greenberg of the Tigers and Al Rosen of the Indians in holding the distinction.

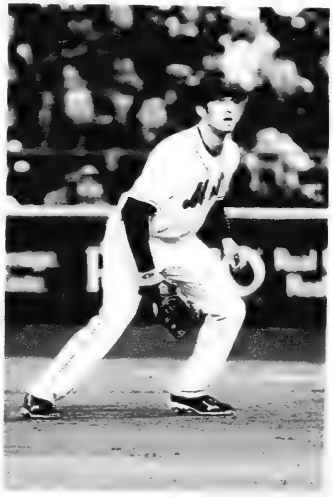
Boston may possibly have three Jews in the lineup in 2012: Kevin Youkilis, Ryan Kalish and Ryan Lavarnway. Youkilis, 33, who can play first or third, has been injury-prone the past two years but will bat third or fourth in the Red Sox lineup after a year in which he had only 431 at-bats but whacked 32 doubles, 17 home runs and had 80 RBIs, but saw his batting average drop to .258 from .307, perhaps due to sports-hernia issues.

Kalish, 24, an outfielder, is presently on the 40-man roster, but due to injury in 2011 had only 86 at-bats and hit a paltry .209 at AAA Pawtucket. In 2010, however, he was with Boston where he managed 163 at-bats and hit .252, drove in 24 and slammed four homers.

Lavarnway, a 24-year-old catcher, was brought up late last season and went to the plate for the Red Sox only 39 times, hitting .231 and impressing with a pair of homers. The Yale grad earned the call-up when no other player in the Boston organization demonstrated more power. Between AA Portland and AAA Pawtucket, he went deep 32 times, drove in 93, and hit .290 in 116 games.

Cleveland second-sacker Jason Kipnis was a second-round pick in 2009 out of Arizona State. If all goes well, two days after his 25th birthday on April 3, he'll start against the Blue Jays at home. He came up last July and in 136 at-bats hit a respectable .272 with nine doubles, seven homers and 19 RBIs. And here's one for Ripley's Believe it or Not: Kipnis became the first Indians' second baseman to hit a homer in four consecutive games on Aug. 3. The only other Cleveland player to do so was Jewish third baseman Al Rosen in his rookie year. Precisely one week later, Kipnis had a five-hit, four-run game.

Ryan Braun


Ike Davis

The Twins have added a second Jewish player to their roster to go along with third baseman Danny Valencia. Right-handed hurler Jason Marquis, who spent his entire 12-season major league career in the National League, is bringing his act to Minnesota to perform at pitcher-friendly Target Field.

The 33-year-old will likely be fourth or fifth in the rotation and, being a sinker-ball pitcher, will keep his infielders constantly on alert. By today's standards his one-year pact at $3 million is a bargain.

Last season, Marquis went 8-5 with an ERA of 3.95 with the Washington Nationals before being traded to the Arizona Diamondbacks on July 30, where he was 0-1 and saw his season ERA rise to 4.43. Now in the AL, he won't have to go to the plate but, interestingly, he was one of the top hitting pitchers in the NL and was on occasion used as a pinch-hitter. Marquis missed the last six weeks of the season with a broken right leg after being hit by a line drive.

Valencia, 27, is coming off a season in which he hit .246 with 15 home runs and 72 RBIs. The Twins are hoping he can improve on his rookie season in 2010, when his batting average was .311 in 322 at-bats. He hits lefthanders much better than righties and is a dead pull hitter with outstanding bat speed. At six-foot-six and 220 pounds, he has lots of power potential. Valencia was raised in Boca Raton, Fla., and is the son of a Jewish mother and a Cuban father. He was raised Jewish, attended Hebrew school and had a bar mitzvah.

Sam Fuld has finally, at age 30, found a home as a utility outfielder who brings excitement to the game. The five-foot-10 sparkplug can lead off, steal a base, and make eye-popping snags in left field. With Tampa Bay last season, he came to the plate 308 times and hit .240 with 18 doubles, five triples, three homers and 27 RBIs. He won't strike fear into the hearts of opposition pitchers, but being an agitator and a base threat with speed that allowed him to steal 20 bases in 2011, he can distract and annoy entire infields.

A self-injecting diabetic – in dugouts during games – the former Cub is a fan favourite.

The Texas Rangers' Jewish duo is back again with Ian Kinsler, 29, at second and Scott Feldman on the mound. You can't define the former by his mediocre .255 batting average in 2011, since Kinsler, who is most often used as a leadoff hitter, had unusual power, going deep 32 times and adding 34 doubles along with 77 RBIs. Kinsler can also create havoc with his feet, having stolen 30 bases and scored 121 runs.

Feldman, now 29, was out much of last year, but in limited service, he went 2-1 and had an ERA of 3.94 in 11 games. A former starter, the Hawaiian resident occasionally comes on in relief and only took the ball as a starter twice last year while working 32 innings. Texas tried to trade Feldman last season, but his contract is heavy and its movement clauses are tight. He will most likely be their primary long man who does a fair amount of mopping up.

New York first baseman Ike Davis, the son of former major-league pitcher Ron Davis and Jewish mother Millie from Lithuania, will start at first base for the Mets and likely bat cleanup. He missed much of last season with a serious ankle injury after colliding with teammate David Wright in pursuit of a pop fly in May. He was off to what may have been an all-star season when with only 129 at bats he was hitting .302 and had eight doubles, seven homers and drove in 25 – which matches his present age. The moribund Mets, who finished 25 games out last year, need a healthy season from the six-foot-four, 230-pound Edina, Minn., native who, for his size, is sure-handed around the bag.

Arizona's bullpen ranked 14th in the majors last season, and for relief in 2012, the Diamondbacks acquired left-handed reliever Craig Breslow, 31, from the Oakland A's.

In the past Breslow quelled uprisings, or tried to, in Boston, Cleveland, and Minnesota. Last year, he was 0-2, but in 67 appearances he sported an ERA of 3.79. Hence, his salary on a one-year pact for the upcoming season is close to $1.8 million, which was negotiated without going to arbitration.

The New Haven, Conn., native is a strikeout pitcher who in his 295-game career has fanned 235 in 279 innings. He has one more asset: Breslow led all relievers in the majors with five pickoffs.

The Dodgers signed veteran Jewish left-handed reliever John Grabow to a minor-league contract this past winter. The 33-year-old went 3-1 last season with a 4.76 ERA in 62.1 innings with the Cubs. He works especially well with runners in scoring position.

Two other hopefuls on this year's rosters to watch for are pitcher Michael Schwimer of the Phillies and infielder Josh Satin of the Mets, both of whom had a cup of coffee in the majors last season.

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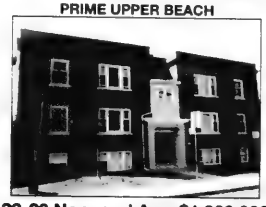

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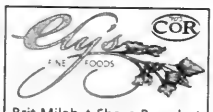

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Journalist calls for 'Zionist BDS'

Ron Kampeas
JTA

WASHINGTON — Should Jews shun other Jews? And should they shun Jews who call on Jews to shun other Jews?

Peter Beinart's call in *New York Times* on March 19 for a boycott of goods manufactured in West Bank settlements reignited a debate not just about what works and doesn't when it comes to advancing a two-state solution, but also about what should and should not be said during the debate.

Beinart, a journalist and essayist whose book, *The Crisis of Zionism*, is about to come out, tried to cast his call in pro-Israel terms.

"If Israel makes the occupation permanent and Zionism ceases to be a democratic project, Israel's foes will eventually overthrow Zionism itself," he wrote.

Beinart referred to his boycott proposal as "Zionist BDS" – a play on the pro-Palestinian boycott, divestment and sanctions movement targeting all of Israel, which Beinart firmly condemned in his *Times* essay as an effort to dismantle the Jewish state.

The pushback was immediate and came from multiple camps in the Israel debate: those who rejected Beinart's thesis but sought to engage him and those who think his latest call places him beyond the pale. More pushback came from advocates of a broader boycott movement targeting all of Israel.

Peter Beinart

Beinart has been a high-profile figure in the debates over Israel ever since he penned a much-discussed 2010 essay in *The New York Review of Books* suggesting that what he depicted as an Israeli slide away from democratic values would alienate American Jewish youth. The essay won him plaudits from the pro-Israel left.

Beinart is scheduled to be a featured speaker at this week's J Street national conference. But even the dovish J Street was cool to his boycott proposal. Its president, Jeremy Ben-Ami, said that boycotting settlements was unlikely to yield positive results.

"We favour a border not a boycott. We want to get the political process going to arrive at a border," he said.

Ben-Ami hastened to note, however, that the idea of boycotting settlements was not out of place in the Israeli discourse. Another J Street conference keynoter, he noted, was Amos Oz, the widely respected Israeli novelist who has signed onto a letter supporting Israeli artists who refuse to perform in the West Bank settlement of Ariel.

"It's a legitimate point of view that a lot of passionate two-state Zionists share," Ben-Ami said. "And Peter is within the mainstream in Israel."

Shimon Fogel, CEO of Canada's Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, called Beinert's position "untenable" on multiple fronts.

"BDS, from the very beginning, has served as the core element of a strategy to isolate and delegitimize Israel. It was never about creating an economic impact, rather it was about undermining and diminishing Israel's credibility," he said.

"The notion that one can endorse any level of a boycott without lending strength to the overall assault on the Jewish state is like declaring a woman 'half pregnant.' However nuanced Beinart may think his message is, he had a responsibility to appreciate how it would be exploited by those who are committed to Israel's demise.

"On a more fundamental level, Beinart is guilty of the most basic and insidious of historical inversions of the Arab-Israel conflict. Israel's presence in the territories comes as a result of the conflict rather than representing its root cause. What is necessary to move towards resolution is not Israel's unilateral evacuation of Judea and Samaria – it is the unequivocal and meaningful acceptance of the legitimacy of Israel as a Jewish state in the ancestral homeland of the Jewish people," Fogel said.

"Those who believe in a two-state solution cannot accept the premise of his position, and even the most strident of anti-Israel voices, including Noam Chomsky and Norman Finkelstein, have repudiated BDS, understanding it for what it is – a cynical and destructive ploy to demonize the Jewish state."

Seth Mandel, writing on the Contentions blog at the conservative *Commentary* magazine, assailed Beinart's boycott proposal as well as his labelling of Israel proper as "democratic Israel" and Israeli settlements as "non-democratic Israel." Mandel called these arguments "both morally reprehensible and a dangerous slippery slope."

"The slippery slope, of course, is that the 'legitimate' vs. 'illegitimate' argument will immediately be applied to those, anywhere and anytime, who voice any support for the Jews Beinart says to stay away from," Mandel wrote.

Jeffrey Goldberg, a writer for *The Atlantic*, who also has harshly criticized the West Bank settlement enterprise, chose the path of engagement, parrying with Beinart in a much-watched exchange on Twitter.

"What's your alternative for stopping the settlement growth that dooms Israeli democracy?" Beinart asked Goldberg.

Goldberg replied: "Longer discussion, but int'l boycott will only make mainstream Israelis more sympathetic to settlers, not less."

Centrist Jewish groups were critical of Beinart's proposal.

"I don't think a JCRC would support any organization that would support any kind of activity that would bring any harm to a segment of Israel," said Ronald Halber, executive director of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington.

Halber said he did not think Beinart would become a pariah in the Jewish community, arguing that it "sounds like he wrote the piece more to start a discussion than advance the proposal.

"I find it a less than serious proposal from a person I consider thoughtful," he said.

With files from Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf

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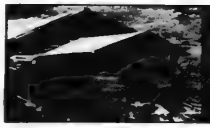
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HEEBONICS

Idan Raichel plays Toronto for a cause

Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf
Staff Reporter

Some 1,500 cheering, raucous fans of Israeli world music can't be wrong.

That was the audience count at the Idan Raichel Project's performance at Queen Elizabeth Theatre in Toronto on March 18.

Raichel and his troupe were in town to play a charity concert in support of the Motek Cultural Initiative, a newly created non-profit aimed at bringing Israeli artists to North Americans to expose western audiences to all Israel has to offer.

Proceeds from the ticket sales went toward launching the venture, and Raichel said it was his privilege to kick off the project as a favour to his friend and the non-profit's founder, Ravid Dahan.

Speaking to *Heebonics* just before taking the stage, dressed in black with his trademark black headscarf concealing some of his long dreads, Raichel said he hoped his music could teach cultures how to live more peacefully with each other.

A wildly popular artist in the world music genre both in Israel and internationally, Raichel humbly noted that his band, while representative of Israel and proudly so, was not officially employed by the government to be a cultural ambassador for his country.

However, he said, it has been an honour for him to read international reviews of his albums and be defined as "the sound track of Israel for the past decade."

Raichel, who grew up in Kfar Saba near Tel Aviv, first burst onto the Israeli music scene in 2002.

Idan Raichel ***[Patrick Jubé photos]***

"If people listen to the Idan Raichel Project, and what comes to their minds is the sound track of the streets of Tel Aviv, then we should... be goodwill and cultural ambassadors for our country," he said.

Raichel said he aspires to be to Israel what other iconic international artists have become to their countries.

"Edith Piaf for the French people, or Mercedes Sosa for Argentina, or the Buena Vista Social Club for Cubans. We would have the honour to be this for Israel," he said.

Asked how he felt about Israel's portrayal in the news as a conflict zone and whether that ever influences his compositions, Raichel said it was unfortunate that many people outside of Israel only know it as an actor in a volatile region.

"It's important that people learn more about [Israeli] culture and other aspects of our reality. What Ravid is doing here is a blessing.

"At the end of the day, all the Israeli artists coming [to Canada] are great artists," he said.

Raichel also pointed out that he has always felt welcomed in Canada wherever he's played.

Musically speaking, Raichel said he's at a point now in his writing where he feels much more comfortable and confident.

Growing up playing with musician-neighbours and with other Israeli artists helped form his style, but he said he is not a prolific writer because his music comes from an "intuitive" place, which takes time to form.

"I write when I have something to say. If I don't have anything to say, I don't write it. It's just a great privilege to be a recording artist who is just recording his life. It's a complementary process," Raichel said.

With that, he politely left to prepare for the March 18 show. And what a show it was.

From the mood-setting introduction of the band by a flautist playing Middle Eastern scales on digital delay under a canopy of violet lighting through to climactic numbers showcasing the Idan Raichel Project's breadth and width of musicianship and verve, it was a concert that imparted the spirit of multiculturalism, done the Israeli way.

The Israeli artist also managed to squeeze in a second performance the following day.

On March 19, Raichel played a set at York University.

He performed for students at the university to promote his message of peace and tolerance through music.

The York event was co-sponsored by the university and the Israeli consulate in Toronto.

Raichel's appearance at York was cause for numerous student campus groups to rally around and provide support to the Jewish and pro-Israel community at the university.

Campus groups supporting Raichel's performance at York last week included the Ahmadiyya Students Club, Ethiopian Students Association, Filipino Student Association, Greek Students Association, Hasbara Fellowships, Hillel at York, Latin American Students Association, Osgoode Campus Conservatives, Power to Change, Schulich Finance Association, Schulich Management Association and the York United Black Students Association.

Consulate spokesperson Natalie Weed said her office wished to highlight Raichel's desire "for people of all cultures to work together. We asked the students to support the concert as a symbol of multiculturalism and as a symbol of unity. York receives so much negative press, and the students want to see positive interaction between students from all different backgrounds and between the student groups."

More news for young Jews on heebonics.ca

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Bialik's Daffodil and Tulip project

I recently read *The Third Industrial Revolution* by Jeremy Rifkin. In a nutshell, the book makes the argument for the need for society and business to prepare today for the convergence of communication and energy technologies that will once again lead to another "Industrial Revolution."

Rifkin proposes that the next Industrial Revolution will come about when five different elements, which exist today at different levels of maturity and highlight advances in communication and energy technology, will be brought together in a new way.

He sees this happening through a convergence of renewable energy technology – buildings of all types capable of becoming micro power plants, the ability for those buildings to store intermittently generated energy combining with ability to share and consume energy by plugging into an energy sharing "intergrid," and finally linked by transitioning the current transportation vehicles such as cars and trucks to share and consume power in this two-directional intergrid.

Sustainable Jew

Fred Winegust

One of the keys to making this a reality, Rifkin believes, would be changing the educational experience. This would require moving from the current focus of helping students become competitive, autonomous and economically productive to an experience that is more focused on distributed and collaborative learning.

This approach would mirror the way students share information, ideas and experiences on the Internet in open learning spaces and social media sites. Rifkin sees this distributed and collaborative learning effort as critical preparation for those who will be participating in an economy that operates on the same set of principles and will eventually lead to a more inclusive community with empathy for the sustainability of our biosphere. The Bialik Hebrew Day School Israel Interactive Centre, under the leadership of Nurith Sela, is putting this new learning approach into practice through an International Education and Resources Network (iEARN) project known as the Daffodil and Tulip collaborative global education project.

This project was originated by Ruty Hotzen in Israel and is one of many global projects that iEARN provides for schools around the world.

In November 2011, Grade 3 Bialik students planted daffodil and tulip bulbs in the front of their school and Grade 3 students from Hashalom-Yitzhak Rabin School in Jerusalem also planted bulbs in their schoolyard.

Students from both schools will collect, communicate and share information through an iEARN provided and supervised online discussion capability. They will explore common parameters affecting plant growth at both locations, including air and soil temperature, sunlight and pollution. This collaborative learning activity is connected to Bialik's Grade 3 science unit about plants and soil and meets the new expectations of the school's technology curriculum for technology operation and communication, such as using digital media to communicate collaborate and share information.

This project provides the students with the opportunity to develop 21st-century learning skills. The live correspondence in Hebrew with their peers in Israel provides them with the opportunity to enrich their Hebrew vocabulary and enhance their ties with Israel. Their understanding of environmental impacts to sustainable growth, in this case of daffodils and tulips, will be a lifelong lesson.

Winegust@gmail.com

APPLE BEET CHAROSET

1 Gala apple peeled, grated
2 medium beets, peeled, grated
3/4 c chopped walnuts or pecans, toasted
1/2 c dried apricots, chopped
2 tbls honey
2 tbls juice +1 tsp zest from 1 orange
1 tsp cinnamon
1/2 tsp ground nutmeg
1/8 tsp salt

In a large bowl, stir together all ingredients. Let sit for at least 30 min before serving to allow apples and beets to soften and flavors to come together.

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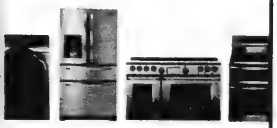

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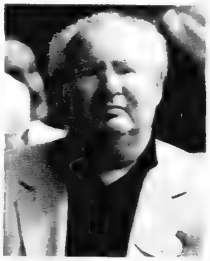

French lawyer and historian Serge Klarsfeld, right, who talks about the recent shooting outside a Jewish school in Toulouse, France, of a rabbi, two of his children and a little girl.

Yachad 2012 program which is organized by the Communauté sépharade unifiée du Québec and Federation CJA's Partnership 2000 program. Through this program, 36 teens, ages 15 to 17, will head to Israel in July.

The CJN's Hebrew-language columnist, Yosef Tastassa, writes about how Israelis are reaching out to Iranians through Facebook.

TAV College is introducing a program intended to enhance job prospects, in particular for students who have attended chassidic schools. TAV, a private CEGEP, is offering a make-up program in basic science and mathematics next semester.

Canadian: insulin, the telephone, residential schools

The Canadian personality is in some ways immature.

Canadians embrace Canadian things we're proud of, such as the invention of the telephone by Alexander Graham Bell in 1876, Banting and Best's discovery of insulin in 1922, and the creation of Trivial Pursuit in 1979 by Chris Haney and Scott Abbott.

But Canadians – our own Jewish community included – generally don't take ownership of the atrocities committed in 132 Canadian residential schools from 1840 to 1996, when Canadian racism was at its peak and many of our government officials, security forces and church "leaders" terrorized our aboriginal peoples.

Urban Writer

Avrum Rosensweig

"O Canada, our home and native land"?

We celebrate the good chapters in our history, but respond to the bad things with, "Well, I wasn't there." But residential schools are as much part of our peoplehood as Stalinism was to Russia's, and our failure to accept this fact reflects our compartmentalized relationship to our own history.

Residential schools were established by the federal government to show our native peoples the "superiority" of European-Canadian society – "to kill the Indian in the child." Children were taken from their parents and sent away to schools that were often run by sexually abusive teachers. Native children, including Inuit and Métis, weren't allowed to speak their languages or practise their religion. The book *A Stranger at Home* reveals the terror a child felt upon returning home from a residential school and hearing her mother yell, "She's not my daughter," a statement that reflected the distance created between the two.

It's not clear how many aboriginal children died or were killed in residential schools by our Canadian ancestors, but documentation by Dr. Peter Bryce, general medical superintendent for the Department of Indian Affairs in the early 20th century, reported to the ministry that from 1894 to 1908, the mortality rate in Western Canadian residential Schools was between 35 and 60 per cent, representing about 50,000 of our children over that time (see http://bit.ly/peKha).

"True patriot love"?

As a Canadian, as a Jew, I'm sickened to share with you that in 1928, Alberta's Sexual Sterilization Act was passed, allowing students of a residential school to be sterilized with the principal's approval At least 3,500 young native females were sterilized this way. Knowing this, I can understand the feelings of young Germans today when dealing with aspects of their country's past.

"The True North strong and free"!?

We know native children were murdered in Canada because of a cultural genocide orchestrated by our government. (Prime Minister Stephen Harper has apologized for this.) We know Ojibwa mothers had their hearts torn out while RCMP officers, following orders, tore their kids away from them as their fathers stood by, emasculated. Yet you won't find any of this in most board of education history books. You have to squint to find a memorial to our native children. You won't find a Jewish-native committee.

"We stand on guard for thee"?

Just as we were present in spirit when Banting and Best discovered a serum that would save the lives of our family members, we were equally represented when 132 residential schools operated across Canada and systematically destroyed the lives of our aboriginal people. Canadian history – blemished and glowing – is ours.

To be Canadian is to be compassionate. To be Canadian is to be destructive. But it's also to be much more. Either way, pledge "Never again" to residential schools. Embrace our history in its entirety and ensure a better future for our native people.

"With glowing hearts"? Not entirely.

Avrum@veahavta.org

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Foreign minister delivers tough message on Middle East. *Page 14*

Passover Greetings

Our annual gift of literary treats. *Section B*

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Thornhill writer wins CBC short story competition. *Page 53*

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'The Torah speaks of four children...'

The headline above is from the Haggadah. As the ancient rabbis ordained, children play an integral role on seder night in the retelling and celebration of the Exodus from Egypt. Please see the editorial on page 8. *[Israel Sun and Flash90 photos]*

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Chag Samayach! Happy Passover to everyone!

CANADA

UNRWA Briefing

OTTAWA — York Centre MP Mark Adler organized a briefing on the state of Arab refugee camps in the Palestinian territories by three Middle East experts in Ottawa last week. David Bedein, director of the Center for Near East Policy Research; Arnon Groiss, a senior journalist for the Israel Broadcasting Authority's Arabic Radio and an expert on the translation of schoolbooks in UNRWA schools, and Jonathan Halevi, senior researcher on radical Islam at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, spoke to MPs, senators and political staffers March 27 in Ottawa. Their talk was titled "Reform of UNRWA: To encourage the resettlement of Arab refugee descendants, so as not to perpetuate their indignity in refugee camp squalor for yet another 60 years." Adler's office said he hopes the talk will help Canada find a role in resettling Arab refugees.

WORLD

New Jewish Mayor

FRANKFURT — The German city of Frankfurt has elected its first Jewish mayor since 1933 and only its second in history. Peter Feldmann, a 53-year-old economist and political scientist, won March 25 with 57 per cent of the vote, reportedly surprising even himself. The Social Democrat succeeds incumbent Petra Roth of the conservative Christian Democratic Union, who had called for early elections but didn't run. Frankfurt's first Jewish mayor was Ludwig Landmann who served from 1924 to 1933, when the Nazis came to power. At the time, the city had Germany's second-largest Jewish population, at 30,000. Today it has 7,000, mostly Russian Jews.

Reform Layoffs

NEW YORK — The Union for Reform Judaism laid off about 30 employees last week as part of a restructuring of the organization. The reorganization is part of a series of changes being ushered in by the URJ's new president, Rabbi Richard Jacobs, who took over at the start of January.

Shul Defaced

CHICAGO — The words "Jews murder" were sprayed painted on one of Chicago's oldest shuls. The graffiti was discovered the morning of March 28 on the Anshe Emet synagogue on the North Side. The congregation, which is nearly 140 years old, has been at its current location since 1929. It also houses the Bernard Zell Anshe Emet Day School.

Ex-Mayor Apologized to London Jews

Ken Livingstone

LONDON — Ken Livingstone, the former mayor of London seeking to reclaim his post, apologized for statements he made in a meeting with the city's Jewish community leaders.

The apology, in the form of a long letter from the Labour party member to the Jewish community, appeared in the *Jewish Chronicle* last week.

Headlined "Please, let's move on from the 'Ken and the Jews dramas,'" it said, in part, "If I believed that Jewish people won't vote Labour in this election, and I did not value the opinions and concerns of Jewish Londoners, I would not have spent my evening at that meeting."

Livingstone the previous evening had a lengthy meeting with Labour party leader Ed Miliband, who is Jewish, and the Jewish Leadership Council in which the apology, with its exact wording, was hammered out.

At a March 1 meeting with Jewish leaders, Livingstone said Jews would not vote for him because "the Jewish community is rich," and he used the words Zionist, Jewish and Israeli interchangeably and "in a pejorative manner," the leaders said in a letter to Miliband.

The meeting was held to discuss Livingstone's support of radical Muslim cleric Sheik Yusuf al-Qaradawi and his accepting money from Iranian state broadcaster Press TV. Livingstone has been a frequent critic of Israel.

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Irv Siegel, sub-district chair of United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism *[Susan Minuk photo]*

Volunteers aid Habitat project

Susan Minuk
Special to The CJN

Some 20 volunteers from various Conservative synagogues, in partnership with Habitat for Humanity, recently spent a day in east Toronto building housing for low-income families.

The 29-family multi-housing unit, at 4572 Kingston Rd., is scheduled for completion at the end of March, when it will be ready for the last 17 families to move in.

The day spent working on the construction site, March 25, was the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism's (USCJ) first community mitzvah mission for 2012. The mission was supported by Beth Tikvah Synagogue, Beth David Synagogue, Shaar Shalom Synagogue and Beit Rayim Synagogue.

"My daughter, while attending Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto... got involved with Habitat for Humanity in Virginia. It was she who inspired the idea to start a USCJ mitzvah mission in Toronto," said Irv Siegel, sub-district chair of USCJ eastern Canada.

"By spending a day building the future for Toronto families living in need, USCJ will have a direct hand in building a better community. This was integral to our efforts to give back to the community and was a perfect fit," Siegel said.

Enloe Wilson, faith and community relations co-ordinator of Habitat for Humanity, said that 76,000 families are "currently in line for some form of social housing in Toronto. This is subsidized housing. We simply don't have the volume to accommodate that demand.

"A wait for a one-bedroom unit can take up to eight years for a family in need. We can't fix that situation all by ourselves, but we can be a part, and we are only a part by way of volunteers like USCJ."

Volunteers, who ranged in age from 16 to 70, were responsible for raising a minimum of $75 each, with a goal of $1,500, which many exceeded.

Continued on page 7

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Searching for images

They were 10 cousins. The oldest was almost 13, the youngest almost four – eight boys, two girls. Somehow, they all seemed to fit at one end of a makeshift table that filled the entire length of the kitchen.

To a youngster seven years old, the kitchen seemed, like all kitchens, large enough to accommodate the 20 people who crowded around the table.

The Kelvinator fridge stood at one corner of the room, at the joining of the wall opposite the table perhaps 10 feet away, and the wall between the kitchen and the summer kitchen.

From the editor's desk...

In fact he never did understand why that smaller room attached to the kitchen was called a summer kitchen. No one ate there at any time, let alone in the summer. It was poorly lit, damp and cold, and used mainly as a gigantic storeroom in which cans of food and other household supplies were stacked in jumbled asymmetry on homemade shelves lined with wax paper.

One walked through the summer kitchen and down the four or five wooden steps to get into the backyard, a small postcard patch of concrete and grass, the escape route to the laneway behind the house, the paradise of all playgrounds for the 10 cousins and their many friends.

At the other end of the table and around its middle sat their parents and grandparents.

Grandfather sat at the head of the table. Although he was not a stern man, he had a stern bearing, probably as a result of his slow gait, his ramrod straight-backed posture and the way he spoke. Even though he was essentially deaf in one ear, he generally spoke quietly.

To a youngster of seven years old, grandfather was the embodiment of authority. No one challenged his will; no one countermanded his instructions; no one questioned his advice – certainly not any of the grandchildren.

Sitting beside grandfather, on his right, was his son, the seven-year-old's uncle. To grandfather's left sat one of the three sons-in-law, the seven-year-old's father.

The other aunts and uncles found their places around the table. Grandmother, two of her three daughters, her son and daughter-in-law sat on the side of the table closest to the fridge, the stove, the sink, the counter and the cupboards. The seven-year-old's mother sat beside her husband.

That night however, the cousins did not charge through the summer kitchen to get to their fantastical laneway. They spent the entire evening inside.

It was Pesach. The extended family had gathered at the bubbeh's and zydeh's house for the seder.

More than four decades later, when the seven-year-old was himself a parent, and he missed his own father, and he wanted to "see" again some of the images of his father as a young man, he recalled the smells and the sounds and the sights of the seders at his grandparents' home – a narrow, two-storey, semi-detached house in the "greener" immigrant neighbourhood of downtown Toronto in the 1950s.

How did we all fit into that kitchen? he wondered bemusedly. How did we not bump into each other whenever we tried to move? How did we have room even to bring the spoonfuls of chicken soup to our mouths without splashing the person next to us?

Though he carefully and lovingly peeled back more of the layers of his memory, he could not remember any scenes of bumping or splashing.

But the echo chambers of his memory did bring back to him the "noise" of the kitchen/dining room. It was always more than a din and never less than a commotion. Had there been a "noisometer" in the room, it would have surely been stuck between ruckus and hubbub.

How could it have been otherwise? At one end of the table were the 10 young cousins. At the other end of the table were the 10 adults: grandparents and parents.

Because grandfather was essentially deaf in one ear, the adults spoke to each other rather loudly, and because the adults spoke rather loudly, the cousins, simply to hear each other better, spoke even more loudly than their parents.

Adding colour to the volume of the sound was the cacophony of four different languages. The cousins spoke to each other in English; the adults spoke to each other in Yiddish. The adults spoke to their children in Yiddinglish. The children answered them in Engliddish.

But that was only during the meal part of the seder. During the narrative of the Exodus, there was only one language: the heavily Polish-accented pronunciation of the Hebrew and Aramaic of the Haggadah, and there was only one sound: the familiar, comforting, sweetly melancholy tenor voice of the seven-year-old's father leading the family in the recitation of the story.

The boy never asked why his father led the recitation and singing. It seemed only natural and right. His father, after all, was a marvellous singer. He had the finest voice of anyone in the family. He loved to sing. But more important, it was obvious even to the seven-year-old that his father needed to sing.

Many years passed before the seven-year-old was able to see the images of his young father in their truer dimension. He finally "saw" that his father, and other sole "survivors" like him, were also remembering and searching as they sang at the seder.

His father, too, was searching for images from a former time. But his memories, barely more than a decade old when his son was seven, could not comfort. They still cut him deeply, the dull edge of recollection's blade piercing his psyche and stabbing at his heart even as his sweet voice became part of the din and commotion of the seder in a new life in a new land.

MBD

SeeJN

PESACH DONATION

Lori Nussbaum, senior fundraising and development officer with Na'amat Canada Toronto, second from right, and local Na'amat president Laurel Wiseman, fourth from right, give a $5,000 Pesach donation to the Jewish Food Bank at the Pride of Israel Synagogue March 28 as food bank volunteers look on.

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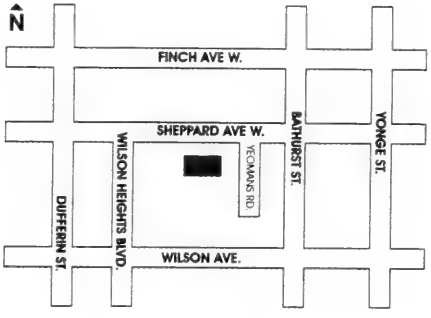

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Italian honoured as Righteous Gentile

Vicky Tobianah
Special to the CJN

Giorgio Perlasca, an Italian businessman who posed as a Spanish diplomat while in Hungary during World War II, saved more than 5,000 Hungarian Jews.

He was honoured at a tribute attended by his son, Franco, and his daughter-in-law, Luciana Amadio, at the Lipa Green Centre in Toronto on April 1.

The event was organized by the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) and the National Council of Italian Canadians.

Giorgio Perlasca was born in Como, Italy. At the beginning of World War II, he was sent to Hungary to get supplies for the Italian army. In 1943, Italy signed an armistice with the Allied Armed Forces, who were then occupying the southern party of the country, entailing the capitulation of Italy. Perlasca refused to swear loyalty to Mussolini's Italian Social Republic, a puppet state of Nazi Germany, and instead proclaimed his loyalty to the Italian monarch, Victor Emmanuel.

Perlasca was jailed but eventually took advantage of a medical pass and sought refuge in the Spanish Embassy in Budapest. He became a Spanish citizen, going by the name of Jorge Perlasca, and he began working with the Spanish ambassador, Angel Sanz Briz, and other diplomats of neutral states to help Jews escape Nazi Hungary. He acquired protection cards for many Jewish citizens based on the 1924 Law of Miguel Primo de Rivera, which granted all Jews of Sephardi origin Spanish citizenship.

Franco Perlasca, centre wearing suit, with Italian veterans, is the son of Righteous Gentile Giorgio Perlasca. *[Sarina Rehal photo]*

When Sanz Briz left Hungary for Switzerland in 1944, the Hungarian government ordered Perlasca to clear out all the houses where Jews were living, and were protected. Perlasca knew that these Jews would be sent to concentration camps, so he falsely informed the government that he had been appointed Sanz Briz's replacement. This allowed him to house, feed and protect more than 5,000 Hungarian Jews. After the war, Perlasca moved back to Italy and did not speak of his heroic actions until 30 years had passed.

Franco Perlasca spoke to the audience, made up of members of the Italian and Jewish communities of Toronto, about his father. "He left a beautiful legacy," Perlasca said. "Remembering is important because it shows that anybody can do something like this, if they want to. I hope his story is remembered, especially by young people, so that they know how to react to violence like this."

Perlasca never revealed to his wife or children that he played such a large role in saving the lives of so many Hungarian Jews. The story only came out when a few Hungarian women began looking for the Spanish diplomat who saved their lives.

"My father never told his story," said Perlasca. "When these women found him, I began to understand that he saved them. But when they started telling their stories, I realized that my father might have saved tens, hundreds or even thousands of people, and then I couldn't comprehend it anymore. I realized I had lived for more than 30 years with a person who I knew nothing about."

During the presentation, a film about Perlasca was screened, in which Mary Siklos, a Toronto Holocaust survivior, spoke about Giorgio Perlasca. "He saved my family," she said. "I would never have been born if not for [his] bravery."

Perlasca was often asked why he took such risks to save the lives of strangers. His son said his father would always answer, "What would you have done in my shoes, seeing so many people suffering and being killed just because of their religion."

Perlasca has been honoured by Israel, Italy, Hungary, Spain and the United States. He died in 1992 and asked that the phrase "Righteous Among the Nations" be written in Hebrew on his grave.

Len Rudner, CIJA's director of community relations and outreach, said he was delighted that the opportunity to honour Perlasca arose.

"I think it's tremendously important to reflect on the fact that one person can make a difference. It's an important lesson for us to hold close to our hearts," he said.

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Items that appear in a typical Passover food box

Food drive falls short

Carolyn Blackman
Staff Reporter

Karen Fenwick, co-chair of National Council of Jewish Women – Toronto section's Passover Food Drive, is appealing to the community for donations after the annual campaign failed to keep pace with last year's fundraising.

As of March 28, the drive had raised $25,000 less than it had by the same date in 2011, which could affect next year's campaign.

That's because the food drive had to make up for the shortfall by tapping into contingency funds it usually uses to start buying food in the summer for the following Passover, Fenwick said.

Karen Fenwick

Delivery day, March 25, was very successful, she said. "Volunteers came out to the deliver the food, and every recipient on the list received a box.

"We have to think long and hard about next year, though. We do not want to cut the recipient list, and we don't want to decrease the amount of food in the box, so we'll have to look at more efficient ways of running the drive."

The food drive is very important, Fenwick said, "especially for those who are struggling financially. We believe that all Jews should be able to celebrate Passover with dignity.

"I am sad and frightened, because the future of the drive is unsure. We can't go down $25,000 next year."

To inquire about donating funds, call NCJW Toronto section, 416-633-5100.

Habitat gets new recruits

Continued from page 3

The volunteers arrived at the site at 8 a.m., completed the registration process, and received steel-toe boots and hard hats. They also received a safety training session and were led in the Habitat cheer, a Swahili saying, "Oyee," which means "We can do it," in English.

Volunteers also received a Habitat T-shirt. USCJ had added logos with the name of the kehillah, along with the USCJ and Habitat logos, to the shirts.

Volunteers were split into groups and led through projects by crew leaders, who are experienced construction volunteers.

Barry Levine, from Beth David Synagogue, had volunteered before on a similar project, and he wanted to introduce his 16-year-old son, Ben, to the work.

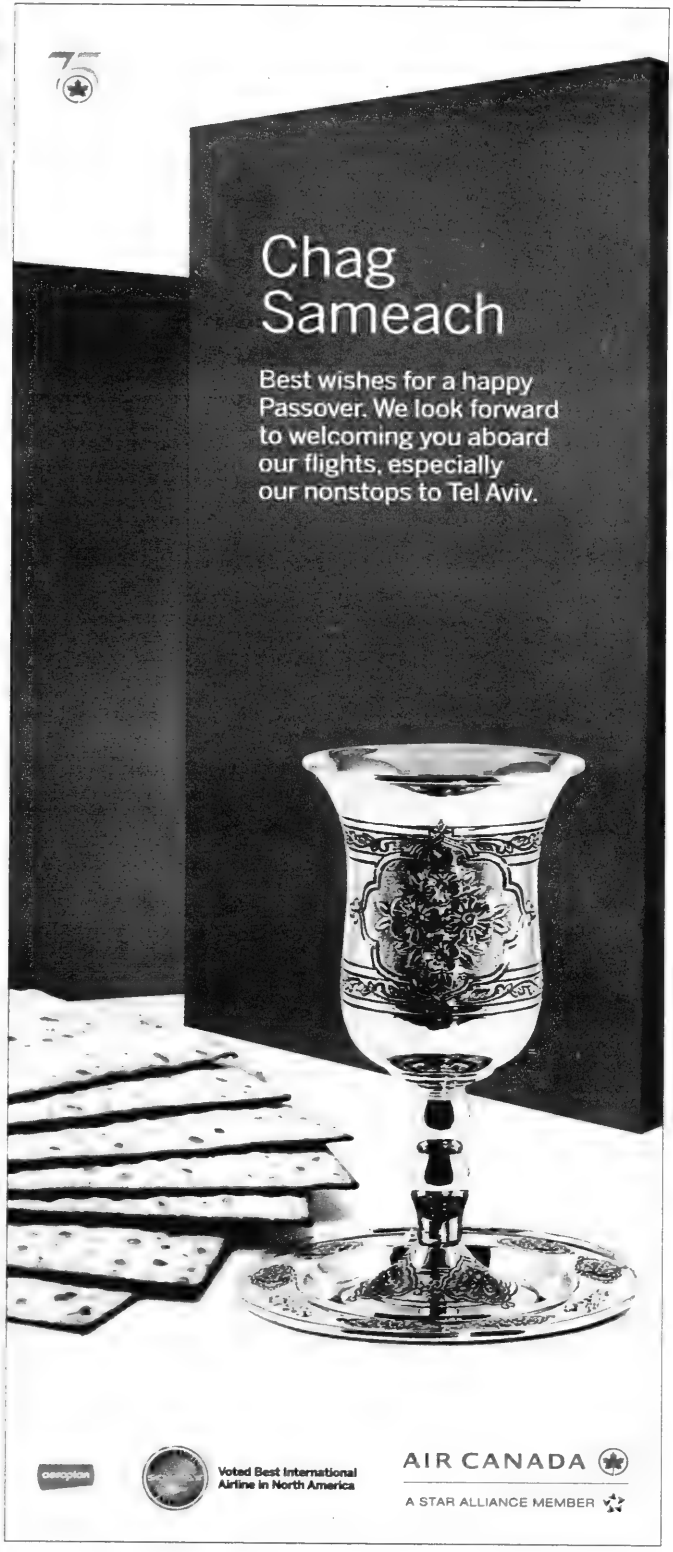
"Dad brought me out today. I am laying laminate flooring with the guidance of crew leader Roger LeFebrve, who has shown all the volunteers how to use power tools to get the job done," Ben said.

"I like the idea that I am helping those less fortunate and it's a good feeling."

Rabbi Irit Printz, of USCJ eastern Canada, said she worked with Humanity for Habitat when she was a rabbi in Atlanta. "When Irv Siegel suggested we do a project where the synagogues could participate, I thought it was an excellent idea. It really embodies what Judaism is all about which is fixing the world and making the world a better place.

"It worked very nicely with Passover, because part of what we are supposed to be doing between Purim and Passover is helping those who are less fortunate than us. At Purim we send gifts of food, and during Passover we are supposed to invite people into our home. We thought it would be nice if we could help these underprivileged families create their own home so the 'who' value of fixing the world fits in generally with our mission, tikkun olam," Rabbi Printz said.

Wilson said that "providing simple, decent, affordable housing remains a matter of social justice, and we are proud to champion a social justice model that essentially helps people help themselves."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We tell our children

It is not by accident that on seder night the narration of the story of the exodus from Egypt begins with our children. After the preliminary formal invocations of blessings, we commence the retelling of our forebears' harrowing yet epochal departure from the land of slavery in response to the Four Questions asked by one of the youngsters at the table.

Nor is it coincidental that the seder night festivity ends with the playful and often rousing singing of songs that are clearly written in the form of children's lyrics.

In his commentary on the Haggadah, Rabbi Jonathan Sacks emphasizes this very point. "Just as we began the seder with the questions of a child, so we conclude it with a nursery rhyme, reminding ourselves that what sustains a faith is not strength or power, but its ability to inspire successive generations of children to add their voices to our people's song."

Children ask questions. Parents and grandparents answer. That is the way of the seder. That is the way of the family. That is the way of our people and has been so ever since Abraham asked questions of God over the fate of Sodom.

The Haggadah teaches us that questions are always welcome, irrespective of their difficulty or, alternatively, of their utter simplicity, and that we must always respond to a question according to the nature of the child who poses it.

That, too, is the way of the seder.

The presence and participation of our children are indispensable to the very essence of the ritual and suggests its core purpose: to teach and to instruct – it is entirely didactic. We encourage our children to be curious, to delve, to explore, to enquire, to find pleasure in learning, and in the process perhaps too, in eventually discovering for themselves – one day if not on seder night – that they belong to something much larger than the family around the table.

And this realization is a source of profound emotion for the parents and grandparents at the seder. For in the faces and the behaviours of our children and grandchildren, we recall and see the faces of people whom we once loved and who were always so prominently at our seder tables past, but are no more.

"And you shall tell your children on that very day" (Exodus 13:8) was God's commandment to the recently freed Israelite slaves.

That is what we do at the seder. We tell our children, gently, tenderly, attentively, responsively, lovingly the story of the Exodus. It is their story too, even as it is the story of their ancestors.

The seder renews that story for each generation and helps create new memories for our children, forging those memories into the steadfast, unbreakable steel of shared responsibility, peoplehood and mission.

25 years ago in *The CJN*

Soviet Jewish emigration hit a five-year high of 477 in March 1987, and world Jewish leaders were cautiously optimistic about a reported Soviet pledge to release some 11,000 Jewish Refuseniks in the coming year.

Dry Bones PASSOVER
AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL LEFT EGYPT IN A GREAT EXODUS.
AND THEY WOULD WANDER IN THE DESERT FOR FORTY YEARS.
FOR THEIR LEADERS WERE MEN . . .
AND WOULD NOT ASK ANYONE FOR DIRECTIONS.
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Prime Minister's Passover greetings

It is with great pleasure that I extend my warmest greetings to the Canadian Jewish community as you observe the festival of Passover.

Pesach commemorates the Exodus of the Children of Israel from slavery to freedom. It is a celebration of the power of courage and faith in overcoming oppression. Throughout history, this momentous event has been a source of hope and inspiration for the Jewish people.

Today, Canada is proud to have a strong and devoted Jewish community that continues to observe these centuries-old traditions. As you gather around the seder table and read the Haggadah, you may be heartened by the wonderful spiritual legacy you are preserving. Your adherence to your faith is truly admirable.

On behalf of the government of Canada, Laureen and I offer our heartfelt wishes for a happy and peaceful Pesach.

Chag Samayach!

To view video, go to cjnews.com

Stephen Harper,
Prime Minister of Canada

* * *

Premier's Passover greeting

On behalf of the government of Ontario, I am delighted to extend warm greetings to everyone celebrating the sacred festival of Passover. Today's world holds unlimited possibilities and unprecedented opportunities. As premier, I believe that learning history's lessons is key to overcoming our current global challenges – and to mapping out a prosperous, sustainable and harmonious future for the generations to come.

Passover is a remembrance of past struggles and a celebration of freedom. It is also an opportunity to pass on values and lessons that will help youth make their way in life. Through readings, prayers and stories, Jewish youth learn of their people's remarkable journey from oppression to emancipation. I wish to take this opportunity to commend the Jewish community for cultivating the ideals of hope, perseverance and justice in the hearts of all people.

May your Passover bring you many blessings, much wisdom and great joy, and be filled with the strength that is found in faith. Please accept my very best wishes for a happy and memorable Pesach. Chag Samayach!

Dalton McGuinty
Premier of Ontario

* * *

Divestment campaign defeated

The article "Carleton grad students pass divestment motion" (March 29) failed to note that the plebiscite passed at the Graduate Students Association was a last-ditch effort by Students Against Israeli Apartheid (SAIA) to salvage its failed divestment campaign. This article should have mentioned that divestment from Israel was explicitly rejected twice in the past year, with the undergraduate students association and the board of governors – the body that actually has influence on such investment choices – both taking a stand against this campaign. These decisions resulted from the hard work of pro-Israel students – Jews and non-Jews.

The CJN's report, however, stated that 72 per cent of students voted for divestment from four companies that, although the resolution omitted this point, do business with Israel. In fact, 72 per cent of students who participated in the plebiscite voted for divestment – representing only 204 votes out of some 3,000 graduate students at Carleton University. Although the article later provides vote totals, it is important to note that this signifies an "endorsement" by less than seven per cent of all graduate students.

The plebiscite itself is nothing more than symbolic, given that the Graduate Students Association has no authority over Carleton's pension investments. When Carleton's board of governors rejected this initiative last year, it established an ethical investing policy. Carleton's administration affirmed that this vote will do nothing to change its ethical investment standards. The message is clear: Carleton will continue investing in companies that trade with Israel, because Israel represents an ethical investment decision.

Ross Diamond
Executive Director
Hillel Ottawa

* * *

Rabbi Lerner's retirement

Rabbi Leigh Lerner, senior rabbi of Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom in Montreal, is retiring. An evening honouring Rabbi Lerner is planned for June 13, during which the congregation will present him with a tribute book. Please contact 514-937-3575, ext. 215, or tebstribute@gmail.com by April 16 with memories, photographs or a special message for the book.

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A modern Passover story
— The life of a Jewish hero —

Special to The CJN

Stories of the heroes of our Jewish nation are heartwarming, eye opening, encouraging and sometimes even frightening. When we hear such stories, we salute those people – some of whom we have never met – for their courage and perseverance, but most of all for their commitment to Judaism and the Jewish People.

We define some of our heroes as today's brave men and women of the Israel Defence Forces, people who protected and continue to stand up for the Jewish nation, as well as those who experienced the horrors of dictators in the middle of last century, including those who perished but also those who survived. Hirsh was a survivor. But he was not considered a survivor of the Holocaust.

This is Hirsh's story, which was told to my children at a seder.

* * *

In 1913, Hirsh was born in the village of Kaydanovo, Belarus (White Russia). As Hirsh grew, his father, Reb Dovid, instilled in him the beauty of Yiddishkeit and gave him a Jewish religious education. Besides learning in yeshiva until his late teens, Hirsh attended public school until eighth grade. He always ran home to his father and to his rabbis and teachers to learn as much as he could from their stories and teachings.

Michael Zobin

Hirsh learned to read from the sefer Torah for his bar mitzvah, which was a small, quiet gathering, and continued to read from Torah until he passed away in 1979.

One can just imagine that times were not so easy for Hirsh's family in Russia in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Hirsh started working in a metal fabrication plant just after his 13th birthday.

After Stalin rose to power in Russia, any form of Jewish education and practice was illegal. On Feb. 26, 1938, a year after Hirsh was married, he was arrested for "being an active member of a counter-revolutionary national Jewish organization."

At his trial, the prosecution depicted Hirsh as "an enemy of the Communist party and of the Soviet power, who carried out anti-Soviet propaganda and made comments betraying the fatherland." Hirsh was sentenced to 10 years of hard labour in Siberia for one reason: he was Jewish. (If one thinks about it, this sentence actually saved Hirsh's life, as he was in Siberia until after the Holocaust.)

While serving his sentence, Hirsh learned that his wife had given birth to a daughter. Some years later, he also learned that his wife and daughter both perished in the Holocaust.

Hirsh was released from his Siberian prison on Feb. 6, 1948. He settled in the city of Kutaisi, Georgia, where he worked as a carpenter. Although Hirsh had served 10 years of hard labour in Siberia, he had continued to learn, teach and honour the Jewish tradition.

He then remarried.

He wed Necha Kronghaus.

On Aug. 19, 1949, their son, David, was born. But the nightmare did not end. Before David's first birthday, on June 29, 1950, Hirsh was again arrested for "participating in a counter-revolutionary national group and continuing to engage in anti-Soviet activities." This time the sentence was not 10 years of hard labour. Hirsh was sentenced to permanent exile in the Krasnoyarsk region of the Soviet Union.

Hirsh and his family arrive in Montreal from Russia. Hirsh is fourth from the right.

The kids stopped the story right there. "It's not fair!" they shouted.

Hirsh, Necha and David lived in the small village of Dolgi Moste among criminals who were sentenced for real crimes against people and property. But Hirsh treated all the labourers with respect and in return, he was saved multiple times from attacks by those very same men. While in Dolgi Moste, their daughter, Anna, was born.

After Stalin's death, the people who lived in urban centres in the Soviet Union were said to have cried tears of grief. But the political prisoners in exile danced in the streets. Hirsh prayed. On Sept. 13, 1954, Hirsh and his family were released from the Krasnoyarsk region. They settled in the city of Rostov. On Sept. 13, 1957, he received a full pardon. In Rostov, Hirsh became the chazzan, ba'al koreh (reader from the Torah), read the Megillah on Purim and sounded the shofar on the High Holidays.

Hirsh and the family applied for exit visas to Israel on several occasions. But all their requests were rejected.

Hirsh, left, and his son, David, at the latter's wedding.

Hirsh had a sister, Tzila, living in Montreal. Every Pesach, Tzila had sent Hirsh "care packages" to Rostov that contained matzot. In 1971, just before the High Holidays, Tzila advised Hirsh to apply for an exit visa to Canada.

Tzila was granted a meeting with an administrative assistant to prime minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau and asked if Trudeau would discuss Hirsh's exit visa application during his upcoming meeting, in October 1971, with the visiting Russian prime minister, Alexei Kosygin.

The Hirsh family's application for an exit visa to Canada was granted.

Jut before Pesach 1972, they arrived in Montreal.

The kids sat in awe. "They came to Canada right before Pesach? They left Russia just like the Jews left Egypt!"

Hirsh, Necha, David and Anna settled in the Snowdon/Cote Des Neiges area of Montreal and made their home on Plamondon Avenue. Hirsh became a *chazzan sheini* at a local shul.

In Montreal, he was able to see his children get married and was privileged to experience the nachat of three of his nine grandchildren growing up and leading a Jewish life. His fourth grandchild was born on the seventh day of Nissan, a week before Pesach, 1979, the same day that Hirsh passed away. His fifth grandchild was born about six weeks later. That fifth grandchild is my sister. I had the great merit and honour of meeting Hirsh, as Hirsh was my paternal grandfather.

Hirsh was a survivor. He was, is and always will be a Jewish hero, my hero. Hirsh lived his life setting an example for us all of how we should all be proud of being Jewish.

(The statements in the story regarding Hirsh's arrests and prosecutions were obtained by Necha's brother in Jerusalem, from archived files of the government of the former Soviet Union. The archives were opened and translated within the last 10 years.)

Michael Zobin lives in Montreal with his wife and three children and works for a customs brokerage firm. He grew up in Toronto.

The genius behind Tel Aviv's towers

In Tel Aviv on March 22, hundreds of Israelis gathered at Israel's Tel Aviv Exhibition-Gardens to honour the great Israeli-Canadian entrepreneur David Azrieli.

At 90 years young, David still dazzles, making his mark in business and philanthropy. The man who brought the indoor mall to Israel – and coined the term for it, *kanyon* – continues to initiate projects while setting new standards in charitable giving in Canada and Israel.

Gil Troy

in Montreal

David is of that extraordinary Holocaust generation that not only survived, not only thrived in the New World, but improved it. Born in Poland in 1922 as David Azrylewicz, he escaped into Russia, survived getting shot, and eventually took the land route into Palestine, aided by another legendary figure, Moshe Dayan. After studying at the Technion, he fought during the War of Independence, travelled abroad and arrived in Canada in 1954. While working as a melamed, a Hebrew-school teacher, he entered the wild world of real estate. One of those successful, hardworking, driven, visionary tycoons who makes it look easy – but outlasted many others who failed – he built an empire in Canada, the United States and Israel.

Along the way, David also built a beautiful family with his amazing wife, Stephanie, and four extraordinary children – my prejudice as a family friend shines through – while giving back as a community leader, heading the Canadian Zionist movement for many years. David has always proudly proclaimed himself a Zionist, embodying the Zionist values of self-reliance, forward-thinking and constructive action. An avid art collector, David is now applying his endless energy and broad vision to the world of charitable giving. News reports when the Azrieli Group in Israel went public estimated that he and his family may contribute one billion dollars to his foundation.

Successful philanthropy requires spending money intelligently, not just giving it generously. Two of the Azrieli Foundation's signature projects prove that the insight that made David Israel's Master Builder is now helping him to become the Jewish world's Great Strategic Giver. In 2001, he published his memoirs, with his co-author and daughter, Danna Azrieli, as *One Step Ahead: David J. Azrieli (Azrylewicz): Memoirs, 1939-1950.* The experience proved so meaningful for him and his family that he decided to help others produce quality memoirs, too. The Azrieli Foundation Holocaust Survivor Memoirs Program now humanizes the Holocaust victims "one story at a time," allowing survivors without David's resources to share their legacy with their heirs.

Similar empathy and creativity is being used to fight the problem of high school dropouts in Israel. When briefed about the challenges of keeping kids in school, David asked the critical question – when do we lose them? He discovered that most high school dropouts are "born," if you will, in the frustrations of junior high. As a result, the Azrieli Institute for Educational Empowerment has created a network of community centres in Be'er Sheva and elsewhere that assist young, overwhelmingly poor learners early in the educational process, so they can feel good about themselves entering high school.

Beyond the headlines, I have had the pleasure of knowing David as a loving family man, a warm presence, a sophisticated analyst, a probing conversationalist. Sixteen and a half years ago, when I was far more familiar with his reputation as a tough businessman than with his gentle scholarly soul, my wife – who grew up with his daughters – and I introduced him to our oldest daughter, who was about four months old then. David zeroed in on her, engaged her with his delighted smile, whipped out a camera, snapped off a roll of pictures, popped the film out of camera and gave it to us. I had simply never seen a 74-year-old gush so much over a baby, nor had anyone simply handed me a roll of film like that before – in the pre-digital era, it was simply not done.

Whenever I drive into Tel Aviv, I am entranced by the three tall, sleek towers David built, which have become, surveys tell us, among Israel's most defining icons. I marvel at their modernity, at the pioneering spirit behind them, at the constructive, entrepreneurial Zionism they epitomize. And I cherish the private moments my family and I have shared with the genius behind the towers, a modern-day David demonstrating the same reach, ambition and joyous abandon for which that great ancient king was known.

What is your cause?

I am writing this column from Israel, three days before embarking upon what may be the craziest thing I've ever done: bike 250 kilometres uphill from Haifa to Jerusalem to raise money for the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism (IMPJ).

Raising money? That's not crazy at all. I do it all the time. Biking 250 kilometres over five days, mostly off road, mostly hilly, mostly in forecasted rain and fog, mostly with young rabbinic students in their 20s who are fit as a fiddle? Now that's crazy.

But it's not crazy to be passionate. We say someone is "crazy about you" or "crazy in love." We are "crazy about" a particular movie or our new car or our job or our kids. "Crazy about" is about passion.

This ride is about passion. Passion for social change in Israel, for which the IMPJ works tirelessly. Passion that there be a true religious choice for Israelis, no more black-and-white categories of religious/not religious or *dati/chiloni*. Passion for religious pluralism, so that every Jew in Israel can find a Jewish niche. Passion for egalitarianism. Passion for the freedom to choose and the ability to question, within the framework of Jewish culture. Passion for a renewed Zionism that holds true to the highest values it originally held. Passion for a Jewish society based on *tzedek* – righteousness – in which no Jew can claim superiority over another Jew, and no Jew can oppress a non-Jew under the banner of Torah.

Most Israelis and Diaspora Jews, too, for that matter, are under the utterly mistaken impression that there are only two ways to be Jewish in Israel: religious (picture here either Chassidim in their distinctive dress or modern Orthodox, beret-wearing women pushing strollers to some hip Jerusalem synagogue on Shabbat) or secular (picture an Israeli family going to the Tel Aviv beach on Yom Kippur for a picnic, carrying their hibachi grill).

In fact there are 34 thriving Reform synagogues in Israel and they offer Israelis the "middle ground," tradition that embraces modernity, egalitarianism, and a life of religious meaning without religious coercion. However, these movements receive little government support and even less "common knowledge" support.

I chose to Ride for Reform because not only do I want to put my money where my mouth is, I wanted to put my body where my passion is.

Rabbi Elyse Goldstein

in Toronto

Passion is defined as "boundless enthusiasm," and we mislabel it as being about sexuality. Passion is when you're so moved by your cause that you cannot think of anything else. You're so dedicated to your cause that no obstacle seems too big. You're so sure that a rainy, muddy hill climb through the devastated Carmel forest seems pleasurable.

Yes, I'm sure I'll stumble and even fall, and come home with many bruises, exhausted and sore. But passion is what gives life meaning. As Steve Pavlins wrote, "Passion and purpose go hand in hand. When you discover your purpose, you will normally find it's something you're tremendously passionate about."

We should all have passion for our families and our work. But do we have a passion for a cause bigger than ourselves? A cause that changes the world? It doesn't have to be a big cause. It can be helping one child learn to read. And it doesn't need to be a small cause, either. It can be building a school for 100 kids. The people I admire most all have the same two things in common: passion and purpose.

So what is your cause? What would you hold as so precious that you would go a thousand miles to do something for its sustenance?

Iraqi general challenged a brutal regime

Although Saddam Hussein is dead and buried, the fascination he continues to exert on Iraq is almost palpable. He was a brutal dictator who transformed Iraq into a model police state, a serial aggressor who invaded Iran and Kuwait, an anti-Zionist who bombarded Israel with a barrage of Scud missiles during the first Gulf War in 1991, and an Arab nationalist who sent pensions to the families of "martyred" Palestinian suicide bombers.

Having been such a disruptive force, he thrust Iraq into the vortex of Middle East politics and always elicited the interest of both journalists and scholars.

Wendell Steavenson's vivid account of Iraq during this repressive period, *The Weight of a Mustard Seed: The Intimate Life of an Iraqi Family During Thirty Years of Tyranny* (HarperCollins), lifts the veil off a dictatorship that brought this developing Arab nation to ruin and isolation.

A British writer, she builds her narrative around Kamel Sachet, one of Saddam's favourite generals, and thus offers a reader an insider's view of Iraq.

Steavenson spent five years on this project, and though she did not interview Sachet himself, she talked with his family, friends and enemies.

Sachet, whose formal name was Kamel Sachet Aziz al Janabi, was born in 1947, in a village 20 kilometres from Baghdad without electricity or an access road. His father, a poor farmer, was illiterate.

A policeman, he joined the army and its special forces to enhance his career. Volunteering for every possible course, he studied mountain warfare in Germany and learned Farsi in Iran. A thorough professional, he rose through the ranks and became an officer.

A hero during the 1980-1988 Iraq-Iran War, he was promoted to general and given the command of the Baghdad division of the Republican Guard, one of the pillars of the Baathist regime. After Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, he was placed in charge of the Iraqi army in Kuwait City. He was then appointed governer of Maysan province.

In Saddam's firmament, he was a bright and shining star. And Saddam rewarded him handsomely for his competence and loyalty. Apart from a slew of medals for bravery, he was lavished with late-model European cars, cash and a fruit farm near the town of Hilla.

At a ceremony, Saddam voiced

Sheldon Kirshner

in Toronto

extravagant praise for him. "Look at Gen. Sachet!" he is reported to have said. "The Iraqi soldier should be in every way like this! Look at how fit he is! Look at his courage! Look at his good manners! Kamel Sachet is a commander I treasure."

Sachet was certainly an important cog in Saddam's machinery of state, but he was also a straightforward person, a trait that Saddam did not appreciate. As a well-connected Iraqi official told Steavenson, "The truth is, in our culture, frankness is disrespect."

In accordance with this Iraqi tradition, none of Saddam's top generals bothered to dissuade him from launching a major incursion into Kuwait, which had incurred his wrath by proving recalcitrant in debt negotiations and increasing oil production to Iraq's disadvantage.

Not consulted for his opinion, Sachet was none too pleased by Saddam's decision, which plunged Iraq into a morass with dire consequences.

"This is mad," he told his wife. "He has created a disaster that will destroy us all."

Despite his misgivings, Sachet dutifully reported for duty in Iraqi-occupied Kuwait City. With the Iraqi army having been ousted from Kuwait by the United States and its allies, Sachet returned abjectly to his home in Baghdad. He was critical of Saddam, claiming that Iraq's ignominious retreat had been premature. "We could have held out six months!" his wife quoted him as saying.

Not long afterward, following a mutiny in the Iraq army, Sachet was relieved of his duties and forced into retirement. He drove his new Mercedes deep into the desert and burned his uniform. "Kuwait had washed any pride in it away," she says.

But in 1992, in a development that Steavenson strangely leaves unexplained, Saddam summoned Sachet to his palace and handed him the governorship of Maysan province. Ever the patriot, he carried out his first order with dispatch, executing two senior Baathist officials who had tried to assassinate an official in front of Saddam's children.

Yet Sachet was not a happy camper. He disagreed with Saddam's policy of draining the life-sustaining marshes of the rebellious Marsh Arabs. Such insolence could not be tolerated by the powers-that-be. In 1994, he was demoted and given the menial task of selling used government cars.

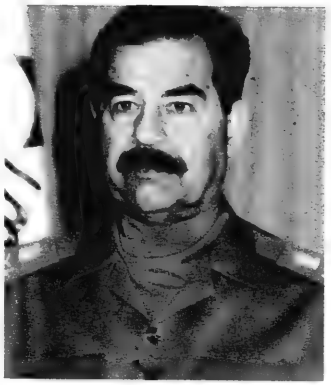
"By the mid-1990s, the net was closing," Steavenson writes. "The Sachets' phone was bugged – this they took for granted – and there was often a parked car outside with two men watching. When he rose early to drive to the mosque for dawn prayers, an agent on a bicycle followed him. The surveillance permeated the house and kept the family under protracted strain."

Steavenson describes this period as one of "fear, ever-thicker paranoia, dread and a constant unbroken tension."

Dr. Hassan al-Qadhani, an Iraqi psychiatrist, told Steavenson that the situation had become unbearable. As he put it, "You had to lie against your principles. You had to say things you did not believe. It was a mental conflict."

On Dec. 16, 1998, shortly before U.S. and British aircraft bombed Baghdad but soon after Saddam reorganized his general staff, Sachet was arrested.

Having investigated the circumstances surrounding his arrest, Steavenson thinks it was prompted by Sachet's refusal to serve under a general he despised and his lapse in failing to report the receipt of a letter from a former chief of staff who defected in the mid-1990s.



Saddam Hussein

Hauled into secret police headquarters, he was personally interrogated by Saddam, who slapped him across the face in raw fury.

By this juncture, Sachet was thoroughly disillusioned, Steavenson says. When his son, Ali, informed him that he wanted to study at the military academy and be a soldier, Sachet put down his foot, declaring that the army was no longer a good place for a young man.

In February 1999, Sachet's family learned to its horror that his body could be retrieved from Abu Ghraib prison.

He had been murdered.

A year later, Ali was detained at the Iraqi border on charges of trying to enter Jordan with a false passport. He was released in a general amnesty in 2002.

The Weight of a Mustard Seed is a harrowing cautionary tale about an Arab society emasculated and crippled by a murderous regime. Sachet's dismal fate goes a long way in explaining why Iraq's dictatorial neighbour, Syria, is in such utter turmoil today.

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Israel: On brink of energy self-sufficiency?

Sheldon Kirshner
Staff Reporter

Israel could well become a net exporter of oil and gas in the near future, a forum on the Middle East was told last week.

The claim was made by an environmentalist and a former Canadian diplomat at a conference on "Canada and the New Middle East."

The daylong event at the Hyatt Regency Hotel was hosted by Advocates for Civil Liberties and The Atlantic Council of Canada.

Lawrence Solomon, founder and managing director of Energy Probe Research Foundation, said Israel has the third-largest reserves of oil shale in the world and intends to exploit them with the assistance of foreign investors.

Mike Ward, a retired diplomat whose last posting was in Istanbul, said immense oil and gas deposits in the eastern Mediterranean Sea stand to make Israel self-sufficient in energy.

Claiming Israel is sitting on oil shale fields that could yield from 250 billion to 500 billion barrels, Solomon said he expects Israeli exports to begin flowing within about a decade.

In his estimation, the price of each barrel would be about $40, far less than the present cost of gasoline.

Saying high-profile investors, including the Rothschilds, are involved in the quest to extract energy from Israel's oil shale reserves, Solomon noted Israel is a leader in the development of oil shale technology.

Ward observed oil and gas deposits in Israeli territorial waters are of such a magnitude that Israel cannot only become self-sufficient but a net exporter of energy.

Solomon said the United States is poised to overtake Russia as the world's number 1 producer of oil and gas.

He also warned the Arab Spring – the series of revolts that have broken out in the Arab world since the end of 2010 – has empowered Islamists.

"The Arab Spring has been an unmitigated disaster," he asserted in a blunt assessment.

Ward, who served as a senior trade commissioner in countries ranging from Turkey to Saudi Arabia, said many Canadian companies are seeking a presence in the Middle East. The primary focus of Canadian investors in the region today is Turkey, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Qatar, he said.

Lawrence Solomon

He added Canada is currently exploring the possibility of signing free trade agreements with Morocco and Turkey, the latter of which he described as one of the most western-oriented and stable countries in the Middle East.

Andrew Mahut, a representative of U.S. Steel Canada, said Canada – a major oil exporter – could benefit should Iran disrupt or stop oil tanker traffic in the Strait of Hormuz, through which 20 per cent of the world's oil supplies pass.

Raymond Boisvert, assistant director of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), disclosed the Middle East has been the centrepiece of its work since the Arab terrorist attacks in the United States on Sept. 11, 2001.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is a threat to Canada and its allies, he declared.

Continued on page 14

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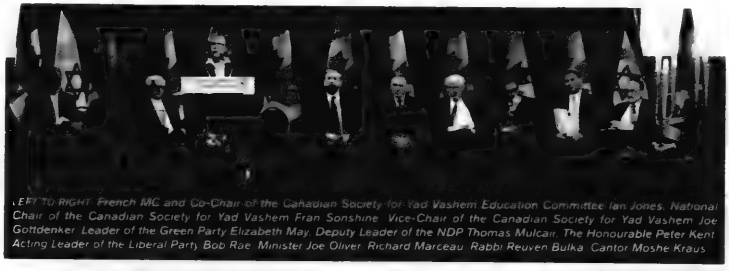

LEFT TO RIGHT: French MC and Co-Chair of the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem Education Committee Ian Jones; National Chair of the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem Fran Sonshine; Vice-Chair of the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem Joe Gottdenker; Leader of the Green Party Elizabeth May; Deputy Leader of the NDP Thomas Mulcair; The Honourable Peter Kent; Acting Leader of the Liberal Party Bob Rae; Minister Joe Oliver; Richard Marceau; Rabbi Reuven Bulka; Cantor Moshe Kraus

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Al Qaeda ideology still alive, says Boisvert

Continued from page 12

Without specifically mentioning Canadian Muslims, Boisovert said CSIS is concerned by the threat of homegrown terrorism and by the influence of the "Al Qaeda narrative" on Canadian citizens.

Boisvert warned that foreign governments will continue to "target" new immigrants in Canada. Despite the death of Al Qaeda's spiritual leader, Osama bin Laden, Al Qaeda ideology is still very much alive, he said.

Iran continues to demonstrate "a clear intent" to develop nuclear weapons, he said, adding Iran's support of terrorism remains a concern.

Doug Best, an RCMP superintendent and head of its national security section, called terrorism "a critical threat to Canada," but he did not elaborate.

He said the RCMP's community outreach program has been successful in foiling terrorist plots. "We don't target communities," he said. "We target criminal activities."

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In an allusion to recent events in Toulouse, France, in which a French Muslim of Algerian origin killed seven Jewish citizens and French soldiers, Best said the RCMP maintains an "appropriate" level of vigilance so that such outrages will not be committed in Canada.

As he put it, "We're flexible and can respond to a threat as it presents itself."

John Thompson, an international security expert affiliated with the Mackenzie Institute in Canada, suggested it is probably too late to destroy Iran's nuclear sites in conventional air attacks. He said the Muslim Brotherhood may attain power in Syria should the besieged regime of President Bashar Assad fall. "We don't know what Syria will become. Another Pakistan?"

Pakistan is both an ally and a foe in the battle against the Taliban in Afghanistan, he said.

In a bleak warning, he said the status of Christian Copts in Egypt may decline precipitously should the situation there deteriorate.

Baird delivers tough message

Sheldon Kirshner
Staff Reporter

Canadian Foreign Minister John Baird delivered a tough and uncompromising message about current developments in the Middle East last week.

Speaking via video to a Toronto conference on the region sponsored by Advocates for Civil Liberties and the Atlantic Council of Canada, Baird accused Mideast governments of repressing their citizens and warned of the spectre of a nuclear-armed Iran.

In a brief but wide-ranging speech, Baird described the Mideast as "critically important" to Canada and the world, saying it is rich in natural resources.

And in a reference to the Arab Spring, the chain of revolts that have toppled several governments in the Mideast since 2011, Baird declared Canada's national security interests are inextricably tied to these upheavals.

John Baird

Canada has a vital stake in Mideast issues, he added.

In a sharp critique of governance in the Mideast, Baird said some Arab governments neither respect human rights nor the rule of law.

"Basic rights and fundamental freedoms are denied in much of the Middle East," he said, calling current uprisings in the Arab world a quest for jobs, dignity and prosperity.

Baird said Canada is working for a safe and prosperous Middle East and for peace in the region.

In a condemnation of the Islamic fundamentalist government in Iran, Baird accused Tehran of ruling with a heavy hand and intimidating its people.

Referring to Iran's ambition for a nuclear arsenal, Baird said the Iranian regime should never have access to atomic weapons. In a clear warning, he said, "The threat of a nuclear armed Iran should not be underestimated."

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TanenbaumCHAT breaks ground this May for construction of The Guttman Family Science Wing, the first phase of the Together Campaign, a multi-million dollar endeavour.

The new wing will enable greater investigative, hands-on learning. With a strong emphasis on sustainability, featuring naturally lit spaces, local and recycled materials and energy efficient mechanical and electrical systems, our new wing will span nearly 16,000 sq.ft. of additional space and will include five new science labs, a science garden, greenhouse and courtyard.

"The new science wing will impact students' learning, not only in science, but throughout the school. The wing will foster a greater synergy among hundreds of students, staff, parents and the community," says Helen Fox, principal, Wallenberg Campus. "In these 21st century facilities, we will now have the possibilities for exploring curriculum to its depths with the most innovative space, equipment and technology."

Groundbreaking Event: Friday, May 11th, 2012 ... Hold the date!

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Teen clarinettist wins shul musical award

Lily Chapnik *[Shane Murphy photo]*

Vicky Tobianah
Special to The CJN

Lily Chapnik, 17, a clarinettist who is a student at the Schulich School of Music at McGill University, will be honoured with Temple Sinai's Ben Steinberg Musical Legacy Award.

The award presentation and the recital that follows are open to the public and will take place at Temple Sinai in Toronto on May 16.

Chapnik is one of the youngest recipients of the award. "Most winners are on the threshold of their career, usually well into their 20s, and ready to begin their professional careers," said Ben Steinberg, who the award was named after, when he retired as Temple Sinai's director of music after 26 years.

"Occasionally someone comes along who is much younger, like Lily. It's rare to see someone of that age play with such maturity."

Music runs in Chapnik's genes. Her grandmother, Atarah Ben-Tovim, is a renowned flautist. When Chapnik was eight years old, she went to France to visit her grandmother. "She took one look at me after I got off the plane and said, 'You're a clarinet player now,'" Chapnik recalled.

"She taught me rudimentary clarinet that summer and I loved it right away." She returned to Toronto and began clarinet studies with a private teacher, Igor Guletsky. She now studies with Michael Dumouchel, a member of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra. Her talent and dedication paid off. At the age of 12, she accompanied her grandmother to England to perform a concerto with the National Symphony Orchestra. She has also been a member of the Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra and was admitted as the youngest member of the Toronto Youth Wind Orchestra at the age of 12. Her interests include chamber music and klezmer music.

Now she is pursuing a double degree in music and Judaic studies at McGill, while also playing in McGill's symphony orchestra. When she heard she won the Ben Steinberg award, she was ecstatic.

"I was really happy that it was a Jewish award because it bridges all my interests into one. It was really exciting because I will perform at my own recital as a prize, which is quite an undertaking and they really help you with it," she said.

Joining Chapnik at her recital will be her grandmother, who is presenting the award, and a flute quartet made up of Chapnik's professor and two other flute students.

The Ben Steinberg award was established in 1984 to encourage the careers of Jewish artists in the Toronto community and beyond, and to feature works of music by Jewish composers.

"There was a time when the Jewish community was much more represented in the musical industry," said Steinberg. He hoped this award would encourage Jewish children to pursue a career in music.

Many of the past winners have gone on to perform in major symphony orchestras in Montreal and Boston. "To win an award like this, you have to be pretty capable and talented," said Steinberg, who will work with Chapnik to prepare her for the recital.

Chapnik has used her talent to help others. In 2008 and 2009, she organized and performed in two recitals, which raised funds for music scholarships and for a Zimbabwe orphanage, through Advocates for Humanity.

For Chapnik, being a clarinet player is a chance to provide people with a unique musical experience.

"I love that once you really know the notes and you don't have to worry about messing up, you can focus on the music and on just delivering a musical message to your audience, taking them on a musical journey with you. That's what good performing is all about, in my opinion," she said.

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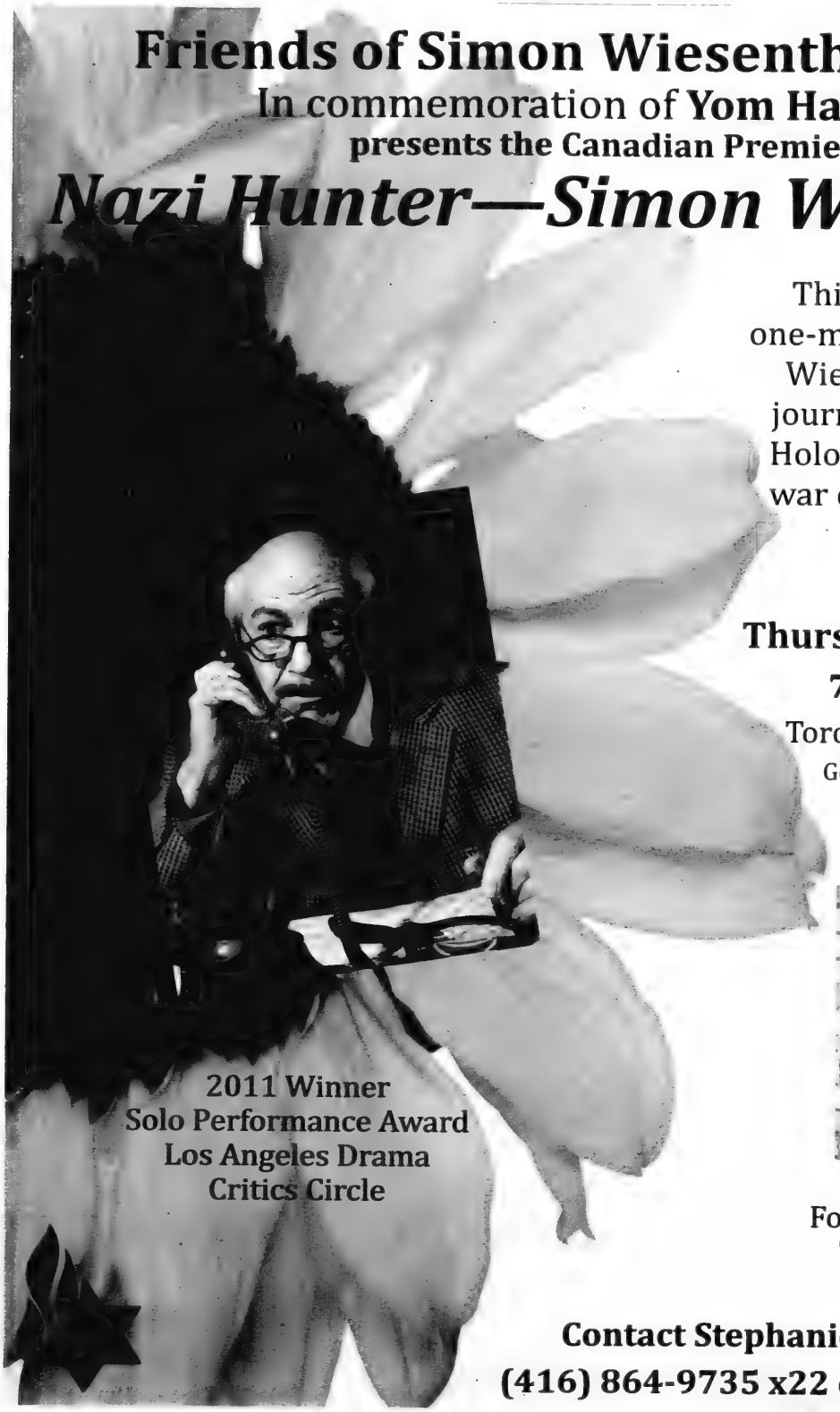

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Senior designs ultra-modern seder plate

Jennifer M. MacLeod
Special to The CJN

For some people, retirement and a disability might mean the end of creativity – but not for Aubrey Abrams. Years ago, when the retired food manufacturer temporarily lost part of his vision, his family suggested he find a hobby where he could work with his hands.

He took courses in metalworking at Harbourfront, studying with metal artist and sculptor Shao-Pin Chu.

"I've always been technical," says Abrams, who practised law in Johannesburg, South Africa, before coming to Canada. With his newfound skills, he created jewelry and household items for family members in copper and other metals. He has since regained his sight, but a couple of years ago, he was seized with an urgent desire to use his skill with metal to create a bold, new seder plate design.

"When this overpowering inspiration comes over you, you've got to do something," Abrams says, and what he wanted was to create a seder plate different from any existing designs. "There were existing matzah holders on the market, round ones," but he didn't want to make anything like those that would be "run of the mill, copying somebody else."

That's when the concept for the ABALABE Seder Plate came together, a combined seder plate and matzah holder in sleek, brushed stainless steel. Not only "reminiscent of the pyramids of Egypt," the rounded triangular shape is "symbolic of the tears through the generations from Sinai… the destruction of the two Temples, the exile and the Holocaust, leading to the re-establishment of the Jewish homeland in Israel."

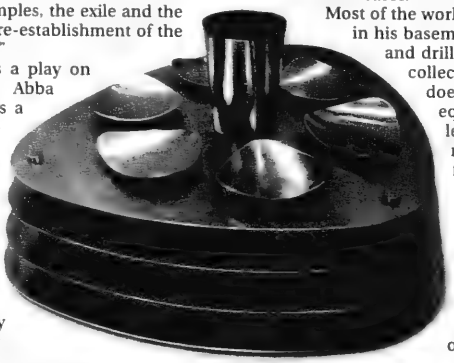
The name ABALABE is a play on Abrams' Hebrew name, Abba Leib. The set also features a separate co-ordinating triangular stainless steel cup for Elijah and six small removable dishes to hold the egg, shankbone and other ritual foods for the seder.

Though the plate, dishes and cup appear symmetrical at first, part of their appeal is that they are tapered, not perfectly regular. "They're wider at the bottom, narrower at the top," Abrams says. Practically speaking, that also means it's easy to insert the small dishes – they physically can't be placed the wrong way around. "They all look stunning, all facing towards the cup."

Creating the set was an elaborate process that began with design and modelling, first in Styrofoam and then in acrylic, before creating the first stainless steel edition.

"One day, I have to do one in silver," says Abrams, who has also created a brass chess set and original silver mezuzah cases.

Most of the work on the seder plates is done in his basement workshop, "using lathes and drills and all sorts of things I've collected over the years." But he doesn't have room for the laser equipment to cut the stainless steel – he buys the material and brings it elsewhere for the initial cutting. Then he assembles and polishes the sets himself. "I put a lot of effort into it, I'm quite proud of it."



The ABALABE Seder Plate by Toronto artist Aubrey Abrams

Abrams says he will make a maximum of 180 numbered, signed copies of the seder plate set. "There's a lot of work that goes into each one… there's a lot of work in polishing."

He is considering several Judaica designs for his next project, which he hopes will be something simpler and perhaps more affordable as a unique gift idea or special item for any Jewish home.

Continued on page 19

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Seder plate on display at Petroff Gallery

Sculpture by Aubrey Abrams

Continued from page 18

"I've got a very wide interest in art and anything mechanical."

The biggest challenge Abrams says his art has faced is being away from home, travelling with his wife. They go to Israel every year and they have visited India, Australia, Italy and many other destinations.

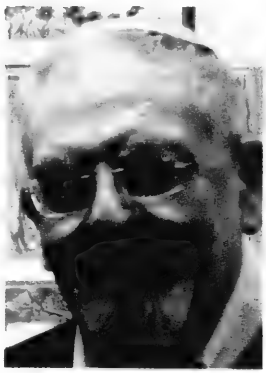
"When you travel, you don't really do anything constructive. I like to be doing something, fixing something."

However, one advantage of travelling is the inspiration of seeing great art in galleries and museums around the world. "I'm looking for the masters, different ideas, how different artists function and what they develop."

But he says his wife has the better eye for design and colour. "She's the one who tells me my designs are good or bad."

Combining an entrepreneurial spirit with his newer talent and craftsmanship in sculpture has become even more meaningful through his exciting and modern Judaica items. Abrams says his family is very proud that his artistic impulses have taken him in this direction.

The seder plate is on display at the Petroff Gallery (416-782-1696) at 1016 Eglinton Ave. W. (just west of Bathurst).



Aubrey Abrams

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Heschel gala gets positive results

Frances Kraft
Staff Reporter

Last year, the Toronto Heschel School replaced its annual fundraising gala with a lower-key idea that organizers say not only brought in more money than its predecessor, but created a buzz and enhanced the school's sense of community.

Now in its second year, Table Talk consisted of 11 separate dinner parties in private homes, each with a guest speaker and a catered, kosher, gourmet, four-course dinner. Hosts donated the cost of the meals, and funds raised this year at the $150-a-plate event will be used for new science equipment for the school, which was founded in 1996 and runs from junior kindergarten to Grade 8.

"We wanted to reinvent the gala and think of something that would celebrate the community, be intimate, and would address the intellectual curiosity the parents share – and that would be fun," event co-chair Michelle Shulman said.

"The speaker stays for dinner, and conversation is great."

She said she has heard of similar fundraisers in the United States, but not locally.

Lainie Rapp, the mother of a senior kindergarten student, attended the March 25 dinner at the home of Lisa Richler and Yishai Wise, where author David Sax spoke about his book, *Save the Deli: In Search of Perfect Pastrami, Crusty Rye, and the Heart of Jewish Delicatessen.*

Rapp, a palliative care social worker whose husband, Gary Cilevitz, is an accountant, said the light-hearted topic was their number 1 choice, and that they looked forward to spending time with the hosts, whom they know from the school.

The menu, aside from the appetizers, did not feature deli food – much to Cilevitz's dismay, his wife noted. However, she said, the balsamic vinaigrette chicken that was served as a main course was "fantastic."

Some of the other dinners featured weightier presentations: Muslim author Tarek Fatah on his book *The Jew is Not My Enemy*, neuropsychiatrist Anthony Feinstein on "Journalists Under Fire," Rabbi Joe Kanofsky on Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel and Martin Luther King, Jr., and author Marina Nemat on her journey to Canada from Iran, where, as a teenager, she was imprisoned on false charges.

Matthew Teitelbaum, director and CEO of the Art Gallery of Ontario, speaks at one of the Table Talk dinners organized by the Toronto Heschel School as a fundraiser.

But Rapp said the talk about deli food, which included information about Jewish immigration from different countries and how those patterns influenced local deli trends, was "very stimulating."

As well, she enjoyed meeting people she wouldn't otherwise know. There were 13 at her table including parents of older children and one couple who have grandchildren at the school, she said.

Compared to large galas, "this is a much more intimate setting, and it really falls in sync with the whole Heschel philosophy of community building."

But the best thing, Rapp said, was the "buzz" at the school the next morning. "If you're talking about building community, this was the epitome. We were all running up and down the halls [asking] 'Where did you go?' 'How long did you stay?' "

The event "really reflects who we are as a community," Shulman said. "We're not a neighbourhood school. We're together because we share common values."

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Founder promotes Krakow Jewish festival

David Grossman
Special to the CJN

Janusz Makuch admits he didn't know what to expect prior to speaking with two distinctly different Toronto Jewish audiences – and the personal discussions that would follow – on his first trip to Canada.

Bialik students Sofie Kreidstein and Daniel Esser watch as Janusz Makuch describes the program for the Krakow Jewish Culture Festival [*David Grossman photo*]

The 52-year-old was on a mission to talk about his role in restoring Jewish culture in Krakow, in a country that had once sentenced it to be forgotten.

Makuch, who is not Jewish, was hoping for an opportunity to educate people about what he had launched in 1988 while Poland was under a Communist regime.

As the founder and director of the Krakow Jewish Culture Festival, the largest of its kind in Europe with a week of concerts and celebration, workshops and exhibits, Makuch made it clear he wasn't asking for financial support for an event that has a $1-million (US) annual budget.

"I come from a country of ghettos, German concentration camps and antisemitic madness," Makuch, a musician, told a predominantly adult crowd at the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre. "I was in my late 20s, wanting to discover the traces of the past, the vast richness of culture in Krakow and had this crazy idea – let's organize a Jewish festival. But I was afraid no one would come."

He was wrong.

For the past 22 years, thousands – the young and not so young – have jammed Krakow's historic Jewish district of Kazimierz in June and July for 10 days to celebrate the beauty of Jewish culture.

A guest of the Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation of Canada and the Ashkenaz Foundation, Makuch caught the attention of grade 7 and 8 students at Bialik Hebrew Day School the next day with his reference to the event as being what some had referred to as the "Jewish Woodstock."

Claiming there is "a boom of Polish Jewish heritage and interest from lots of non-Jews," Makuch said reviving Jewish music, art, dance and singing has very special meaning to him. "We will never forget that Poland is the largest Jewish cemetery in the world," he said.

"What we're doing is a festival that looks beyond the trauma. It's about life and reflects thousands of years of history, but also concentrates on today. We move forward building on the wonderful contemporary Jewish music – the cantorial and the Sephardic, the chassidic guys and the punk rockers, dancing and performing in an ambiance that inspires the culture."

This year's Krakow Jewish Culture Festival, with Jewish performers invited by the organizers, will feature between 150 and 180 artists and take place from June 29 to July 8. Makuch said the event aims to educate non-Jews by highlighting the richness of life and the knowledge of religion.

"I have heard people ask how we can do something like this when not far away we had death camps," he said. "How much can we focus on what we have lost? With our youth, we now celebrate Jewish culture and study song, dance and bring Jewish life back to a country that almost saw it disappear."

Eric Stein, the 38-year-old artistic director of Toronto's Ashkenaz Festival, attended the Krakow event in 1999 and eight years later was invited to perform there.

"I first went as a spectator with an open mind," said Stein, an accomplished musician. "Then, when we performed, it had to be one of the most amazing experiences for me."

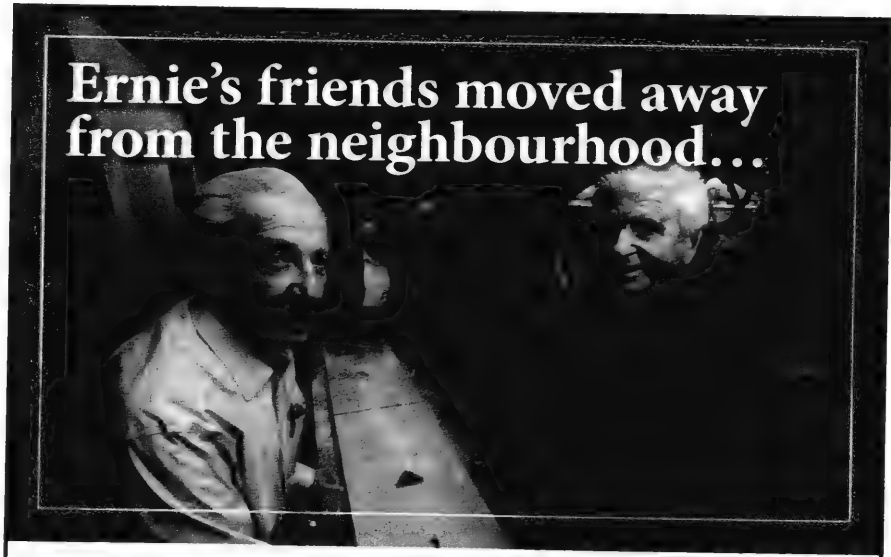
And when Makuch addressed the Bialik group of about 100 students and staff, more than one listener had a keen interest in more than just the topic.

Bialik students Daniel Esser, who plays the cello, and Sofie Kreidstein, a singer, were both impressed that the event was spearheaded by a non-Jew.

"Not being Jewish and doing something like this impresses me," said the 13-year-old Esser. "I was happy that he didn't dwell on the unfortunate things of the past and instead was glad to hear him admit that Jewish culture has been part of Poland culture for many years."

Kreidstein, 12, had a similar reaction.

"We know that terrible things happened, but it's time to move forward," she said. "Having something like this helps us learn. Then, to have someone not Jewish say he understood how the Jewish culture was an important part of Poland. We have to build on that message."



At Chartwell, they're just down the hall

There was a time when Ernie knew everyone in the neighbourhood. Running into friends was as easy as taking a morning walk or watering the grass in the early evening. But as the years passed, the neighbourhood began to change. Over time, Ernie's friends began moving away and life became lonelier.

Now at Chartwell, Ernie is part of an active community again. Not only is he making new friends, but he is back to doing the things he's always enjoyed: a morning coffee with the gang, a game of afternoon cards and shooting pool after dinner. Like your friends just down the hall? We can help.

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THOMAS (MINUK) ALI

Pesach lessons all year long

The holiday of Pesach is a stand-alone Jewish holiday. In other words, we keep it in isolation from the rest of the year.

Unlike Rosh Hashanah, for example, the themes of Pesach don't often continue to inform us beyond the holiday. I don't eat matzah any other time, nor am I dipping vegetables into bitter herbs or concocting food that looks like clay mortar.

Feelings of redemption are hoped for throughout the year, but I'm not told to re-experience Egypt and the redemption from it every time I sit down to eat.

Most of the other Jewish holidays inform me in a way that will continue to bring me Jewish connection throughout the year. Sukkot is the time the world is judged for water amounts, so if I encounter a dry season or a flood, I can connect back to Sukkot. Chanukah always reminds me of Jewish pride and autonomy, while Purim teaches me of the precarious position of Jews in exile.

Yet somehow I manage to isolate Pesach and experience Pesach immersion for one week, and when I pack up the Pesach dishes, I also pack up the Pesach meaning.

But this is an artificial disconnect. The meanings of Pesach aren't meant to be isolated from the rest of my life. I should be identifying "Pesach moments" the rest of the year and reinvigorating the meaning of the holiday.

One of the major themes of Pesach is the idea of seizing the opportunity. Miriam teaches us this meaning most effectively when she watches over her baby brother, Moses, and seizes the opportunity to bring mother and son together by suggesting she bring a Hebrew nursemaid for the baby.

Midrashic Moments

Rachael Turkienicz

Moses seizes the opportunity to save an innocent slave when he defends him from an Egyptian taskmaster, even to the point of death. There are many more examples that we could ask our guests to identify during the seder. The next step of course would be to re-examine moments in our lives when we seized an opportunity that ended well or not so well.

Another main theme is one of redemption, a word many of us don't quite understand. When we redeem an article, we retrieve something that was once ours but has been kept away from us. Likewise, redeeming ourselves is to identify what part of our true selves have we been burying inside, away from the access that we need to retrieve back into our lives.

Of course, one of the things that matzah signifies is our commitment to end suffering. The Torah tells us that as long as we remain in Egypt, the plagues will continue. Once we're told to leave, we grab our bread, not yet leavened, and we rush out. The matzah symbolizes how quickly we left, since the sooner we leave, the sooner the last plague stops.

The sages in the midrash have noted that we are told to "observe the feast of the matzot" just as we are commanded to "observe the mitzvot." The Hebrew letters of both "matzot" and "mitzvot" are identical, and from this we learn that just as we can't be slow in baking our matzah or it will leaven, so we must not be slow in seizing the opportunity to do a commandment. The themes of Pesach are brought together and made meaningful to the other 51 weeks of our year.

The stressfulness of Pesach can tempt us to create an isolationist attitude toward the holiday. Ironically, we would then miss the opportunity to seize the moment and teach ourselves to hurry toward acts of loving kindness and ultimate redemption.

Why would we want to do that?

Rachael Turkienicz is director of rachaelscentre.org.

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Israel and the Persian Empire

We recently celebrated the holiday of Purim, which is based on events that occurred during the mighty Persian Empire of the middle of the first millennium BCE. Today, we face the descendants of the Persians, the modern state of Iran, whose stated goal is once again the destruction of the people of Israel. Despite the picture painted in Esther's Megillah, 2,500 years ago relations with the Persians were somewhat different than they are today.

The founder of the Persian Empire, Cyrus the Great, has been looked upon favourably in the long span of Jewish history. It was Cyrus who allowed the exiles to return from Babylon after the 70-year captivity following the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of Jerusalem and the First Temple.

The time spent in Babylon was a crucible in Jewish history. Contrary to popular belief, not all of the population of Judah was deported to Babylon. It was primarily the leadership and intelligentsia that were carried off to captivity "by the waters of Babylon." This period saw the gathering together of our sacred texts. It also laid the groundwork for the meeting house, or beit knesset, which the Greeks would call the synagogue.

These institutions were developed to allow the survival of our people in exile. It was not the first time that such a catastrophe had befallen us. That had also happened about 125 years earlier, when the Assyrians destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel and deported thousands of its inhabitants, giving rise to the legend of the Ten Lost Tribes. These tribes never came back, while many of the exiles from Babylon did.

Past Forward

Alex Gropper

Interestingly, the Persian period, which lasted for 200 years, is one of the least understood phases in the history of ancient Israel. One of the best-known authorities of this age is Prof. Ephraim Stern of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, who has written the definitive text on the Persian era in Israel. Some of his evidence comes from the site of Tel Dor, the magnificent ruin on the Mediterranean coast of Israel north of Caesarea, which he excavated for over two decades.

Although the Persian age has very few monumental remains, such as those from the Roman period or the preceding monarchical age, it was a peaceful time in which we were governed with minimal outside interference. This is in marked contrast to the succeeding Hellenistic Age, when we fell under the sway of the successor states of the empire of Alexander the Great.

The period of Persian rule in Israel allowed us to return from exile. Under Nehemiah, the Persians gave us permission to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem, albeit on a much smaller scale than the one before or the one that came after, built by Herod. Also, during the period of Persian rule, we nearly completed the canon of our holy text under Ezra the Scribe, thus laying the groundwork for our survival as a people in the tumultuous ages to come.

Looking forward

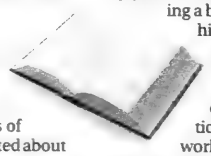
Rabbi Howard Markose

I have had an experience of a lifetime returning to Toronto after being away for the past 17 years. Following a decade as a rabbi in Toronto from 1984 to 1994, I made aliyah to Israel with my family in hopes of realizing our Zionist dream.

Judy and I found a home and a community in the southeastern part of Jerusalem, called Armon Hanatziv, and there we have raised our four children. We have said in our retelling of our "why we made aliyah" story that we didn't actually abandon Toronto, but rather as a result of our move to Israel, we had to leave somewhere, and our having chosen to settle in Jerusalem was a great decision, which we affirm every single day.

We are about to celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread, which commemorates the liberation of the Israelites from bondage in Egypt. At the time of the Exodus, the children of Israel were running from persecution in Egypt. They were leaving their lives of slavery, and it didn't really matter where they were going. The Torah tells us that they left in a hurry – to get *out* and not to get *to*. Their destination, virtually unknown to them, seemed almost an afterthought. That the Israelite nation ended up in the Promised Land 40 years later and not right away perhaps was a result of the fact that they needed time to get excited about the prospects of being a free nation in their own land, one flowing with milk and honey. They needed to somehow look forward and anticipate with excitement what would be their future home.

Rabbinic Reflections



There are many aspects of our lives that we can be excited about and look forward to, a phenomenon that is well known in our Jewish tradition. Our midrash teaches that when the Israelites left Egypt, they were told that 50 days later they would receive the Torah, so they started counting the days – literally – looking forward to that great moment in their history. This counting became and continues to be the practice observed by subsequent generations of traditional Jews.

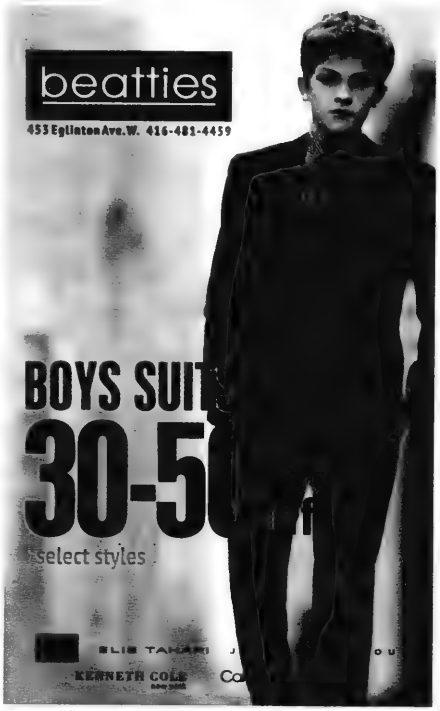
With this in mind, I challenge us all to look forward by creating goals for which we can reach, instead of marking situations we wish to avoid.

Our vacations, for example, can be planned as a "going to" experience rather than as a "getaway." It is hoped that the time spent on holiday is for investing quality time with family and friends and encountering new and different experiences rather than simply for "clearing the head" and "taking a break." Graduation from high school or university might best be seen as a stepping stone on the way to the next academic challenge or the ticket to the vocational world, rather than a goodbye to a past experience.

The exodus from Egypt gave the Jewish nation the freedom to look ahead to the receiving of the Torah. May we always possess an outlook in life in which are looking forward in positive anticipation.

Chag Samayach!

Rabbi Howard Markose is the interim senior rabbi of Beth Tikvah Synagogue in Toronto.



Apps to help you keep kosher

As the days count down toward Passover, kashrut organizations are working overtime answering consumer questions and monitoring food manufacturers to make sure their products conform to halachic regulations. In addition to putting out glossy magazines and building informative websites, many kashrut organizations are also creating apps to cater to mobile shoppers, apps that will continue to help kosher consumers well after all the Passover dishes have been stored away for another year.

All apps are for iPhone/iPad and are free unless otherwise noted.

cRc Kosher: I love this app from the Chicago Rabbinical Council for several reasons. In addition to comprehensive product information, it includes:

• the definitive list of kosher liquor including bourbon, liqueur, mead, sake and vermouth.

• a Passover guide that answers questions about cleaning your home and which types of products require – and don't require – holiday certification.

• and a huge database of the logos of reputable kashrut agencies from around the world. If you see a squiggle on a product you can't decipher, just fire up the app and compare. **[http://bit.ly/koshapp1]**

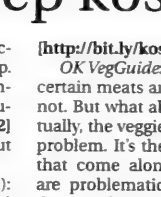
MK Kosher (iPhone and Android): "Your Key to a Kosher Canada" has a massive database of products, including gluten-free foods, vitamins, couscous and, fittingly for a Quebec-based organization, maple syrup. Also includes a handy listing of Montreal area restaurants under its supervision. **[http://bit.ly/koshapp2]** Check out a recent *CJN* article about this app. **[http://bit.ly/koshapp3]**

OU Kosher (iPhone and Android): Billed as the "world's most recognized trusted kosher certification," this app from the Orthodox Union includes a database of kosher products, kosher product alerts and a listing of newly certified products. **[http://bit.ly/koshapp4]**

Kof-K: Includes an interesting Q&A section. Sample question: how is it possible to have a certified kosher pareve product that states on the label "made on shared equipment with milk, nuts, shellfish.?" Answer: "It has become common practice for companies to post allergy information below the nutritional facts... Often a pareve product can be produced on equipment used for dairy production, after complete kasherization. Although the machinery is halachically considered 100 per cent pareve, a person with a severe milk allergy can conceivably have an allergic reaction." **[http://bit.ly/koshapp5]**

Jewish & Digital

Mark Mietkiewicz



OK VegGuide: It's no surprise that certain meats are kosher and others not. But what about vegetables? Actually, the veggies themselves are no problem. It's the (non-kosher) bugs that come along for the ride that are problematic. This app surveys dozens of common vegetables from artichokes to zucchini and tells you which insects may be hiding out and what to do about them. **[http://bit.ly/koshapp6]** Also check out the OK Kosher Food Guide. **[http://bit.ly/koshapp7]**

Kosher or Not ($0.99): Some apps try to do almost any function you can think of. Others are determined to focus on one goal only. I would say that the Kosher or Not app falls into the latter category. Type in the name of a fish (or just the first letter), and you are presented with a long list of fish, some kosher, some not. With this app in hand, never again will you have to walk away from your local fishmonger wondering whether you can feast on Jewfish, Mozambique mouthbrooder or even porkfish, while remaining faithful to your heritage. You can. **[http://bit.ly/koshapp8]**

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Passover preparation

Abigail Ben-Bassat, left, and Gabrielle Fisher, senior kindergarten students at Associated Hebrew Schools' Posluns Education Centre on Neptune Drive, press grapes to make wine for Passover.

Noam, a senior kindergarten student at Netivot HaTorah Day School, visited the Chabad's Model Matza Bakery with his class and "weighed in" on how to bake matzah.

Reena in the News

Reena

Grandparents Say Thank You to Reena

Our grandson Levi lives in a Reena home because of his special needs. He requires and receives the best of care by staff that is well trained and empathetic.

We often ask ourselves what our family would have done had Reena not been there for us. Levi was raised in a home where Jewish religious customs and practices are observed. From early childhood, Levi eagerly participated in Jewish religious life at home. At Sabbath meals Levi joined in the ritual and the singing, even leading the singing. At Passover, he would advise us on the proper order of the ***seder***. It was always clear to us that Jewish religious practice had to be part of Levi's environment, not just because the family wanted it but because he wanted and needed it.

Over the years we have seen others with special needs who share Levi's craving for an outlet for their strong Jewish identity. We have no doubt that parents and grandparents of other faiths with special needs children could attest to a similar experience.

We realize that Reena cannot duplicate the full range of Jewish practices one finds in a religious Jewish home. However the Reena staff, acting in accordance with Reena policy, do their best to create a Jewish environment. Reena homes have ***mezzuzahs*** on the doors, the food is kosher, and Jewish holidays are celebrated.

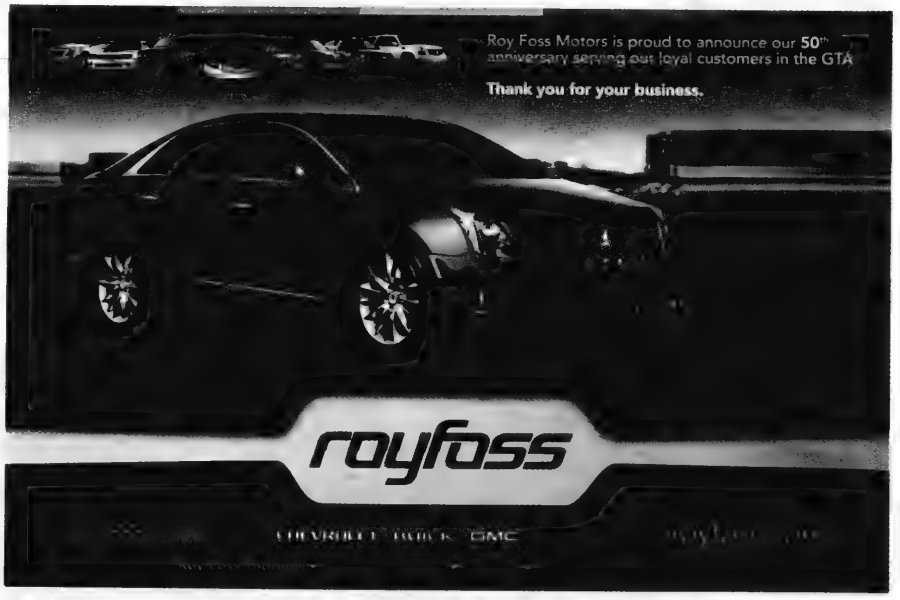
Does Reena's attention to Jewish custom have an adverse effect on non-Jewish clients? We have been sensitive to this question and are not aware of any significant problems for non-Jewish clients. Of course no one attempts to proselytize others. Often other Reena clients seem interested in what is going on and enjoy the treats associated with the various Jewish holidays. When Levi asked to be taken to synagogue on Saturday mornings a staff member volunteered to take him. For a while two other clients asked to accompany him, one Jewish and one not Jewish. They enjoyed the novel experience and they and the staff member were happy to partake of the food served at ***kiddush*** (ritual blessing over wine) after services.

For Jewish clients like Levi, for whom a Jewish environment is important Reena is the only residential option available. Moreover we have been most impressed that all staff members, from top down, are attentive to the clients and their needs, and are willing to go the extra mile.

We are grateful to the late **Rabbi Joseph Kelman** of blessed memory who saw that it was possible to create a high quality organization serving all members of the Canadian population, while at the same time providing Jewish clients with a Jewish framework. We are grateful to **Sandy Keshen**, President, the Reena Board, and the Reena staff for so ably carrying out Rabbi Kelman's vision.

With thanks from grateful grandparents,
Arthur and Betty Kruger

www.reena.org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Pesach...just days away

Rabbi Yonah Vilenkin of Tzivos Hashem Canada, an independent Chabad organization, conducts the group's newest workshop – the Wine Press – with Grade 6 students Rony Malev, left, and Natan Levy of Chabad of Richmond Hill Romano Centre Hebrew School.

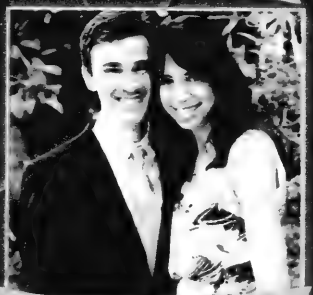
Two-year-olds Maya Donsky, left, Bella Tick, centre, and Hudson Fenwick of Temple Sinai Nursery School take great pride in painting their seder plates for Passover. The children also created a kiddush cup, afikoman pouch and matzah cover to use at their own Passover seders.

Tzvi, a junior kindergartner at the Toronto Heschel School, dressed as Moses, leads her peers and fellow Israelites across the Red Sea while dramatizing the Passover story.

Mazel Tov
מזל טוב

Mazel tov to Harry & Sarah Glowinsky on your 60th wedding anniversary, Love, your children, grandchildren and great-granddaughter

Happy birthday to Vanessa Bower. Have a fantastic year! Love from all of your family.



Cylena & Michael Cohen, Linda & Alan Shadgett are delighted to announce the engagement of Wendy & Lane. All siblings and Grandma Helen are thrilled.

Welcome Eliezer (Elie) Rory! born Dec. 8. Love, parents Jori & Asher Lichtman, sister Lielle, brother Gavriel, grandparents Cheryle & Henry Gertner, Annette & Adrian Lichtman.

Family and friends celebrate 90th birthday of John Franken, decorated Dutch ex-PoW in Japan, one of the last survivors of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki.

Ryan & Sarah are thrilled to announce the birth of Russell Alvin Morris, March 14. Grandparents Ron & Linda Morris, Dr. L. Stephen & Patricia Johnson.

Email your digital photos to cblackman@thecjn.ca or go online to www.CJNews.com and click the "Family Moments"

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What's New

By LILA SARICK

Social Networking @ The Canadian Jewish News
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HEEBONICS

Deadline reminder: April 9 is the deadline for the issue of April 19. April 16 is the deadline for the issue of April 26. Please note all deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; fax 416-391-0829 or e-mail whatsnewcjn@gmail.com.

Saturday, April 7

TPM MINYAN

TPM North meets at 9:30 a.m. at Reena, 927 Clark Ave. W., Thornhill.

Other News

PASSOVER SEDERS

Chabad of Markham holds a seder April 6, led by **Rabbi Nachman** and **Aviva Forer**. RSVP 905-886-0420, ext. 221, or www.chabadmarkham.org.

Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism holds a seder April 6, led by **Barry Olshen** and **Sandi Horwitz.** RSVP 416-385-3910 or roby@oraynu.org.

The City Shul holds a seder April 6, at Mideastro, led by **Rabbi Elyse Goldstein.** Reserve in advance, 416-477-2427.

Chabad of Danforth-Beaches holds a seder April 6 led by **Rabbi Sholom** and **Devora Lezell.** RSVP 416-809-1365 or visit ChabadDB.com.

Danforth Jewish Circle seder, April 10. RSVP info@djctoronto.com.

United Jewish People's Order sponsors a third seder with musicians **David Wall, Marilyn Lerner** and the Toronto Jewish Folk Choir, April 15. Reserve in advance, 416-789-5502 or info@winchevskycentre.org.

JEWISH WAR VETERANS

Jewish War Veterans of Canada Toronto post holds its general meeting April 15, Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St. Breakfast 9 a.m., meeting 10 a.m. MP **Mark Adler** is the guest speaker.

NEVER AGAIN?

Yehudit Shier Weisberg discusses "Never Again?: The Legal Forum for the Land of Israel," April 15, 9:15 a.m. at Beth David Synagogue. 416-633-5500.

SPRING LECTURE SERIES

Temple Emanu-El's spring lecture series begins April 16, with **Adam Chapnick** discussing Canadian foreign policy. To register, 416-449-3880.

THEATRE TRIPS

Beth Emeth Synagogue's theatre group is offering transportation and tickets to summer theatre. First show is *The Matchmaker* at Stratford, May 23. Deadline for reservation April 16. Call 416-633-3838.

MELTON CLASSES

Yehudit Shier Weisberg teaches a nine-week class on Prayer: A Gift for Our Lives, starting April 18 at Beth Emeth Synagogue. Call 416-789-7400.

TIKKUN GUATEMALA TOUR

Spaces still available on the Tikkun Guatemala tour, teaching the Jewish community, building a school, April 20-29. 416-537-9459.

TORAH TOTS MUSIC

Chabad of Markham's Torah Tots offers a drumming class for children aged 6-24 months, starting April 20, 9:15 a.m. Call 905-886-0420, ext. 227.

Continued on page 27

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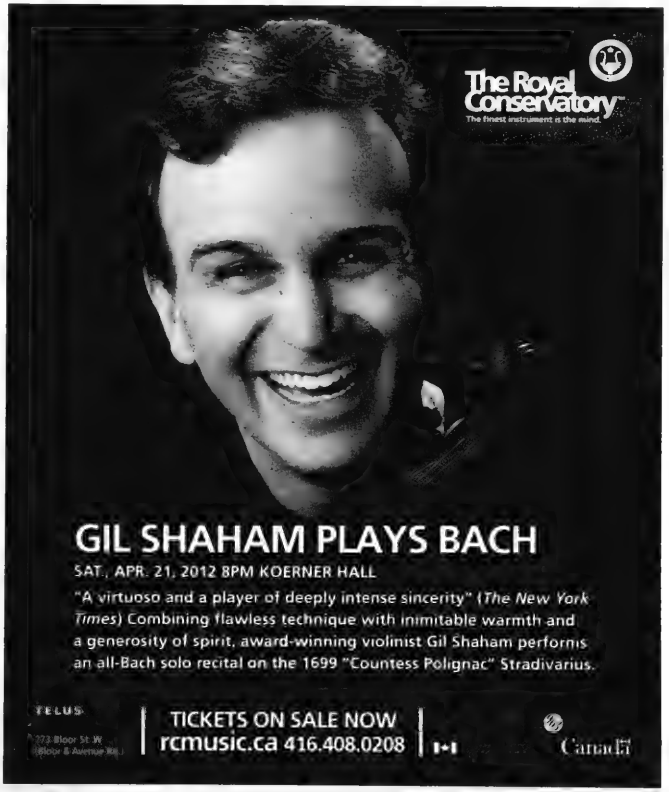
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Continued from page 26

THE WILL TO LIVE

Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism holds a ceremony honouring Jewish Holocaust refugees in the Soviet Union, April 19, 7 p.m. at 18 Wynford Dr.

OMER STUDY PROGRAM

Temple Sinai is studying **Norman Cohen**'s book, *Hineni in Our Lives: Learning How To Respond to Others*, Saturdays starting April 14, 8:45 a.m. 416-487-3281.

OUR YIDDISH HERITAGE

Cantor **Katie Oringel** with composer **Ben Steinberg** and **Harvey Atkin** weaves a multimedia experience of art, music and narrative on the life of **Marc Chagall**, Temple Sinai, April 15, 4 p.m. 416-487-3281.

THE SIX MILLION

TanenbaumCHAT Kimel presents a Yom Hashoah program at Shaar Shalom Synagogue, April 19, 7:30 p.m. Call 905-787-8772.

HARBORD REUNION

Anyone who taught or attended Harbord Collegiate Institute is invited to a reunion April 26-27. www.HarbordClub.com.

HELPING OTHER PARENTS

HOPE (Helping Other Parents Everywhere) is a support group for parents of acting-out youth. The group meets Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m. at Edithvale Community Centre, 131 Finch Ave. W. Call **Bernice**, 905-737-3403.

SCHWARTZ REISMAN CENTRE

The centre is open for daily tours. Register now for pre-school and daycare. Call 905-303-1821.

JF&CS GROUPS

All programs require pre-registration and are open to all members of the community. To register, call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or www.jfandcs.com. All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St., unless otherwise noted.

Parenting the Child with ADHD: A 4-week session for parents. Starts April 3, 7 p.m. Call for pre-group assessment.

Younger Widow/Widower Bereavement Group: A 6-session discussion series for people 60 and younger. Starts April 10, 7:30 p.m.

Widows/Widowers 65+ : A 6-session group for people over 65 who have recently lost a spouse. Starts April 18, 1 p.m.

Mind, Body Connection for Women: An 8-session group for women who want to learn mindfulness and meditation. Topics include stress and anxiety reduction, enhancing your self-esteem. Starts April 25, 3 p.m. at 35 Madison Ave.

One Family, Two Homes: A 6-session series for families experiencing separation and divorce. Children and parents participate in separate groups. Starts April 25, 6:30 p.m.

The Challenge of Anger for Women: A 6-session group for women to learn how to express their anger in an assertive, non-aggressive way. Starts April 26, 7:30 p.m.

Beyond the Chupah, Becoming a Couple: A 6-session marriage preparation group for couples, offered with the Rabbinical Assembly of Ontario. Starts April 26, 7:30 p.m., Beth Emeth Synagogue.

BEREAVED PARENTS

Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups to bereaved parents. Call **Beth Feffer** at JF & CS, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or bfeffer@jfandcs.com.

FOR SENIORS

Seniors Social Club presents singer **Sari Featherstone**, April 15, 7 p.m., Earl Bales Community Centre. RSVP **Sandy**, 416-736-8073 or 416-458-1440.

Association of Jewish Seniors. Tammy, 416-635-2900, ext. 458. April 19, General meeting, program to commemorate the Shoah, Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue. Refreshments 9:30 a.m., program at 10 a.m.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park. (60+). **Valerie**, 416-395-7881. Casino Rama, April 18. Dance with live music, April 22. Tuesdays, gentle exercise, 10 a.m.; Wednesdays, duplicate bridge, 12:30 p.m.; Thursdays, line dancing, 10 a.m.; social bridge, 12:30 p.m. Non-members welcome.

Circle of Care is sponsoring Let's Talk, an education group on topics such as home safety, mental and physical well-being and legal and financial planning. The 6-session group begins April 17. Call 416-635-2860.

National Council of Jewish Women, Aviva branch, is looking for women over 70 for their group. Call 416-633-5100.

LZA Seniors Cultural Club meets Tuesdays, 10 a.m., Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell, 416-630-9444.

New Horizons is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club that offers kosher food, card games, casino trips, 416-256-1892.

Adath Israel Congregation. Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub. Refreshments $2. Call **Pearl**, 416-635-6317, or **Sheila**, 416-665-3333.

Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue welcomes new players for mah-jong and Rummikub Monday and Wednesday afternoons, 416-633-3838.

The bridge club at Forest Hill library has reopened and is looking for new members. Call **Lea** (evenings), 416-487-7630.

Bernard Betel Centre 416-225-2112. April 5, **Sarah Dunford** discusses diabetes education, 1:30 p.m. April 10, **Diana Mingail** discusses "Lost Tribes Around the World," 10 a.m. April 12, **Miriam Diamond** discusses "The Relationship Between Us and the Environment," 1:30 p.m. April 12, laughter yoga, 1:30 p.m.

Seniors Gentle Fitness Club offers Tai Chi Chih classes, Wednesdays, 7 p.m., and Feldenkrais, Mondays, 10:30 a.m., Edithvale Community Centre, 416-665-9050.

Active Seniors, Miles Nadal JCC, 416-924-6211, ext.155. Psychiatrist **Lesley Wiesenfeld** talks about "Positive Aging and Adaptation: Challenges, Opportunities and Transitions," April 19, 1:30 p.m.

Active 55 Plus Fitness Training, Miles Nadal JCC, Colin Blayney 416-924-6211, ext. 526. Golf conditioning starts April 12, 6:30 p.m. Functional mobility starts April 16, 6:30 p.m.

PROSSERMAN JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com.

Tickets for spring/summer theatre trips are on sale now.

The spring/summer program guide is available now, ext. 4235.

Save the date for community bingo, April 7; computer animation classes, April 17; *Shalom Sesame Pesach*, April 4.

MILES NADAL JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org.

The winning entry in the 2011 Canadian Jewish Playwriting Competition, *Haunted* by **Daniel Karasik**, will be performed April 10, 8 p.m. Ext. 606.

Mimouna will be celebrated with henna, cooking and belly dancing workshops, Middle Eastern music and food, April 15, 7 p.m. Tickets $15 in advance, $20 at the door, ext. 0.

Film critic **Adam Nayman** analyzes **Stanley Kubrick**'s films in an 8-lecture program, Mondays 7 p.m. starting April 16. Ext. 0.

Classes in Hebrew literacy and conversation start the week of April 16. Ext. 154.

Felix Opatowski, author of *Gatehouse to Hell*, shares his experiences in Auschwitz, April 22, 11 a.m.

Tickets on sale now for Stars on Spadina Gala with **Theresa Tova, Moshe Hammer, Hilario Duran** and more, April 23, 7:30 p.m.

Reading Jewish, a class with **Rabbi Elyse Goldstein,** starts April 30, 8 p.m.

How Beautiful We All Were, a photo exhibit of 16 Canadian poets, is at the gallery until April 30.

The Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Thursday at 7:15 a.m. and Sunday at 8 a.m. followed by a breakfast. Call **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200.

A MAGICAL GALA: Associated Hebrew Schools' Parent Teacher Council and Kadima's family giving committee recently hosted their annual gala, Jeans, Jazz and Java. Almost 200 attendees at the Uptown Loft in Toronto enjoyed live jazz, an auction, poker tables, mah-jong games and lessons. Funds raised support programs at the school. Above, parent Simone Levine is dazzled by a magician. ***[Orna Wolfe photo]***

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 38

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Ethnic coalition deplores kosher, halal criticism

Janice Arnold
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — A coalition of various community groups is calling on Parti Québécois (PQ) leader Pauline Marois to distance herself from her agriculture critic's comments on religious ritual slaughter.

Headed by Montreal city councillor Marvin Rotrand, the coalition's 11 members are mainly from outside the Jewish and Muslim communities.

They include Dan Philip, president of the Black Coalition of Quebec; Noel Alexander, president of the Montreal Jamaican Association; Aurora Osdon, president of the Philippine Association of Montreal, and lawyer Walter Chi-Yan Tom, as well as Salam Elmenyawi, spokesperson for the Muslim Council of Montreal.

Elected officials besides Rotrand, who is the majority house leader at city council and longtime councillor for Snowdon, are Montreal city councillors Frantz Benjamin; Côte St. Luc councillor Dida Berku; and Ellie Israel, a commissioner of the English Montreal School Board.

Rotrand, who is Jewish, said the endorsement by such a wide spectrum demonstrates "that you don't have to be Jewish to believe Jews should have kosher meat, or Muslim that Muslims should have halal meat."

All minorities feel threatened when one is targeted, he said.

The statement deplores André Simard's comments last month about the humaneness of halal and kosher slaughter and the safety of such meat, and especially his opinion that the practice clashes with "Quebec values."

Simard, a veterinarian representing Kamouraska-Témiscouata in the lower St. Lawrence region, raised similar questions again March 23, expressing concern that Quebecers may be unwittingly buying such meat because it is not properly labelled.

The coalition believes Simard's remarks are "evidence of the worst ignorance and of intolerance, two values that do not define Quebecers."

It believes Marois should rebut and dissociate herself from Simard's position, which the coalition says "tarnishes Quebec's image on the international scene."

Marois has not responded to the coalition, Rotrand said March 28.

Marvin Rotrand

The coalition points out that halal and kosher killing meets all of the federal standards for any type of slaughter.

Halal and kosher meat is generally sold in small stores frequented mainly by the Muslim and Jewish communities, it adds, and the meat that is sold in larger outlets is clearly labelled as halal or kosher.

The coalition is inviting the public to consult the abundant information available on the Internet about halal and kosher food. The members are convinced this slaughter is humane and that the meat is healthful. In fact, they claim many people with allergies to other meat can eat meat produced by traditional Muslim and Jewish practices.

Rotrand said he deplores what he sees as an effort to "demonize minorities," possibly for political gain by playing on Quebecers' insecurity about their identity.

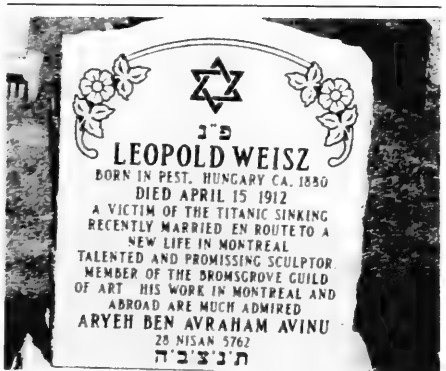
All minorities, not just Muslims and Jews, feel the sting of any attempt to "drive a wedge between them and the majority, he said.

"I'm shocked because the PQ has always represented itself as progressive. This has generally been the discourse of the far right," said Rotrand. "We're disappointed Marois has been silent on the issue so far."

Simard, who has worked as a provincial inspector in abattoirs, said March 23 that he does not want to fan any anti-religious feeling.

"Religious ritual slaughter, whether it is kosher or halal, is an exception to the law, not the general rule," he reiterated.

A call to Marois' office for comment was unreturned by *The CJN*'s deadline.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ROSS, Merle Elizabeth. May 21, 1939 - March 4, 2012. Merle passed away suddenly at her home in New Westminster, BC at the age of 72. Loved and missed by her children: Cheryl (Ken), Brian (Maria) and Corey (Anne). Grandchildren: Tatiana, Heather, Adina, Marco and Cale. Merle will be remembered for her love of knitting, charity work and sharing stories with her grandchildren.

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Vancouver federation campaign raises $7.6M

Lauren Kramer
Pacific Correspondent

VANCOUVER — Despite prevailing economic uncertainty, Vancouver's local Jewish community rallied together and raised $7.6 million through the 2011 Federation Annual Campaign.

An additional $585,000 was donated in supplemental gifts to fund specific programs.

The total amount raised is down two per cent from 2010, but the drop won't affect the distribution of funds to community needs locally, overseas and Israel, according to Mark James, annual campaign chair.

"We put risk management steps in place that would allow us to smooth out these bumps in the road," he said, referring to the Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver's (JFGV) agency stabilization fund that was created in 2008 to maintain allocations in down years and protect the community from swings in campaign results.

When the Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver (JFGV) withdraws $91,000 from the fund, it will be the first time it's been tapped to maintain overall local allocations. Replenishing the fund is a priority for the 2012 campaign, said Mitchell Gropper, JFGV board chair.

Local needs include social services for socially isolated and frail seniors, supporting working families who have been affected by the economy, programming to support youth and encourage them to make healthy choices, and services to support Jewish adults with mental health issues. Sixty per cent of the funds raised will stay in the local community, while the remaining 40 per cent will be sent to Israel and programs overseas.

In addition to the $7.6 million generated through the JFGVs annual campaign, the Jewish Community Foundation, the endowment arm of the JFGV, distributed a total of $628,600 for the fiscal year ending March 31 to community agencies and received additional gifts totalling $450,000.

Ex-pat Iranian says most Iranians want peace

Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf
Staff Reporter

In a web exclusive, Iranian expat Reza Akhlaghi, a senior writer and editor specializing in the Middle East with the New York-based Foreign Policy Association, tells *The CJN* how Iranians feel about peace with Israel, the West's sanctions on their country and Tehran's quest for nuclear weapons.

Go to cjnews.com to read this interesting story.

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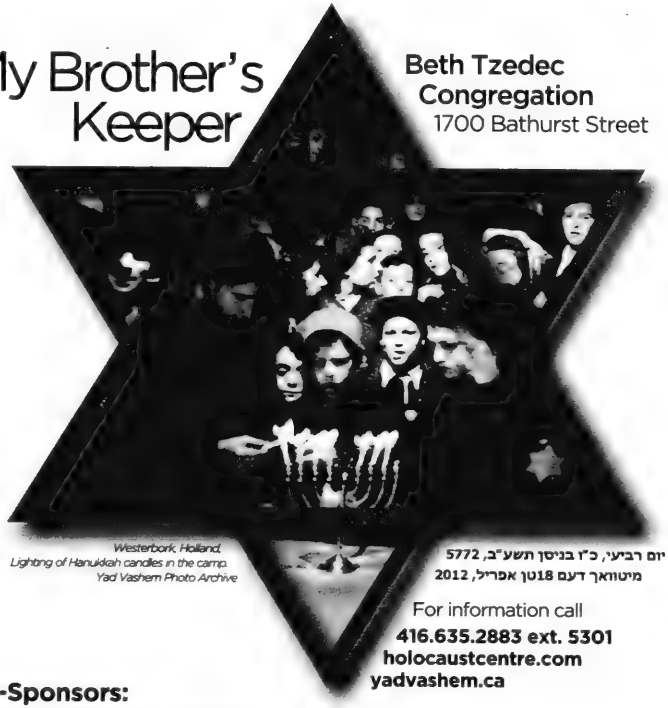

Westerbork, Holland.
Lighting of Hanukkah candles in the camp.
Yad Vashem Photo Archive

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Tensions with Egypt fan Gaza fuel follies

A serious strain in Egypt-Gaza relations, although given scant media attention here, is very revealing about the strange complexity of developments in the region.

The story revolves around a severe fuel shortage in Gaza caused by Egypt and Hamas – and not Israel.

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

Contrary to what one might expect following the "Arab Spring" and the resulting rise of the Muslim Brotherhood, Egyptian authorities have in recent months refused to allow inexpensive gas to be smuggled through tunnels into the Hamas-run enclave. As reported by Associated Press (AP), the 1.5 million people of Gaza have thus suffered repeated, lengthy blackouts – including some lasting upwards of 18 hours per day. The fuel shortage has extended beyond motor vehicles, even affecting backup generators in hospitals.

According to AP, "[t]he fuel crisis has its origins in the decision by Hamas, more than a year ago, to use smuggled fuel to run the territory's only power plant instead of paying for more expensive fuel coming through an Israeli cargo crossing. The plant normally provides 60 per cent of Gaza's electricity." The power plant in question has been mostly down since mid-February.

After the fall of Mubarak, while Cairo has allowed Gazans greater access to Egypt through the Rafah border, it has refused Hamas' desire to use the crossing as a cargo route.

What angered Egyptian authorities was that while Egyptians, facing an economic crisis, were experiencing fuel restrictions, Hamas raked in profits via its standard cut from smuggled Egyptian fuel. At the same time, Hamas wanted to avoid paying back the Palestinian Authority for more expensive fuel that was previously imported into Gaza from Israel.

When Cairo cut off the supply of cheaper fuel to Gaza, a senior Hamas official accused Egypt of "political blackmail" and called on the newly elected fundamentalist-dominated parliament to "solve this problem."

Still, it was Israel that transferred half-a-million litres of diesel fuel to Gaza on March 23, paid for by the EU-backed PA, enabling the territory's power plant to operate at full capacity for the first time since the crisis began.

The deeper issue at play here is threefold:

First, Egypt doesn't want to assume responsibility for Gaza, and, therefore, insists that the onus still falls on Israel to supply goods and services to the territory.

Ismail Haniyeh

Second, although Israel would love for Egypt to take over full responsibility for Gaza, it's not going to press the issue at this time, given the tense and tenuous nature of the current relationship.

Third, Egypt has its own concerns about Hamas, given divisions within the organization itself, including those within Gaza who are trying to maintain ties with Iran. Ismail Haniyeh, Hamas' Gaza-based prime minister, visited Iran in March, reportedly seeking fuel subsidies, among other financial aid.

To thwart signs that Gazans might go on "strike" to protest Hamas' failed management, the organization's security services arrested more than 100 local residents last month, including taxi drivers, for spreading "rumours" of a fuel and electricity crisis in the strip.

Meanwhile, the Egyptian military, still in control of the country against the will of the Brotherhood, has offered some limited assistance to Israel in a bid to counter efforts by Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and other Iranian-backed terror groups that have used the Sinai as a platform for attacks. (On March 9, Israel killed Zuhir al-Qaisi, head of the Popular Resistance Committees in Gaza, who Israeli intelligence revealed had been planning another such terror operation.)

While Hamas is counting on the Egyptian Brotherhood to come to its aid, it's still the generals who are making the decisions, at least for now. In fact, the military may have struck a deal with the Islamists to retain major elements of control even after the June presidential election, the writing of a new constitution, and the formation of a new government.

What this means for Israel remains to be seen, but observers would be remiss to ignore the complex and shifting Egypt-Gaza relationship, and how it will shape the future of the region.

Paul Michaels is director of research and media relations for the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs.

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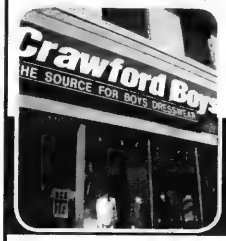

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Neo-Nazi-turned-Jew describes his transformation

Janice Arnold
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Pawel Bromson needed to down the shot of whisky Rabbi Yossi Shanowitz brought him before he could overcome his nerves and begin to speak.

In his youth, Bromson was a neo-Nazi skinhead in Poland. He hated minorities and foreigners, and Jews – although he didn't know any – were especially loathsome to him. Bromson, 37, is today a black hat-wearing Orthodox Jew, working as a shochet and mashgiach in Warsaw.

He was in North America for the first time last week to speak about his remarkable transformation, through an interpreter, at a fundraiser for Chabad of Westmount.

His gang sometimes went to Auschwitz, vandalizing the site and shouting at visitors that the Nazis had not killed enough Jews.

Then, one day when he was in his early 20s, he learned that he was Jewish, that all four of his grandparents were Jewish, a fact that had been completely hidden.

Alcohol was his initial way of dealing with the staggering news.

When his wife came home 15 years ago with the documentary proof of his Jewishness, Bromson said he took a week off work and spent the first four days drinking.

"It was almost the end of the world for me," he said.

Bromson appeared overwhelmed by the crowd that turned out to hear him.

He was visibly uncomfortable talking about his skinhead days, which he wants to put far behind him and declined to go into details "about the horrible things I did." More than once he put his head in his hands to express his shame.

He said he grew up in a very patriotic family – his grandparents had been officers in the army.

His explanation – but not justification for his falling in with a racist "subculture" – was the turmoil that ensued after the fall of communism in the early 1990s, which coincided with his own rebellious adolescence.

Pawel Bromson

He married early, incredibly learning from his mother-in-law on his wedding day that his bride was Jewish, although the family was completely assimilated.

"I thought she was just trying to be mean, so I reciprocated by saying, 'Some people keep a dog or other pet at home. I'll have a Jewess,'" he recalled.

Soon after their marriage, his wife began delving into her Jewish roots and then started going to synagogue every Friday night.

"I thought, 'This is great – two or three hours every week without her, beer in the fridge and a football game on TV and friends over.'

"That was the first time I appreciated Shabbat."

While researching her genealogy in the Jewish historical archives, his wife, unbeknownst to him, dug into his family tree, triumphantly brandishing a sheaf of papers that proved he was also Jewish.

After getting over his shock, Bromson began going to the synagogue with his wife and meeting with the rabbi, learning about Judaism and undergoing conversion. He thought his biggest sacrifice would be keeping kosher, but then he learned about circumcision. He underwent a belated brit milah, and is able to joke today that everything in his life has been relatively easy since. He and his wife were remarried under the synagogue's chupah.

Devorah Shanowitz, co-director of the Chabad centre with her husband, stressed how difficult it was for Bromson to come here, confess his past and allow strangers to probe him.

But she believes it was worth it, to show that it's possible for people to change, even radically so.

"He won't let his children use the word 'hate,' not even about food," she said, "because he knows its toxicity."

Today, Bromson credits his wife with his transformation. "If I had not learned that I was Jewish, I think my life would have been wasted on nonsense."

Bromson elicited some guffaws when he said he does not think there is antisemitism in Poland today. He also said he himself has not experienced antisemitism.

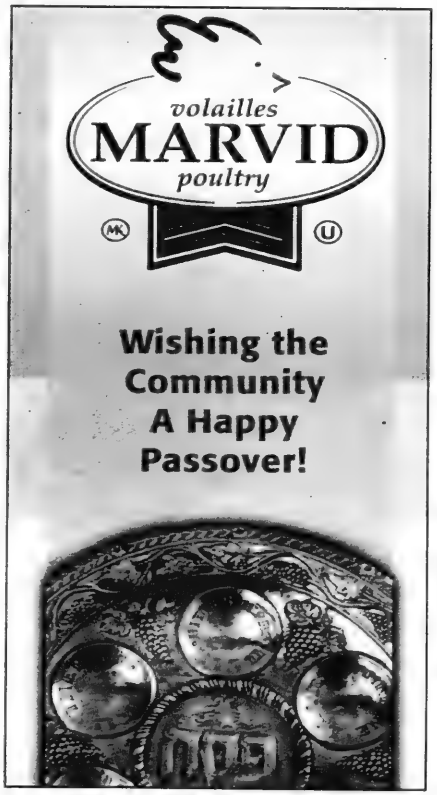
He raised some hackles when he refused to say how he felt about the state of Israel. "I am not a politician," he said.

Pressed on whether he believed Israel is the home of the Jewish nation, he only responded that "every people deserves a nation."

Some found it incredible that his wife's parents would have allowed her to marry him. Bromson said that, while his wife knew of her Jewish ancestry from the time she was a child, her parents spoke little of it. "The fact was belittled, not taken too much into account by them," he said.

If he could speak to his younger self, his advice would be: "Be proud of who you are, but everyone has to live together."

As many regrets as he has, the greatest, he said, is "I lost 22 years, not knowing I was Jewish. I am still catching up."



CJPAC party has record turnout

Cara Edell
Special to The CJN

More than 1,000 young professionals and 40 politicians from all levels of government recently mingled at the sixth annual ACTION party organized by the Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee (CJPAC).

The event, held this year March 29 at Toronto's Skywalk, encourages young Jewish Canadians and pro-Israel supporters to become politically active and make an impact on issues of concern in the community.

"Young professionals often think of politicians as being out of reach and assume it's impossible to impact Canadian politics. The ACTION party is an informal environment that helps build relationships while highlighting how easy it is to become politically engaged," said Sara Lefton, event co-chair along with Michelle Golfman, Matthew Lerner and Jared Tessis.

This year's party featured live entertainment, an open bar and hors d'oeuvres. Government officials in attendance included members of Parliament Carolyn Bennett and Monte Kwinter, Ontario Opposition Leader Tim Hudak, MPP Peter Shurman, Toronto Mayor Rob Ford, Coun. Josh Colle and Israeli Consul General Amir Gissin.

"The ACTION party is a unique and entertaining way to accomplish our mandate," Lefton said. "It allows us to showcase our efforts and to celebrate the work we do. It's one of our most recognized programs."

Matthew Solomon, a young professional who has attended the party for four years straight, said ACTION was the first Jewish event he experienced upon moving to Toronto from Montreal.

"Not only is it one of the premiere parties of the year in the Jewish community, but it's most paramount to bring young Jewish professionals and politicians together in order to promote pro-Israel leadership in the Diaspora and specifically here in Canada," he said.

Ben Rogul and Ruth Koziebrocki enjoy this year's CJPAC ACTION party.
[Cara Edell photo]

ACTION provides an opportunity for young professionals and politicians to unite in a relaxed and casual atmosphere, Lefton said. "We are constantly looking for different and unique places to hold our event and this year is no exception. With its striking views and sweeping windows, the Skywalk is a Toronto landmark, but it has never been used for an event of this nature."

A similar party is scheduled for Montreal on May 17.

Lefton said the event is not a fundraiser "in the traditional sense," as it is "focused on encouraging political engagement rather than donations for CJPAC. That said, all donations are used to fund programs that engage the community in political activity."

For more information on CJPAC, visit www.cjpac.ca.

Parliamentary committee to help build nations and peace

David Lazarus
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Liberal MP Irwin Cotler and Tory Senator Linda Frum are co-chairing a new committee that will enable Canadian parliamentarians of all political stripes to encourage nation-building and peace in the Middle East, Cotler announced at a March 27 Ottawa press conference.

Called the House-Senate Committee on Middle East Peace, Justice and the Rule of Law, it will serve as a non-partisan venue for "targeted efforts to help build free and democratic societies anchored in the rule of law," Cotler said.

He added that he would also welcome the participation of the new leader of the NDP, Thomas Mulcair.

Cotler said the committee is being formed in the context of the continuing upheaval and turmoil in the Arab world, including Egypt, Syria and elsewhere.

"We can't focus only on the Israeli-Palestinian issue," Cotler told *The CJN*. "Everything interacts, and we want to have a more comprehensive, a more global approach to fostering human rights and democratic institutions, and the rule of law."

Cotler also used the press conference to announce the formation of the Iranian Political Prisoner Advocacy Program, an initiative of the Inter-Parliamentary Group for Human Rights in Iran.

Cotler said the group will be modelled after the movement to free Soviet Jews in the 1970s and 1980s, and will hopefully see parliamentarians and politicians around the world "adopt" individual Iranian political prisoners to advocate on their behalf.

To read full story, go to cjnews.com

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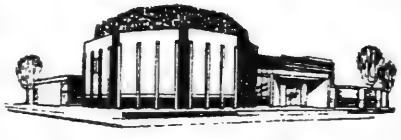

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CHAT choir performs rare medieval seder music

Compiled by CJN Staff

Students from the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto's Kimel Family Education Centre in Vaughan performed medieval seder music on March 27 as part of their "Sounds of Spring" musical concert at the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts.

It was likely the first performance of the two pieces in almost 400 years, according to a news release from the school. The school's TCK singers – eight boys and 16 girls – sang *Adir Hu* and *Ki Lo Naeh*, *Ki Lo Yaeh* to tunes that were published in a 1644 Haggadah by Christian scholar Johannes Ringel.

The Haggadah came to the attention of Tanenbaum-CHAT's director of education Paul Shaviv through a blog (onthemainline.blogspot.ca). Music teachers Jacklyn Klimitz and Janice Rose decoded and transcribed the music with the help of computer software.

The concert featured an eclectic selection of music including jazz, classic, Klezmer and a song from the musical *Wicked*.

"The medieval music is a rare window into how seder evenings must have sounded four centuries ago," Rose said. The performance can be seen at http://bit.ly/GX-h3XA.

Geneology web feature

Bill Gladstone
Special to The CJN

Utilizing modern mapping technology from Google Maps, a Jewish genealogy website has launched a new feature that allows researchers to view the geographical distribution of a specific surname on a map of Poland, decade by decade from the early 1800s to the first part of the 20th century. For more information about the Surname Distribution Mapper,, visit www.jri-poland.org. The site is free but users are required to register. To read entire article, please go to cjnews.com.

דער יידיש ווינקל

דזשערי קעין

פון מײַן וועלטלעכער פּסח הגדה
אַן איציק מאַנגער ליד וואָס שטעלט גאָט צום משפּט
די "אוהבי ישראל"
ביים טויטנלאַגער בעלזשעץ

איר וועט דאָס ליד פון איציק מאַנגער נישט געפינען אין קיין טראַדיציאָנעלער פּסח הגדה, אָבער דער אינהאַלט פון ליד שפּיגלט אָפֿ די נעשיכטע פון יידן דונט כיר זײַנען אַנטלאָפֿן פון פּרעמן און אַרויס פון מצרים. אָבער דער שלום וועלכן מיר זוכן נאָך אַלץ איז נישט געקומען נאָך פֿערציק יאָר וואַנדערן אין מדבר. כאָנגערס ליד שטעלט דיך וויִ אַ פֿראָגע אין מײַן הגדה– פֿאַרוואָס, דור אײַן דור אויס, געפינט מען נאָך אַלץ די תּאָמ וויללן פֿרײַנקין יידן?

אין אונדזער צײַט האָט חיטלער פֿויבירט פֿאַרניכטן דאָס יידישע פֿאָלק און כּמעט דערגרייכט זײַן ציל. הײַנט האָבן יידן זייער אייגענע מדינה אָבער די נײַע יידן האָסער לירערן און חילן אונדז ווידער אוכבראַנגען. וועגן מיר לייענען די הגדה דערמאָנען מיר אונדזער געשיכטע. דער טויטנלאָגער בעלזשעץ איז אַ וויטיקדיק קאָפּיטל אין דער געשיכטע פון אַנטיסעמיטיזם.

אין מײַן הגדה האָב איך אַרײַנגעשטעלט מאַנגערס ליד צו דערמאָנען די יונגע ביַם טיש ווי נאָענט דער בעלזשעץ טרעגלאָגער איז צו אונדזער ציט. מאַנגערס ליד, פֿאַר מיר, וויַזט אַז שלום פֿאַר יידן ליגט אין אונדזערע הענט – מיט אָדער אָן דעם אייבערשטנס הילף.

מיר שטאַרקן זיך אין מאַנגערס ליד. מיר אַלע וואָס זיצן אַרום סדר טיש זײַנען די עדה אמתע "אוהבי ישראל."

ר׳ משה לייב פון סאסאָוו טייטלט אויף די הויפּנס אַש,
(דער שטורעם האָט אָקאַרשט דוכגעוויטערט)
זײַן באָרד ציטערט, זײַן לייב און לעבן ביטערט:
– ..נאַ, נעם און זע, אַך גאָטעניו טי נאַש״.

ר׳ וואָלף פון זבאַראַזש מורמלט: הערט רבותי, הערט!״
(זײַן קול איז ווי אַן אָוונט-פֿידל מיד)
–דער אייבערשטער האָט זײַן ווײַנגאָרטן נישט אָפּגעהיט
אַ סימן: אָט די הפּקר-הויפּנס אויף דער ערד.״

ר׳ מאיר׳ל פון פרעמישלאַן אויף זײַן אַלטן שטעקן אָנגעשפּאַרט
שטייט און וואַרט, פֿיבערנדיק און צערט:
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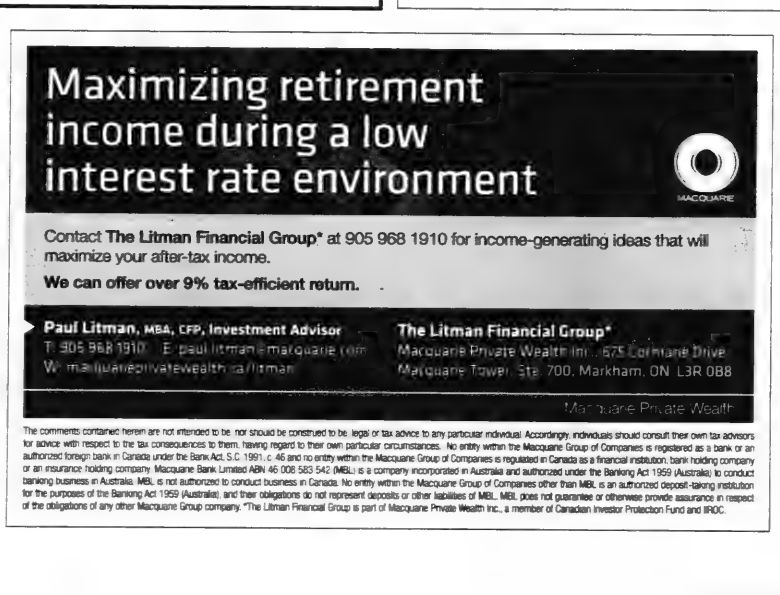
נאָר מיר די גאַליציאַנער מעקן דיך אויף אייביק אויס
פון דער עדה אמתע, אוהבי ישראל.״

פון דער רעדאַקציע: אויב איר האָט געדאַנקען תּען אונדזער וויצקל לאָזט וויסן, דורך פֿאַקס אָדער בליקפֿאַקס: *cjninfo@gmail.com*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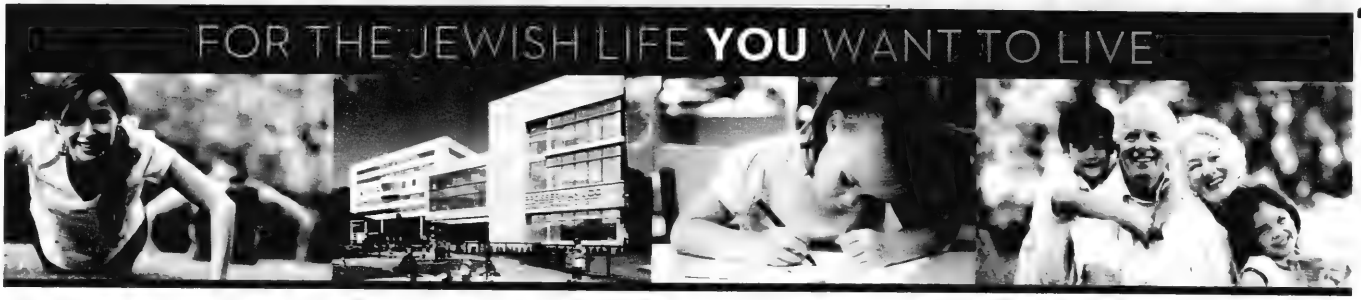


NEW SPRING/SUMMMER PROGRAMS

CHILDREN & FAMILY

Afternoon of Hocus-Pocus
Tuesday April 10
2:30 - 4pm

Bubby, Zaidy & Grandkids Challah Making!
Sunday May 6, 1-3pm

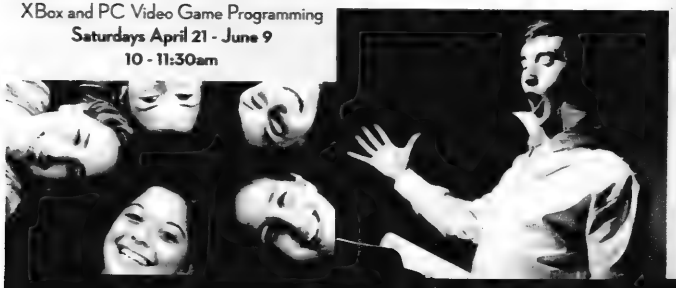
Mystic Drumz
Thursdays May 3 - 24
10 - 10:45am

TEEN PROGRAMS

Interactive Computer Animation
Tuesdays April 17 - June 5
5:30 - 6:30pm

Computer Java Programming for Beginners
Saturdays April 21 - June 9
10 - 11:30am

XBox and PC Video Game Programming
Saturdays April 21 - June 9
10 - 11:30am



ADULTS, ZOOMERS & BEYOND

Social Media Computer Class
Tuesdays April 17 - May 22
2:15 - 3:30pm

Community Bingo
Tuesday April 17, 1 - 3pm
Thursday May 3, 7 - 9pm

Jewish Words: Weapons of Mass Destruction
Tuesday May 29, 1:30-3pm

OPERA WITH IAIN SCOTT

Insights Into Mozart's Operas
Wednesdays 7-9pm
May 23 - The Early Operas and Idomeneo
May 30 - The Abduction from the Seraglio & The Marriage of Figaro
June 6 - Cosi fan Tutte and Don Giovanni
June 13 - La Clemenza di Tito and The Magic Flute

CENTRE FOR DYNAMIC LEARNING

THE COMING WAR BETWEEN THE GENERATIONS: CAN WE RESOLVE IT ?

The Centre for Dynamic Learning is proud to host DAVID CRAVIT, author of **"The New Old"** (2008) and Vice-President of Zoomer Media as he launches his new book, **BEYOND AGE RAGE.**

Is there a real 'war' or is it just rhetoric? What are the issues? What's coming next? Join us for this enlightening talk and meet David Cravit on **Thursday, April 26 at 7:30pm** when the author will discuss the key ideas in his provocative new book. We look forward to a lively and stimulating evening.

Light refreshments will be served.

This event is co-sponsored by the Slodovnick Endowment Fund.

BECOME FIT AND HEALTHY AT ANY AGE

Tuesdays, May1 to May 22, 7:30 – 9:30pm

Experts in fitness and nutrition discuss key wellness issues about maintaining an active lifestyle into one's 80s and beyond.

May 1: Nutrition &weight loss: Sorting out fact from hype. Presenter: Nutritionist Barbara Silverstein.

May 8: Get serious about getting fit after the age of 55 Presenter: Personal Trainer Edna Levitt

May 15: Become a runner or cyclist at any age Presenter: Running coach Bennett Cohen

May 22: Stress and Aging - Stop the biological clock: Strategies for Stress Reduction. Presenter: TBA

ETHICS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Thursdays May 3 to May 31, 1:30 – 3:30pm

Come join us as we explore some key issues together, inviting thoughtful people to present background on a topic leading to discussing such issues as:

How far should free speech be allowed to go if it might be harmful to someone or some group? Should someone who may be ill and in pain, and wishes to get help to end their lives, be allowed to do so, or should the principle of life preservation prevail? What are the ethical obligations on the media to be fair and balanced in all cases? Are they? In business, should the right to make money in the free market be limited only by whatever legal regulations are in place or should ethical considerations be equally constraining? Should society expect us to donate organs to fill the need or should we all have the right to refuse both while alive and post-mortem?

Dates and presenters are being finalized for these sessions and will be announced in early April. Check out the website for up-to-date information and look for our flyer coming out around Passover...

For more information or to register, contact **416.638.1881 x.4235** or **prossermanjcc.com**

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What type are you?

Sue Epstein
Special to The CJN

There are two types of cooks when it comes to Passover.

There are those who scramble through recipes and old notes trying to recreate the Passovers of their childhood, and serve the same traditional dishes each year.

Then there are those who want their seder meal to be modern and sophisticated. They watch food shows on television and browse through gourmet cookbooks for inspiration and to see what can be converted to a Passover recipe.

Whichever type of cook you are, there is one indisputable dish that will be on almost everyone's menu – the *pièce de résistance* of the seder table: chicken soup with matzah balls, like your bubbie made.

BUBBIE'S MATZAH BALL SOUP

When buying chicken to make soup, it's preferable to use large chickens because they are meatier.

4-5 lb. chicken and bones cut into eight pieces
1 or more turkey necks
16 cups water
1 large onion peeled and cut in half
2 stalks of celery, cut in 1/2-in. pieces
1 small parsnip root, peeled
1 small celery root, peeled and cut into quarters
3 large carrots, peeled and cut into 1/4- to 1/2-in. rounds
5 garlic cloves
1 tbsp.paprika
1/2 bunch fresh parsley
1/2 bunch fresh dill
2 bay leaves
salt and pepper

Wash the chicken pieces and turkey necks and place in a large stockpot. Add all vegetables and top with water. Add remaining ingredients. Bring to a simmer and skim. Let simmer, half-covered, for about 2 hours. For best results and a clear, flavourful broth, do not let the soup boil at any time. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serves 8-10.

Serving Tips: Cool down before refrigerating. Before reheating, skim all the fat from the top and discard. The soup can be served with or without the vegetables. I like to pass the vegetables and necks separately and let guests serve themselves.

MATZAH BALLS

If you end up with leftover matzah balls they're delicious sautéed in oil with browned onions and served as a side dish.

1 cup water
1/2 cup margarine or vegetable oil
1 cup matzah meal
1/2 tsp. kosher salt
3 eggs
pinch of white pepper

In a saucepan bring water and margarine to a boil. While still on the flame, carefully add matzah meal and salt and mix together to make a paste (about 1 minute). Cool down to a temperature comfortable to the touch.

Continued on page 37

Bringing back recipes from the past

Continued from page 36

Add eggs one by one (if the mixture is too hot, the eggs will coagulate), mixing after each addition until eggs are completely incorporated (this step can be done with an electric mixer).

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. With wet hands, shape mixture into balls and drop into boiling water. (Make balls smaller than desired since they will almost double in size while cooking.)

Boil for about 45-50 minutes until the balls float, removing with a slotted spoon. Makes about 24.

MUSHROOM PATE

A delicious appetizer or side dish for the modern seder table. Serve on matzah.

1 tbsp. vegetable oil
1/4 cup chopped onion
1 oz. dried porcini mushrooms
2 tbsp. hot water
1/4 cup kosher dry red wine
1 lb. mixed wild mushrooms such as oyster, cremini and shiitake
1/2 tsp. salt, or to taste
1/2 tsp. pepper, or to taste
2 tbsp. lemon juice

Combine vegetable oil and onion in a wide skillet. Cook over medium heat until translucent, about 5 minutes.

Combine dried mushrooms with hot water and red wine. Allow to soak a few minutes until soft, then drain and chop mushrooms, reserving the soaking liquid.

Chop the fresh wild mushrooms. Add to onion mixture. Add chopped porcini mushrooms and cook on high heat for 2-3 minutes. Add reserved soaking liquid. Cook another minute or so.

Purée in a blender. If blend is too dry, add a little more wine. Add salt, pepper and lemon juice. Serve with matzah. Makes about 1 cup.

And for the vegetarians or those looking for healthy dishes…

WHOLE GRAIN MATZAH KUGEL

3 whole-grain or whole-wheat matzot
6 eggs
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 tsp. kosher salt
1/4 tsp. cinnamon
1/2 cup golden raisins
1/2 cup chopped black walnuts or English walnuts
4 apples, shredded (use a combination of granny smith and golden delicious)
1/3 cup orange juice
3 to 4 tsp. cinnamon sugar
1/4 cup vegetable oil

Preheat oven to 350. Break matzot into pieces. Soak in warm water until soft, but still with a little "bite," like al dente pasta (about 2 minutes). Drain.

Beat eggs. Add sugar, salt and cinnamon. Stir in matzah. Add raisins, nuts and apples. Pour into greased 9x13-in. baking pan. Drizzle orange juice over top. Sprinkle with cinnamon sugar. Drizzle with oil. Bake for 45 minutes or until browned. Let sit for a few minutes before cutting. Makes 8 servings.

Courts look at ability to pay for activities

Family Matters
by
John Syrtash
B.A. (Hon.), LL.B.
Counsel
Garfin Zeidenberg LLP
Family Lawyer & Mediator
for 31 years

Question: I live in Ontario. When I retire I will be earning $42,000 per year. My ex-wife also has other children, and expenses such as private school, camp, psychologist. Do I have to pay for these in addition to the support indicated in the table? For example, if the total of these expenses is $30,000 and she earns the same as me, do I have to pay an additional $15,000?

Answer: It depends on many factors. First, the expense must be found by the court to be "special or extraordinary." If a court is to impose such payments, it will do so against both parents in proportion to their respective gross (not net, after-tax) incomes.

So which expenses will the courts in Ontario truly consider "special and extraordinary" and under what circumstances? Under section 7 of the Child Support Guidelines the court must "take into account the necessity of the expense in relation to the means of the spouses and those of the child and to the family's spending pattern prior to the separation."

In addition, if the recipient spouse gets a tax break or other benefit for a day-care expense or obtains a subsidy that the other spouse will not benefit from when he pays his share, then the court must take that into account when calculating his contribution.

Moreover, if someone is retiring, then even if his children were attending private schools at the time he separated from his wife, it may be that it is no longer realistic to expect him to contribute to that luxury. That is especially true if making that payment over and above the table amount would compromise his ability to afford basics such as food, clothing and shelter on an after-tax basis.

The courts first look at the payer's ability to pay. If it is there then the court will almost always find day care or nannies to be "special or extraordinary" if the custodial parent works, is currently looking for work or is going to school.

Equally important are extended health-insurance premiums or specific non-OHIP health costs, especially dentists. And if there is enough money, which there may not be in your case, orthodontists are also likely to be important. Psychologists? Maybe not, if a child psychiatrist that OHIP covers can provide the same services. But with very long waiting lists, that may not be possible or in the child's best interest.

Overnight camp you can no longer afford (day camp, you might). But for higher income-earners, it's usually ordered. The toughest questions: extra-curricular activities, like hockey or other sporting opportunities. Are they truly "special or extraordinary" activities?

Are hockey, figure skating and the like "special or extraordinary" expenses?

The answer depends not only on the payer's ability to pay, as discussed above, but also on where you live. In Ontario (unlike some other provinces), a Judge would likely order both parents to contribute to at least part of their child's hockey expenses in proportion to their respective gross incomes.

In one reported case, a Judge ordered that the husband would not have to contribute to skating lessons but would have to pay towards the special travel costs of the child's skating competition overseas. Under section 7 of the Child Support Guidelines, much depends on the facts of each case: the number of children, the income of each of the parents, who has what kind of custody, the type of expense, which province, and whether the expense was paid for at the time of separation.

More specific information about special or extraordinary expenses can be obtained by consulting the Spousal Support Database at www.spousalsupport.com.

To all my readers and from my family, Garfin Zeidenberg and I, we would like to wish you a "chag kasher v'sameach!"

Mr. Syrtash is Counsel to Garfin Zeidenberg LLP, Suite 800, 5255 Yonge Street (at Norton) just north of Mel Lastman Square, Civic Centre Subway station, Toronto, ON M5G 1E6. John Syrtash can be reached at (416) 642-5410, Cell (416) 886-0359. Visit www.freemychild.com; www.spousalsupport.com; www.garfinzeidenberg.com.

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Russian Holocaust scholar visits University of Toronto

Michelle Bitran
Special to The CJN

In discussions about the Holocaust, the number of Jews murdered on Soviet territory is often overlooked, minimized, or simply not examined due to a lack of accessible information, says Ilya Altman, a leading scholar in Holocaust studies from the Russian State University for Humanities in Moscow and a Yad Vashem fellow.

Altman was visiting Toronto for the first time to give the annual Chancellor Rose and Ray Wolfe Lecture in Holocaust Studies. His talk was the keynote lecture of an international conference on Soviet Jewry during the Holocaust held by the Centre for Jewish Studies at the University of Toronto.

The conference, titled "Jewish Life and Death in the Soviet Union during World War II," brought together academics from Europe, Israel and the United States during the last weekend of March.

"Soviet propaganda... was very clear that Nazis killing Jews was not special, but that they were killed as Soviet citizens," said Altman.

He added that between 2.6 to 2.8 million Jews were killed on Soviet territory during World War II. This staggering number represents nearly half of all the Jewish deaths in the Holocaust. But this number was often eclipsed by the overall total of 27 million Soviet deaths during the war, he said.

Ilya Altman
[Michele Bitran photo]

Altman was working in the Central State Archive in Russia when, in the late 1980s, he found an extensive collection of accounts about the murder of Jews on Soviet land, and of how the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee tried to commemorate the horrible deaths. In 2008, he published an edited collection of these accounts, called *The Unknown Black Book*.

"Everybody's family lost somebody during the war," said Altman, explaining that this is partly why the massive number of Soviet Jewish deaths didn't receive special attention in Russia.

Another reason, he added, was because the killing of Jews often occurred in shooting massacres or forced marches, and not in the death camps that are often associated with the Holocaust.

Even today, decades after research began on the topic of Soviet Jews in World War II, people around the world, and especially in Russia, are just beginning to realize the extent of the organized murder of Jews on Soviet territory.

"Only in more recent years, Russian society has come to understand the Holocaust," Altman said.

In 1991, Altman co-founded the Russian Research and Educational Holocaust Center in Moscow. It was the first organization of its kind in eastern Europe.

As he explained in his lecture, which contained information and stories from the archival content that fills *The Unknown Black Book*, Altman has made it an important part of his career to ensure that Soviet Jewish Holocaust victims are commemorated and that the Holocaust becomes a part of Russia's school curriculum.

Altman said he hopes to continue to bring to light the unknown atrocities and to have the Russian people see them as distinct from the millions of Soviet casualties of the war.

Altman began and concluded his lecture with the same message about the significance of public understanding and acknowledgement of the Holocaust in Russia: "Holocaust education in my country is very, very important," he said.

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PYNK addresses the needs of young breast cancer patients

Carolyn Blackman
Staff Reporter

Dr. Ellen Warner, a medical oncologist at Sunnybrook Hospital, says she is passionate about PYNK.

A breast cancer program for young women, PYNK is the first of its kind in Canada to address their special clinical, psychological, research and educational needs.

Warner said the seeds for the program were planted in 2004 at the San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium, when she attended a session on young women with breast cancer.

"We discovered the unique issues these young women face, which the majority of women with breast cancer, who are on average in their 60s, do not have to deal with.

"Some of these issues are a higher risk of recurrence and death, infertility, early menopause, sexual dysfunction and body image problems, more fragile relationships with partners/husbands, small kids to take care of, financial pressures because of job loss or interruption of schooling."

Ellen Warner

When the session was over, she said, she and her colleague decided that these women needed a special program.

One of the first obstacles they faced was raising enough money to hire a nurse specifically devoted to helping the women navigate the complex maze of appointments, referrals and tests, and support them and their family from the time of diagnosis through treatment and followup.

"The hospital administration loved the idea, but couldn't spare a cent to make it happen. But when I shared my vision with Ricky Fitzerman, a Jewish breast cancer patient – who has since died – she got so excited she got together a group of friends and did an event at Beth Sholom Synagogue called Maj 4 Mammaries, which raised $65,000."

In addition to the special support the PYNK program gives young women, she said, "we also perform a lot of research focusing on questions critical to this young age group, including a collaboration with Harvard's Dana-Farber Cancer Center, looking at the relationship between tumour biology, which is more aggressive in young women, and patient ethnicity."

Another mandate of the program, she said, is to educate physicians about the need to diagnose cancer earlier in these women, and to educate other oncologists about how to manage the young women more appropriately.

"Unfortunately, there are still doctors out there who don't bother referring these women for fertility preservation before they start chemo, because they [don't realize these women] can freeze embryos or eggs and safely get pregnant later."

The concept of the program has appealed to a number of physicians, she said, and last year she was contacted by Tel Hashomer Hospital in Israel, who wanted to copy it.

They are now desperate, she said, because now that Fitzerman has died – a second event raised $100,000 – there is no one able to take on the task of fundraising.

"We had another funding source, but because of the economy, they will no longer be able to fund us. We are desperately hoping that PYNK will become someone's pet charity."

TZEDAKAH SANDWICHES: Bialik Hebrew Day School students Alex S. and Serena L-R., along with their classmates in Grade 7, prepared sandwiches that they brought to school to donate to Ve'ahavta, which will be distributed to Toronto's homeless.

Heart disease kills more women than cancer

Heart disease and stroke is the number 1 killer of women in Canada, taking nearly 35,000 lives each year. That's more than all forms of cancer combined.

Most women have at least one risk factor for heart disease and stroke, yet women aren't aware of this.

In 2011, the Heart and Stroke Foundation found that too many Canadians are in denial about the risk factors for heart disease. There are risk factors you can't control, such as age, gender, family history and ethnicity. But some of the risk factors contributing to heart disease and stroke can be controlled.

Reducing the risks of heart disease and stroke are as simple as physical activity. Physical inactivity has been found to be the most common of all risk factors contributing to heart disease and stroke. A recent Statistics Canada Canadian Health Measures Survey revealed that 85 per cent of Canadians don't meet the recommended amount of 150 minutes a week of moderate physical activity. That translates to only 22 minutes a day.

Physical inactivity is a contributing factor in most of the risk factors of heart disease that you can change, such as diabetes, obesity, high cholesterol and high blood pressure. Physical activity helps prevent heart disease by lowering blood pressure and increasing levels of good cholesterol in the blood, among many other things. It can also help control blood sugar levels if you have diabetes.

Fitness Corner

Felyce Zomparelli

Evidence shows that physical activity provides significant benefits among all ages, ethnicities, disabilities and chronic conditions, even if you remain overweight. Exercise can also help those who already have heart disease prevent additional heart attacks.

Heart disease and stroke kill one in three Canadians, but they don't have to. Everyone can prevent and reduce their risk of heart disease by not smoking, achieving a healthy body weight, being physically active for at least 30 minutes a day and eating a healthy diet.

If you are new to exercise, consult an expert, such as a personal trainer, to help you get started. And always check with a doctor before starting any exercise program.

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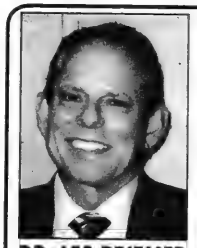
CHAT BOWLEREINU: A student-driven initiative of the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto, Bowlereinu brought together students from the Jewish high school with their counterparts from Zareinu Educational Centre, which serves students with special needs. Pictured, from left, are event co-chair Adeena Zeldin, Zareinu student Cory Bickof, Zareinu student Tuvi Rockove, and event co-chair Jonah Hart.



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RHA MILESTONE: Robbins Hebrew Academy/USDS held a 50th Birthday Gala on March 22 and an Alumni Shabbat Dinner on March 23. The events brought together parents, educators and former students, many of whom hadn't seen each other in years. Proceeds from the gala will go to technology initiatives, student bursaries and alumni efforts at the school. Pictured, from left, are events co-chair Shauna Merkur, Sharlene Wilder, Andrea Zecharia, Heather Mincer, Cherie Stekel and events co-chair Sara Gottlieb.

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As you prepare for the holiday of freedom, what does freedom mean to you?

An occasional feature

Freedom from our *i-pressers*

It's astonishing to think that for the first time in our 2,000-year Diaspora, 21st-century Jews enjoy the opportunities and freedoms to freely practise our faith and to be as much a part of the general society as we wish. But is it true freedom? I look at so many Jews around me, both religious and secular, who are experiencing an ever-tightening stricture of their lives. Today, the great "oppressor" and divider are all the wonderful technologies that enslave us to every single ringtone, vibration and message that shows up on our phone or computer screen. Our attention spans are becoming increasingly more limited, and it's becoming harder to enjoy the people and experiences around us.

Rabbi N. Daniel Korobkin

Yes, I'm free, but freedom isn't always what it's cracked up to be if that freedom prevents me from enjoying life. Our sages were onto something when they said (Pirkei Avot 6:2), "The only real free person is one who engages in the Torah." They were trying to convey how many distractions are out there in the world that prevent us from stopping to smell the roses and appreciating the more profound aspects of life. Studying Judaism and meditating in prayer refocus our attentions to the really important aspects of life.

The freest time of my week is on Shabbat, when I'm sitting down with my family to enjoy their company and catch up from the busy week. No phones, no BlackBerries or iPhones, no text messaging, no e-mails. It's a *mechayeh*! That is why, especially today, our mandate is to experience "freedom" when we're at our seders this Passover. We've achieved freedom from our *oppressors*, now's our chance to achieve freedom from our *i-pressers*, those little gadgets with their screens and buttons we press that take us out of this real world of family, friends and love of Judaism.

Enjoy your freedom this Passover!

Rabbi N. Daniel Korobkin is spiritual leader of Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation in Thornhill.

The heart of the immigrant's journey

Admittedly, freedom wasn't something I thought about much as I was growing up. It is not that I took freedom for granted, because I didn't, but that thoughts of freedom were more within a historical context.

I lived a blessed childhood. I grew up in a loving family where each of us had a distinct voice. Cote St Luc, in Montreal, was a safe, close-knit Jewish neighbourhood. I had the freedom to choose my path in all areas of work, love and play. Freedom was integral to my life and meant choice and opportunity.

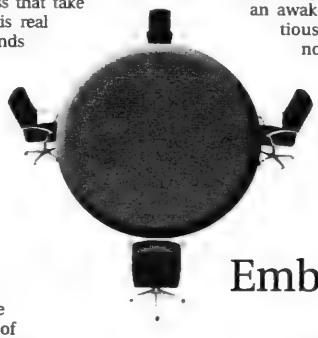
Janis Roth

Fast forward to Sept. 11, 2001, a day that shook me to the core and signalled a contemporary horror, a new reality and, with it, an awakening, a cautiousness, that has not dissipated.

It's been 11 years since then and 9 years since I started working at JIAS Toronto, where I've come to understand that freedom, more than anything else, is a core determinant of every person's future and at the heart of every immigrant's journey. Freedom to step more lightly, to trust, to stand proud, to be counted and included, to feel safe, to raise children without fear, to earn a living and to openly live Jewish values and tradition.

The holiday of freedom reminds me that while freedom remains elusive across the globe, every one of us can do our part to ensure freedom for the newcomers to our community and for our loved ones and colleagues with whom we interact every day.

Janis Roth is executive director of JIAS Toronto.



No one can take away your dream

An inward-looking journey to explore the true meaning of freedom started, in my case, 130 years ago, when my great- great-grandfather, Rabbi David Gissin, left his home in Ukraine and boarded a ship to Eretz Israel. With him on the ship was a herd of cows that he just bought with all his life savings. Being an avid reader of the Torah, he dreamed all his life of the green slopes of the Judean Mountains. In his vision, he saw his cows grazing lazily against the biblical backdrop.

Amir Gissin

It never happened.

Half the cows died at sea, while the other half was handed, upon arrival to Jaffa port, to a Bedouin shepherd. The shepherd left with the herd toward the mountains of Judea, and was never seen again. Six generations later, our family still awaits his return…

Rabbi Gissin was terribly naïve, but he was a free man. He went against common wisdom and left his hometown to start a new life, based only on a dream, a vision. For me, that is the ultimate form of freedom – to act upon your vision and to follow your dream. He left our family a legacy of true love for the Land of Israel, and a somewhat limited talent for business.

Yes, sometimes someone will disappear with your herd, but no one can take away your dream.

For me, that is the true meaning of freedom.

Amir Gissin is consul general of Israel to Ontario and Western Canada.

Embrace our duty as a people

Freedom has many definitions and philosophical concepts behind it, such as being in a state of liberty, free will and no oppression. However, one dimension of freedom that stands out for me is the concept of political and national independence or sovereignty. That freedom to me is called the State of Israel.

For thousands of years, the Jewish nation has been persecuted, exiled and dispersed. The dream of returning to the Jewish ancestral homeland, however, never vanished. Regardless of the geo-political tensions surrounding the State of Israel, the Jewish people have come home. It is a warm and welcoming home, where being at liberty and being Jewish go hand in hand – a sovereign entity that is not a state for the Jews, but rather a Jewish state that applies the liberties and freedoms it has always desired to all of its citizens. I cannot help but think of how fortunate I am to be able to experience the freedom that my ancestors only dreamed of.

Alexandra Izso

As Passover approaches, it is important to remember to embrace our duty as the Jewish People – the duty to preserve our sovereignty while never forgetting the struggle and patience it took to attain it. Freedom is very powerful in granting individual liberties, but there is nothing more powerful than a people, previously dispersed around the world, being able to say that they are finally free together.

Alexandra Izso is a fourth-year political economy student at Carleton University.

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Mossad reducing activity in Iran, *Time* reports

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NEW YORK — A *Time* magazine report revealed on Friday that Israeli intelligence services have scaled back their covert operations inside Iran.

According to senior security officials who spoke to the magazine, operations have been reduced in areas such as high-profile missions, including assassinations and detonations at Iranian missile bases, as well as in recruiting spies inside the Iranian nuclear program and efforts to gather on-the-ground intelligence.

The report further states that according to one official, the reductions have caused "increasing dissatisfaction" within the Mossad, Israel's intelligence agency. Another official credits the decrease in activities to the reluctance of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who the official says is worried about the outcome if the operations are discovered.

According to *Time*, Iranian intelligence already cracked a cell trained and equipped by the Mossad. Western intelligence confirmed that the detailed confession of Majid Jamali Fashid over the January 2010 assassination by motorcycle bomb of nuclear scientist Massoud Ali Mohmmadi was genuine, and blamed a third country for exposing the cell.

Scaling back covert operations against Iran carries costs, *Time* magazine said, especially as Iran hurries to disperse its centrifuges into facilities deep underground. In one intelligence finding, an Israeli official says Iran itself estimates that sabotage to date has set back its centrifuge program by two full years. The computer virus known as Stuxnet is only the best known of a series of efforts to slow the Iranian program.

Ali Khamenei

That effort involves a variety of governments besides Israel, as well as equipment made to purposely malfunction after being tampered with before it physically entered Iran, the report says. The setbacks have prompted Iran to announce it would manufacture all components of its nuclear program itself – something outside experts are highly skeptical Tehran has the ability to actually do.

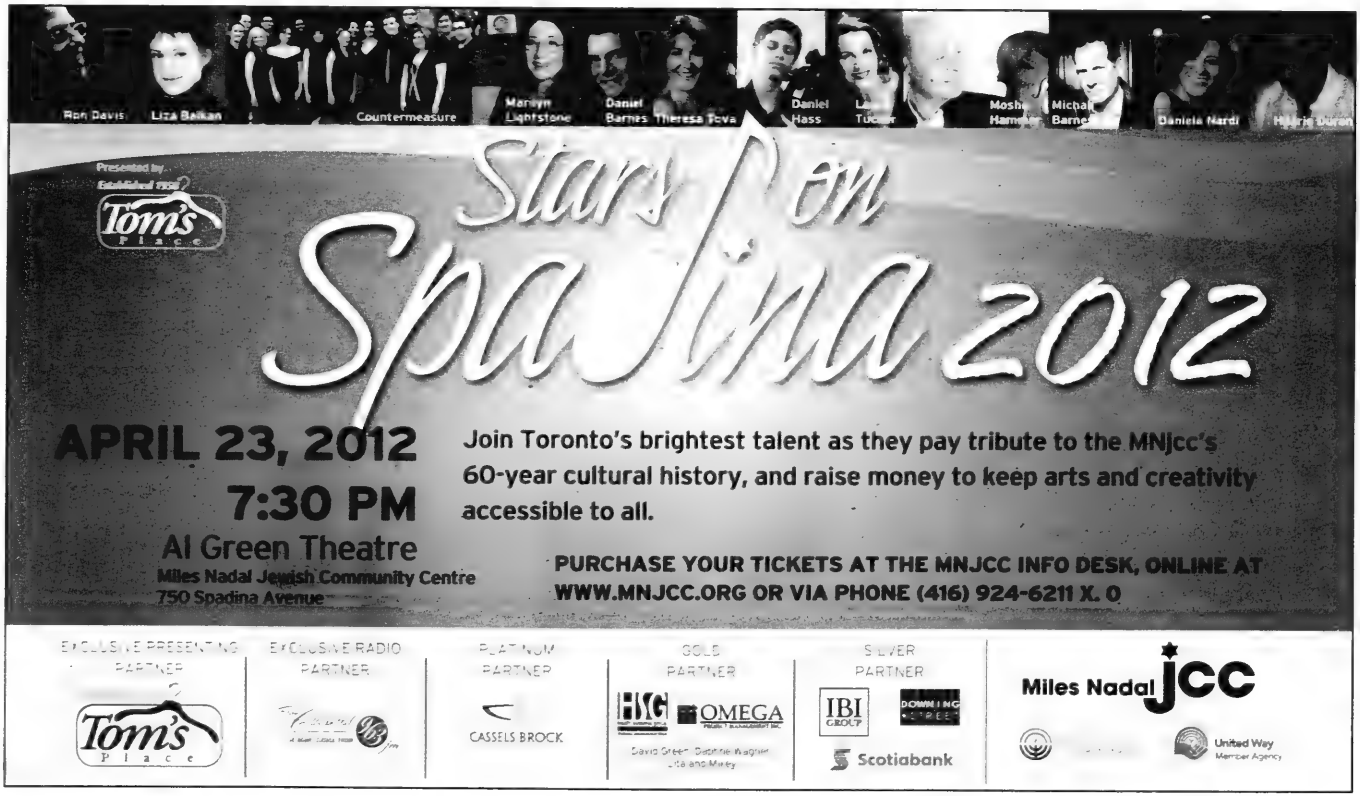
In related news, citing intelligence sources, Sky News is reporting that a secret Iranian network of assassins is under orders to attack Jewish, Israeli and western targets in Turkey.

The organization behind the attack is called Unit 400, a secret wing of Islamic Jihad's al-Quds Brigades, under the direct command of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Sky reported over the weekend.

"Unit 400 of the Quds Force has been developing in the last few months a standing operating procedure for carrying out an attack in Turkey against western targets as well as Israeli and Jewish," an intelligence source told Sky News. "It is our firm assessment that these procedures are in a very advanced stage, and that the intention is to act on the plans very soon."

A document obtained by Sky News also suggests that Unit 400 is behind the car bomb attack in New Delhi that injured the wife of an Israeli diplomat, as well as attempted attacks in the Georgian capital of Tbilisi and in Thailand.

Attacks on Israeli targets have occurred in recent years in Turkey, including last year when six Turkish civilians were hurt during an attack on the Israeli Consulate in Istanbul blamed on Unit 400.



Argentina resumes investigation into bombings

© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

NEW YORK — Israel's UN envoy praised Argentina for reinvigorating its investigation on Friday of a deadly 1994 bombing of a Jewish centre in Buenos Aires that Argentine authorities have blamed on Iran.

"I think they're re-energizing" their work on the case, Israel's UN Ambassador Ron Prosor told reporters.

"In the past, there was not a real motivation to check [the facts]," he said. "I see it differently today. One should give them credit for it. I see it differently today on the Argentinian side."

The bombing of the Argentine Israeli Mutual Association building killed 85 people and injured hundreds of others. In 2007, Argentine authorities secured Interpol arrest warrants for five Iranians and a Lebanese in connection with the attack.

Tehran denied links to the bombing but last July offered to hold talks with Argentina to start "shedding light" on the case.

The bombing virtually froze Argentina's relations with Iran, though the two countries have recently expressed a desire to have better relations.

Argentine President Cristina Fernandez told the UN General Assembly last September that Buenos Aires was ready to engage in dialogue with Iran.

Concerned about a possible warming of ties between Iran and Argentina, including a sharp increase in bilateral trade, western and Israeli officials expressed concern that Buenos Aires was quietly reaching out to Tehran while they were seeking to isolate Iran over its nuclear program.

They also voiced concerns that Argentina might have lost its interest in pursuing investigations of the 1994 Jewish centre attack, as well as the 1992 bombing of the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires, in which 29 people were killed.

The Islamic Jihad Organization, believed to be linked to Iran and the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, claimed responsibility for the 1992 bombing.

For more than a decade, Argentina appeared to do little to investigate the two attacks. But former Argentine president Nestor Kirchner vowed to reopen the cases when he took office in 2003, calling the failure to push investigation of the cases "a national disgrace."

Several years later, former Iranian president Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani was among those indicted by Argentine prosecutors for the 1994 bombing and sought by Interpol.

Fernandez, who is Kirchner's widow and was re-elected to a second term last year, and Argentine Foreign Minister Hector Timerman were invited by Israel's Deputy Foreign Minister Daniel Ayalon to visit Israel this year, Argentina's Jewish News Agency reported earlier this month.

Ayalon extended the invitation during a visit to Argentina to mark the 20th anniversary of the Israeli Embassy bombing, according to the news agency, which quoted him as saying the trip would deepen "the level of strategic and political dialogue between Argentina and Israel."

Globe Theatre urged to cancel Israeli company's invite

JTA

JERUSALEM — Three dozen British directors, writers and actors called on Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London to cancel an invitation to an Israeli theatre company.

In an open letter published March 29 in the *Guardian*, the cultural figures expressed "dismay and regret" that Israel's National Theater, Habima, will perform *The Merchant of Venice* in the Globe to Globe festival in April. The six-week festival at the Globe will feature Shakespeare's 37 plays performed in 37 languages. A Palestinian theatre company is scheduled to perform *Richard II* in Arabic.

Habima "has a shameful record of involvement with illegal Israeli settlements in occupied Palestinian territory," the letter said, citing the fact the company has agreed to perform in the culture centres of two large Israeli settlements and threatened repercussions against any actors or directors who decide out of conscience not to perform there.

"By inviting Habima, Shakespeare's Globe is undermining the conscientious Israeli actors and playwrights who have refused to break international law," the letter said.

Among the signatories to the letter are actress Emma Thompson and playwright Caryl Churchill.

Canadian immigrant wins Israeli talent show

JTA

JERUSALEM — A Canadian immigrant to Israel won the first season of Israel's musical talent reality show *The Voice*.

Kathleen Reiter, 23, who made aliyah from Montreal just weeks before her audition, won the competition last Saturday night, receiving the most votes from the Israeli viewing audience. Reiter won an international recording contract with Universal Helicon, an Israeli record label.

She already spoke Hebrew, thanks to her Hebrew-speaking Israeli parents.

Reiter was mentored by Israeli pop star Sarit Hadad. She defeated finalist Raz Shmueli, who was mentored by Israeli rock star Aviv Geffen.

The Voice is based on the successful U.S. model and received very high ratings in Israel.

The finalists will set off for a countrywide tour in May, in which they will perform their best-known songs, along with some of the songs that made their mentors famous.

Kathleen Reiter

With files from Ha'aretz

Abbas honours anti-Israel reporter

Barak Ravid

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JERUSALEM — Nearly two years have passed since longtime American journalist Helen Thomas was forced to resign after making antisemitic comments on camera.

Since then, Thomas has been the subject of fierce criticism from both ends of the American political spectrum and from her fellow journalists. But on Sunday, she received an award – an honour reportedly from none other than Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

In May 2010 at a White House event commemorating Jewish Heritage Week, Thomas, the senior White House writer, was asked for her opinion of Israel. "Tell them that they need to get out of Palestine and return home to Germany, Poland, and America," Thomas responded on camera.

As a result of her comment, an onslaught of public criticism forced Thomas to apologize and retire. Shortly after her retirement, however, Thomas claimed she had said "exactly what she thought." As a result of the comments, the Society of Professional Journalists decided to discontinue the yearly lifetime achievement award bearing Thomas' name.

Helen Thomas

It seems, however, that there is, in fact, someone who sees Thomas and her comments in a more positive light. On Sunday, dozens of diplomats and journalists assembled in Washington for an event in her honour. The man responsible for organizing the event was the head of the Palestine Liberation Organization Mission to the United States, Maen Areikat.

Representatives of the PLO in Washington released a statement claiming that the text of the prize was written to "recognize Thomas' long career in the field of journalism, during which she defended the Palestinian position every step of the way."

The event was also attended by PLO executive committee member Hanan Ashrawi, who presented the medal to Thomas, bestowing upon her the honour said to have come from Abbas himself. According to the Washington PLO office's statement, Ashrawi "presented Thomas with the appreciation and blessing of the president and the Palestinian people for all of her actions supporting Palestine in the West."

Three months ago, Thomas, 91, granted an interview to CNN, her first after a long period of silence following the events that caused the embarrassing end to her career. She did not repeat her previous comments, though she blamed the Zionist lobby in Washington for distorting her comments.

"Everything is distorted, but I don't care," Thomas said. "You have organized lobbyists in favour of Israel. You can't open your mouth. I can call the president of the U.S. anything in the book, but you say one thing about Israel and you're off limits."

When asked if she had any regrets, Thomas replied, "I have regrets that everybody has misinterpreted it and distorted it. You have [former White House press secretary] Ari Fleischer and [Anti-Defamation League president] Abe Foxman distorting everything."

Will Toulouse murders affect French election?

Daniel Hoffman
JTA

PARIS — With the first round of France's presidential election less than four weeks away, the attacks that left four Jews and three French soldiers dead are reshaping the race – but for now, it's not clear exactly how.

In the days leading up to the attacks, President Nicolas Sarkozy had managed to close most of the gap behind the leader in the polls, Socialist candidate Francoise Hollande, with a rightward turn that included calls by Sarkozy in favour of tougher immigration restrictions and against the labelling of halal meat.

Nicolas Sarkozy

Since the March 19 attack on the Jewish Ozar Hatorah school in Toulouse, Sarkozy has announced several measures to clamp down on right-wing and Islamic extremists. He ordered French security forces to seek out Muslim extremists, barred an influential Egyptian Sunni cleric from attending a conference in France next month and urged TV networks not to air footage of the Toulouse attack and the one on soldiers in nearby Montauban that had been delivered to the Al Jazeera bureau here.

On March 23, police commandos reportedly arrested 19 people and seized weapons during morning raids in Toulouse and other cities. Sarkozy promised more action in the weeks ahead.

While politicians across the political spectrum condemned the attacks, Sarkozy won praise from the Jewish community for suspending his campaign and flying to Toulouse immediately after the school shooting, calling it "obviously antisemitic" and saying that the "whole republic" was mobilized to face the tragedy.

But it's not clear how long the focus will remain on security before shifting back to the main issue facing France: the economy.

"The political debate will probably refocus on the fundamental economic topics," said Jean-Yves Camus, a political scientist who specializes in right-wing extremism. "Still, it is very important to French Jews to make the population understand that the Toulouse attack does not only concern their community but the whole country."

French Jews, he said, "will most certainly vote for politicians with solid experience who are able to put in practice legal and credible measures to answer an Islamic threat."

The latest national polls show Sarkozy and his centre-right Union for a Popular Movement, or UMP, trailing Hollande by a percentage point or two in the first round scheduled for April 22, but by a wider gap in a theoretical runoff scheduled for May 6.

Since the Toulouse attack, the National Front, France's largest far-right party, has tried to take advantage of the changed climate. Last week, party leader Marine Le Pen promised to "bring radical Islam to its knees." In her speech Le Pen, who has been polling at approximately 15 per cent, also linked mass immigration with fundamentalism and denounced the risk of a "green fascism."

Few observers believe that many Jews will opt for the National Front, even though Le Pen has sought to woo Jewish voters and distance herself and her party from the antisemitism of her father, Jean-Marie Le Pen, who founded the National Front.

The Jewish community, whose 600,000 members comprise less than 1 per cent of the total French population, remains more supportive of Sarkozy's party than the general public. But prior to the Toulouse shootings, a survey of the Jewish electorate showed that Sarkozy had lost support among Jews, even though he remained more popular than any other single candidate.

According to a March 9 poll from the French polling institute IFOP, Sarkozy's favorable ratings among Jews had fallen to 43 per cent as of January from 62 per cent in May 2007, when Sarkozy was elected president. The main reason, said Jerome Fourquet, who directed the survey for IFOP, was France's economy.

"The trend is similar to the French general electorate's disaffection with Sarkozy," Fourquet said. "People are dissatisfied with the economic situation and their purchasing power."

For many Jews, the economy is not the only source of discontent with the president. In early March, Sarkozy's prime minister, Francois Fillon, made controversial statements about halal and kosher slaughter rituals, declaring that the "ancestral traditions" in Islam and Judaism were "outdated."

The comment provoked a strong reaction from Jewish leaders.

Analysis

"As religion and state are strictly separated in France, politicians should avoid giving their opinion on these topics," said Richard Prasquier, president of the CRIF, the main French umbrella organization for Jewish institutions.

More widely, French moderates also have expressed concern about Sarkozy's tilt to the right. A week before the Toulouse shootings, Sarkozy told an audience that France has "too many foreigners" and proposed cutting legal immigration in half.

Thirty years ago, most Jews leaned toward the Socialist Party. Francois Mitterrand, a Socialist who served as president of France from 1981 to 1995, was considered a friend of Israel – an image he developed after his 1982 address to the Knesset, where he emphasized the Jewish state's right to security.

But the Jewish vote drifted toward the UMP during the second intifadah, when many leftist organizations took a pro-Palestinian stance and violence against French Jews soared.

In related news, Ozar Hatorah has received a rash of antisemitic hate mail and phone calls since the shooting. The school complained to the local prosecutor about the harassing mail and phone calls, the French news agency AFP reported. Prosecutor Michel Valet has ordered a police investigation into the incidents. The school's e-mail system reportedly filled up with messages calling for the murder of Jews and linking the attack to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, according to AFP.

Meanwhile, shooter Mohamed Merah was buried last week in a cemetery on the outskirts of Toulouse, despite objections from the city's mayor. Algerian authorities had refused to allow Merah's body to enter the country for burial, Reuters reported, citing an official at the Grand Mosque of Paris. His Algerian-born father had wanted him to be buried in the North African country.

Israel Briefs

Fatah, Hamas not yet united

The Palestinian reconciliation deal between Fatah, headed by Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, and Hamas has broken down. "Unity is frozen," Abbas said from Baghdad, where he was attending the Arab League summit. Abbas said he and Hamas leader Khalid Meshal agree "on the vision and objectives and conditions in full," but that some Hamas leaders have not accepted the agreement signed last May in Cairo.

Putin coming for dinner

Vladimir Putin, president-elect of Russia, intends to visit Israel this summer. The date has yet to be formally announced, the Israeli media reported, but will come after Putin's May 7 inauguration. Putin reportedly is interested in unveiling a monument in Netanya to Jewish Red Army soldiers who fought in World War II, *Ha'aretz* reported, citing a senior Israeli official. A Putin visit last year was cancelled due to a strike by Israeli Foreign Ministry employees. In a call earlier this month to congratulate Putin on winning the presidency, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu invited Putin to visit Israel, *Ha'aretz* reported.

Mofaz heads Kadima

Shaul Mofaz defeated Tzipi Livni to become the new leader of Israel's Kadima Party. Mofaz received 62 per cent of the vote in the March 27 Kadima primary to unseat Livni as the leader of Israel's main opposition party. Forty-five per cent of the party's 95,000 registered members voted in the primary. The Iranian-born Mofaz is a former chief of staff of the Israel Defence Forces. Previous party heads were founder Ariel Sharon and Ehud Olmert. Recent polls suggested that Kadima, which has 28 seats in the current Knesset, will likely see its support plunge dramatically in the next elections.

Files from JTA

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Young Jews gather at TribeFest

Sheri Shefa
Staff Reporter

LAS VEGAS — For anyone curious about what organized Jewish communities will look like in the years to come, the Jewish Federations of North America's second annual TribeFest was the place to be last week.

The three-day event held in Las Vegas at the Venetian Hotel from March 25 to 27, welcomed more than 1,400 young Jews from 81 communities in North America to celebrate Jewish culture.

TribeFest co-chair Jason Rubinoff insisted that the event was not about campaigning and fundraising. Rather, he said, it offered Jews in their 20s, 30s and early 40s an opportunity to connect to Jewish culture and identity.

Rachel Dratch at the opening event at TribeFest. *[JFNA photo]*

Judging by the content – which included interactive sessions about climate change, making the community more welcoming to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered Jews, and exploring the connection between Zionism and liberalism – the event focused not on the history that has shaped Jewish culture for the past 70 years, but on what will shape and influence Jewish communities in the years to come.

Filmmakers, social activists, entrepreneurs, religious leaders and community builders led the sessions during the day, while Jewish and Israeli musicians performed concerts at night.

Participants even had the opportunity to take part in a service project that sent busloads of participants to various public Las Vegas schools in low-income neigbourhoods to distribute 1,000 backpacks filled with books to students.

But the biggest draw was the opening event, one that was delivered more like a standup comedy show.

Saturday Night Live alum Rachel Dratch, who was promoting her book titled *Girl Walks Into a Bar…: Comedy Calamities, Dating Disasters, and a Midlife Miracle*, talked about being subconsciously Jewish, but not incorporating Jewish traditions into her life.

After cracking jokes about how crazy our traditions sound to non-Jews (on Pesach, "we wait for a ghost to come so we can drink with him") and how disgusting Jewish cuisine is ("there's got to be someone out there who can up the chocolate quality level of the Chanukah gelt!"), Dratch did speak about why it's important for her to stay connected to her Jewish roots.

"Like many Jews today, I do feel connected culturally more than religiously, but I do yearn for Judaism to inform my daily life more," she said.

"I may not know what Lag b'Omer is… but I know when I'm around other Jews, I feel at home."

A.J. Jacobs, bestselling author of *A Year of Living Biblically* – a book that chronicled his attempt to take every one of the commandments and mitzvot literally and incorporate them into his everyday life – also opened the event.

Jacobs pre-empted his address with a disclaimer about the role that Judaism plays in his life.

In trying to emphasize how secular his upbringing was, Jacobs said, "I'm Jewish in the same way that the Olive Garden is Italian… Shockingly, until recently, I thought the Haftorah was literally 50 per cent of the Torah."

Speaking about his experience writing his most widely received book, he said the project led him to connect with his Judaism for the first time in his life.

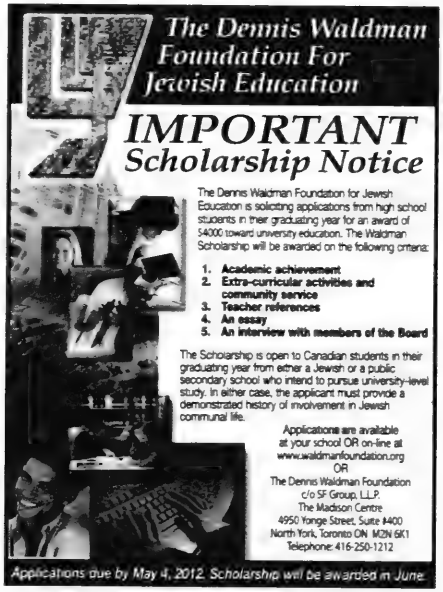
(For more details about the opening event, check out heebonics.ca.)

One of the most encouraging signs that the future of our community will be left in capable hands was 16-year-old Talia Leman.

Hearing her speak passionately about her non-profit organization called RandomKid, her poise, her wisdom far beyond her years – never mind what she's accomplished in her short life – was enough to turn the cynics into believers of the tikkun olam philosophy.

Through RandomKid, an organization led by youth to "solve the problems in the world," Leman has worked with 12 million kids from 20 countries and has raised about $11 million.

For the complete story, please go to cjnews.com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Israeli airlines concerned over open skies agreement

Zohar Blumenkrantz
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TEL AVIV — The backlash to the open skies agreement with Europe is building: Israel's airlines are ramping up their criticism of the competition-creating deal, while travel industry sources are lobbying to see the agreement through.

Israel and the European Union recently finalized the deal after three years of negotiations. It still needs the approval of Transportation Minister Yisrael Katz.

The deal, which would be implemented over the course of five years, between 2013 and 2018, would eventually allow Israeli and European airlines to compete freely over flights to and from each other's home countries.

Katz is planning to discuss the agreement with Israel's three airlines to give them a chance to voice criticism. The next battle arena is likely to be the Knesset, which will have to approve the agreement once it receives Katz's approval. Katz is expected to sign off on the deal in July or August.

"The deal between Israel and the European Union will increase the volume of incoming tourism to Israel," senior tourism sector sources told Katz and Tourism Minister Stas Misezhnikov in a letter. The signatories included Israel Hotel Association chair, Ami Federmann, and Israel Incoming Tour Operator Association chair, Shmuel Marom. "Europe is naturally the main, central source of incoming tourists. The agreement with the European Union will create new opportunities to market Israel among that audience."

Other signatories include the chairs of the car rental association, the tour guides association and the restaurants association.

They called on the ministers not to delay the agreement.

Meanwhile, El Al Israel Airlines and Arkia and Israir airlines refused to comment on the deal, despite El Al CEO Eliezer Shkedi's fierce battle against the agreement.

However, the El Al union sent a warning letter to Katz.

"We expect the transportation minister to stand behind his promise and to make sure the agreement does enough to protect Israeli airlines and their workers before it is signed," said union chair Asher Edrey. "In any case, we reserve the right to act in any way we see fit in the future."

Israeli airlines, including Arkia, will face added competition from European airlines thanks to an open skies agreement. ***[Flash90 photo]***

The tourism industry leaders also played the employment card.

"Incoming tourism influences multiple sectors, which employ a total of 200,000 both directly and indirectly," they wrote. "The deal will enable enlarging flight capacity relative to the number of flights."

It will draw more low-cost airlines into the market to and from Israel, and tourists will have more potential flight times, they added.

Every 100,000 incoming tourists create about 3,800 jobs, they wrote. This means that if the agreement brings in another one million tourists a year, 38,000 jobs will be created at small and medium-sized businesses in tourism-centric cities and the outlying areas. Many of these jobs will go to people who are currently outside the workforce, they added.

"These people and employers need to be represented by the government no less than the employees at Israel's airlines," they wrote. "The agreement is crucial to developing incoming tourism, to increasing its percentage of the GDP and to creating more jobs in the outlying areas."

They noted that the government itself believed the agreement could help Israel achieve its goal of five million incoming tourists a year in the not-so-distant future.

The government should help the local airlines get past the implications of the agreement, while still taking the rest of the tourism sector into account, they added.

Passover gifts rise despite economic slowdown

Haim Bior
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

TEL AVIV — The gifts employers give their workers for Passover are evidently no yardstick for the state of the economy. Companies are spending about 10 per cent more on gifts to employees this Passover than last year, despite signs of economic slowdown.

Employees at the Dead Sea Works, a unit of Israel Chemicals, led the way last year and this. They're each getting a cheque for 1,780 shekels ($477, all figures Cdn) plus an iPad 2.

About 1.5 million workers in Israel get a gift for the holidays. The value of this Passover gift market is estimated at about 2.7 billion shekels ($723 million) in 2012 – an increase of 10 per cent from the year before (and comparing with about 2.2 shekels billion ($589 million) for Rosh Hashanah).

A survey by the Tovanot market research institute found that a third of employees who receive vouchers would have liked something more personal.

Three-quarters of working Israelis expect to get a present for the holiday, Tovanot found, compared to 72 per cent at Rosh Hashanah. Seventy per cent figure the boss will give them a shopping voucher, one of five expects a more personal gift, while six per cent anticipate cash. Only two per cent are confident they'll get nothing.

Another survey, by the company Vaadim, which collates information on employment conditions at big enterprises, found the average value of corporate Passover gifts this year is in the range of 600 ($161) to 900 shekels ($241) per worker.

High-tech workers can expect a gift worth an average of 400 shekels ($107) to 700 shekels ($187), while executives will receive a present worth as much as 5,000 shekels ($1338).

The enormous popularity of cooking shows on Israeli television may have affected the nature of gifts this year. The most popular category of presents this year is cooking utensils, from nesting pot sets to kitchen knives. In second place are electrical appliances, such as vacuum cleaners and steam irons, followed in third place by gadgets. One of the most popular in that category is a device for locating your house or car keys.

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Mal Coven - a major figure in Canadian retail

Sheldon Kirshner
Staff Reporter

Long before Wal-Mart established a beachhead and then a mighty presence in Canada, the BiWay chain sated the desires of Canadian shoppers hungering for quality merchandise at bargain basement prices.

With 249 discount stores in eight of Canada's 10 provinces, BiWay carried name-brand apparel and general goods ranging from household goods to health and beauty products.

"It was a working man's store," said Mal Coven, one of its proprietors, in an interview.

A major figure in Canada's retail scene for about three decades, Coven looks back at his career in his forthcoming autobiography, *How to Succeed in Retirement by Really Trying and the BiWay Story*.

Scheduled to be officially released on April 14 at Indigo's Manulife branch, six days after his 83rd birthday, it will be sold on Amazon.com from April 17 onward.

Published by BPS Books, Coven's book is a breezily written memoir of a marketing specialist who earned a degree in business administration at a Jesuit college and cut his teeth at an iconic department store where bargains were supposedly born.

Coven's volume is also an account of a surprisingly shy man who found true love in Quebec's Laurentian mountains, proved his acumen as a retailer in Toronto and dabbled in a series of entrepreneurial projects after his retirement.

Above all, it is about the highly competitive world of retailing in which he excelled.

Born in Boston, the son of a pedlar originally from Lithuania, Coven studied at Boston Latin School, the oldest public high school in the United States whose graduates include Benjamin Franklin and Leonard Bernstein.

Coven considered dentistry and teaching before deciding to study science and business administration at Boston College. Fresh out of college, he dreamed of becoming a buyer at Filene's, whose low prices revolutionized American retailing in the 20th century.

Having failed to get into Filene's executive training program, Coven was crushed. He turned to his cousin, an accountant and one of the founders of Staples, for advice.

His cousin said, "If you want to work for a company, go there and take any job. You are better off on the inside looking in than on the outside looking in."

Acting on this sage recommendation, Coven accepted a position as a temporary stock boy at Filene's, which closed late last year. Promoted to buyer after a phenomenally successful campaign to sell snowsuits in July, he remained with Filene's for the next decade.

He ascribes his success to two factors: determination and luck. "You need both to succeed," he said.

During a vacation in the summer of 1956, Coven drove to Montreal to see an old friend. Much to Coven's disappointment, he had gone to Winnipeg.

On a whim, Coven headed to the Laurentians. Stopping in Ste. Agathe, a resort favoured by Montreal Jews, he checked into a family hotel. At a dance, his life changed when he met his first wife-to-be, Miriam Fish, whom he described as "a tall, beautiful blond."

Miriam's brother, Abe, a retailer, eventually invited Coven to be a partner in his discount store in Toronto, one of the first of its kind in Canada. (Abe's brother, Morris, a lawyer, is now a judge on Canada's Supreme Court).

Having dreamed of opening his own store, Coven jumped at the opportunity. "We were partners from beginning to end."

Arriving in Toronto in 1962 as a landed immigrant, Coven took charge of BiWay's 1,600-square-foot store at the corner of Islington and Albion, in the west end of the city.

Mal Coven

Thanks to its formula of carrying brand-name jeans such as Levi's and Lee and selling them at reasonable prices, the store was a great success in terms of sales. "We were making about $800 to $900 per square foot," he recalled.

He avoided low-quality goods. "I never bought anything that I'd be ashamed to bring home to my family," said Coven, who has two children, Robin and David.

Coven, who became a Canadian citizen in the mid-1970s, prospered as he and his brother-in-law opened more BiWays.

After opening the fifth BiWay store, Coven's friend from Boston, Russ Jacobson, was offered a partnership in the expanding company.

"Abe, Russ and I continued to do our thing. Abe was the chief executive officer. He bought and supervised the health and beauty aids, negotiated new leases and, I would say, was the father figure. Russ and I were responsible for the buying and merchandising of the soft goods and in the preparation of the advertising."

He added, "At our peak, we were among the top 50 discounters in North America. In Canada, we were the fifth-largest seller of clothes."

By his reckoning, half of all sales were in apparel, followed by linen and bedding, health and beauty aids, and household and seasonal goods.

Dylex, a Canadian retailing conglomerate whose holdings included Tip Top Tailors, Harry Rosen, Thrifty's and Big Steel, was so impressed by BiWay's track record that it purchased a 50 per cent equity in the late 1970s, when the chain had grown to 15 stores.

"We were by far the largest of the 10 chains in Dylex's portfolio," said Coven. "We were generating as much as 40 per cent of the profits."

Coven left BiWay in 1990. "I had had enough."

Biway did not survive his departure. Acquired by a U.S. dollar-store chain owned by an Israeli corporate raider, it was ultimately shuttered.

"No one could run BiWay the way we did," he said. "It was never the same without us. It was a hands-on business."

During his post-BiWay phase, he invested in an electronics store that ultimately failed and brokered the sale of Winners – a women and men's wear chain – to an American company.

In retirement, Coven has gravitated to promoting cute novelties. He refers to these endeavours as "fun projects."

Some of the novelties, such as Italian Baseball Cards, have failed. But others, namely Pinky Puppets, have gained traction.

Lately, Coven has been working on his newest project, My First Car, a driving aid.

As always, he is busy. Never a dull moment for this bold entrepreneur.

Sonny Goldstein, CFP
President

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Dancer in semifinals of TV talent competition

Susan Minuk
Special to The CJN

Dance prodigy Shale Wagman, 11, recently performed *Toreador Song* from the ballet *Carmen* on the TV show *Canada's Got Talent*, earning a place in the show's semifinals.

The judges, comedian Martin Short, opera singer Measha Brueggergosman and composer Stephan Moccio, gave Shale's performance an overwhelming "yes," which allows him to advance to the live national show which airs April 15 on Citytv, when viewers will choose the performer who will advance to the next round. .

Canada's Got Talent, which premièred March 4, is billed as the largest national talent search in Canadian television history and features a colourful array of hopeful stars, including comedians, contortionists, impressionists, jugglers, magicians, ventriloquists, singers and dancers. The show has attracted an average of 1.5 million viewers.

"I am so happy right now. I hope that Canada will like me and will support my passion for dance," Shale said when he heard he had made it to the semifinals.

As Shale did perfect cartwheels by the age of three and exhibited grace and strength at a very young age, he was enrolled by his mother, Heather Wagman, in recreational dance at Vlad's Dance Company.

The company's artistic director, Vlad, has said about Shale, "He moves like a cat. I want him in competitive dance right away."

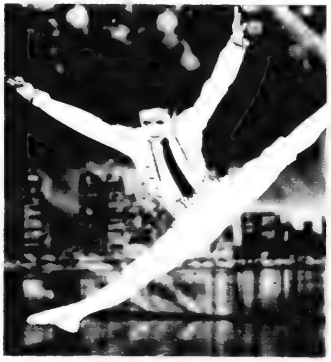
By age seven, Shale was performing solo and went to a major dance competition in Boston with the company. "Shale would be mesmerized by the other dancers and watch backstage all day," Wagman recalled.

When Shale started competing and winning trophies and prizes, it was very easy for him to get caught up in excitement. Vlad grounded Shale by instilling the awareness that "the real reward comes from accomplishing your goals you set for yourself and the knowledge that you did the best you could do. There is always more to be learned," Wagman said.

"Vlad was instrumental in challenging Shale to push himself as far as he could, and to persevere and never give up. Both Shale's dad, Michael, and I instilled in Shale not to be concerned with others' opinions. The only measure of self-worth that matters is your own."

Over the years, Shale has continued to watch, be inspired and be appreciative and respectful of other dancers.

While performing at a charity event for SOS Children's Village Foundation, a producer in the audience was awed by his performance, which led to Shale's commercial in a Maxwell House campaign promoting optimism (http://bit.ly/H85pwy).



Shale Wagman

Shale trains some 30 hours a week with the company Bridge to Artists in ballet, jazz, hip hop, contemporary, modern, acrobatics and lyrical dance.

"The studio has been like a second family to me," Shale said, "and Vlad has been a wonderful mentor, teaching not only dance but invaluable skills that will serve me in life."

Vlad said that "Shale is a very dedicated young man who has a passion for his art... He definitely has a bright future ahead of him."

When not dancing, Shale spends time with his family, which includes two older brothers, Max and Jared. "I have two dogs, Ruby and Scotch, whom I love," Shale said.

"Kvelling is an understatement in describing Shale," Wagman said. "When I watch my son dance, I am moved and can't help but feel his energy radiating, as I know that he is doing what he loves and what makes him happy. You can see and feel Shale's entire heart and soul poured into his dance."

Shale is a Grade 6 student at the Claude Watson School for the Arts, where his favourite subjects are visual arts and drama.

"Dance is Shale's passion, and the dedication he has put into his craft is very obvious," said the school's principal, Michael Byrne. "Even moments outside at recess are most often spent perfecting a specific movement. The entire Claude Watson community is cheering for Shale on *Canada's Got Talent*."

Inspired by dancers Mikhail Baryshnikov, Friedemann Vogel and Alex Wong, Shale aspires to study ballet at the Julliard School in New York and one day open up his own dance studio.

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- Excellentes aptitudes en relations interpersonnelles
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- Expérience dans la conception et la mise en application de nouvelles initiatives est un atout

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EYE ON ARTS

By BILL GLADSTONE

PLAYWRITING CONTEST WINNER RECEIVES SHORT STORY PRIZE

Daniel Karasik, a 25-year-old native of Thornhill, Ont., has been named winner of the CBC Short Story Prize. Karasik's story, *Mine*, was selected from a field of more than 3,750 submissions.

Karasik is to receive $6,000 from the Canada Council for the Arts, and his story is being published in *enRoute* magazine. He will also receive a two-week residency at the Banff Centre's Leighton Artists' Colony. **Shelagh Rogers** interviewed him last week on her CBC Radio show *The Next Chapter*.

Remarkably, Karasik was the playwright who won the 2011 Canadian Jewish Playwriting Competition for his play *Haunted*. The play is to receive a staged reading at the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre on Tuesday, April 10, 8 p.m. (416-924-6211, ext. 606)

He has won numerous other awards for plays that have been seen in Toronto, New York, and Germany. His latest, *The Innocents*, is at the Tarragon Theatre Studio April 26 to May 13. He also recently completed a first novel, which has also received acclaim by way of the Alta Lind Cook Prize and the Norma Epstein National Literary Award.

Jurors for the CBC short story prize are **Peter Behrens**, **Michael Winter** and **Alison Pick**, whose 2010 novel, *Far to Go*, won the Stan and Helen Vine Canadian Jewish Book Award for fiction.

* * *

Jewish Music and Chagall: Friends of Yiddish presents *Our Yiddish Heritage — A Polyphonic Canvas featuring Jewish Music and the Art of Marc Chagall*. Cantor **Katie Oringel** weaves together a multimedia experience of art, music and narrative on the life of Chagall. Also featuring Temple Sinai composer-in-residence **Ben Steinberg** and actor **Harvey Atkin**. Temple Sinai, 210 Wilson Ave., Sunday April 15, 4 p.m. Free admission, everyone welcome.

* * *

Talent Shines for One Night Only: Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company presents *One Night Only: An Evening Of Song & Laughter*, hosted by **Linda Kash** and **Sheila McCarthy**. The talent for this HGJTC fundraiser includes **Thom Allison**, **Micah Barnes**, **Mitch Smolkin**, **Theresa Tova**, **Gabi Epstein** and many others. $50 and up. VIP $180. Jane Mallett Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre, Monday, April 16, 8 p.m. 416-366-7723, www.hgjewishtheatre.com

* * *

Names in the News: Marla Lukofsky, a 56-year-old Toronto comedian who used to perform the story of *The Wizard of Oz* in one minute, has turned to more serious fare over the past decade since becoming a breast cancer survivor who underwent difficult chemotherapy treatment. She still keeps them laughing, but now adds a modicum of tears and sadness to her performances. Audiences are deeply and sometimes profoundly moved. Lukofsky, who lives in the Eglinton-Spadina area, recently drew standing ovations when she performed her show, *I'm Still Here… and So Is My Hair!* recently at Bayview Secondary School. The *Toronto Star* lauded her "lightning quick comic timing." She performs the show again at Rouge Woods Community Centre, 110 Shirley Dr., Richmond Hill, Wednesday, April 18, 8 p.m. www.marlalukofsky.com

* * *

Arts in Brief

• Film critic **Adam Nayman** presents a lecture with film clips on the films of Stanley Kubrick (*Fear and Desire*, *Killer's Kiss*), Miles Nadal JCC, Monday, April 16, 7 to 9 p.m. $12 drop in, students $6; $90 for all 8 lectures. Call 416-924-6211, ext. 0 to register.

• The Al Green Theatre presents Stars on Spadina Gala, a benefit featuring **Marilyn Lightstone**, **Theresa Tova**, **Moshe Hammer**, **Hilario Duran**, **Laura Tucker**, **Daniela Nardi**, **Ron Davis** and more. Tickets $180. Funds raised will support cultural arts programming. Miles Nadal JCC, Monday, April 23, 7:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 0.

• Medina Theatre Ensemble presents a staged reading performance of *From Chelm to Chollywood (A Panorama of Jewish Humour)* by **Morris Jacobs**. $10. Temple Sinai Congregation, 210 Wilson Ave. (east of Bathurst), Monday, April 23, 7:30 p.m. 416-638-2716 or 416-785-0344.

Sarit Hadad

• Israeli pop music star **Sarit Hadad** is giving a concert in Toronto in celebration of Israeli Independence Day, Thursday, May 10. National Hall, 1000 Finch Ave. W. near Dufferin. $65. 905-881-1826.

* * *

At the Galleries: *How Beautiful We All Were* is an exhibit of photographs by **Shelly Grimson** of 16 Canadian poets – namely **Margaret Atwood**, **Michael Ondaatje**, **Milton Acorn**, **Leonard Cohen**, **Irving Layton**, **George Bowering**, **Pat Lane**, **Victor Coleman**, **Doug Jones**, **Al Purdy**, **Gwendolyn MacEwen**, **Earl Birney**, **Raymond Souster**, **Margaret Avison**, **John Newlove** and **Eli Mandel**. Miles Nadal JCC Gallery, April 3 to 30.

Group celebrates Yiddish language and culture

Rena Godfrey
Special to The CJN

Growing up in Toronto in the early 1960s, I would frequently hear my parents converse in Yiddish when they didn't want me to know what they were saying.

Before long, I was able to understand a word or two, when it became obvious that the conversation was about my naughty antics. Although annoyed at my parents, I was still captivated with the spirited tone of the Yiddish language, especially when my father told off-colour jokes to his friends. I was even more intrigued when often reminded that Yiddish is considered a dying language.

Now, almost 40 years later, over a cup of coffee and a *shtickel* (piece) of cake with Helen Smolkin, president of Friends of Yiddish (FOY), I was happy to learn that Yiddish is still thriving in the 21st century.

"What gives me naches is when we have a good turnout at our events," says Smolkin.

FOY is a Toronto club that celebrates the language and culture of all things Yiddish, offering year-round programming of lectures, concerts, film screenings, sing-along sessions and holiday-themed parties for close to 200 members, as well as non-members, who are also welcome. The programs, which Smolkin plans with her board, are usually held at Beth Tikvah Synagogue.

But you don't have to be a Yiddish speaker to join in on the fun. As comically described in their bright yellow brochure, FOY is open to people of all ages and Yiddish-speaking abilities. "Sometimes we almost *tzebrech di tzeyn* [we break our teeth] as we try speaking Yiddish, and we can't always find the right word. We laugh a lot too… sometimes so hard, we can't speak any language!"

Smolkin adds that there's always a nosh and coffee provided at each event, as well as a chance to win a door prize.

Not only does Smolkin possess an enduring love for Yiddish, which she credits to being raised in a Yiddish-speaking home, but she is also knowledgeable about and supportive of the many activities focused on Jewish/Yiddish culture, here in Toronto and across the globe.

Some of FOY's past events were launched in partnership with other organizations, including the Committee for Yiddish of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, Workmen's Circle, Holocaust Education Week and the Jewish Book Fair.

Smolkin is a longtime supporter of the Ashkenaz Festival, the largest Jewish cultural event in Canada, and she wouldn't dare miss KlezKanada's Laurentian Retreat in the summer, Canada's largest annual festival of Jewish and Yiddish culture and arts. Smolkin is also on the board of the International Association of Yiddish Clubs (IAYC), an umbrella organization that connects Yiddish clubs worldwide, including FOY.

Although Smolkin is only too happy to mention other Yiddish-focused events in the local Yiddish scene, such as the Yiddish Vinkl (www.yiddishvinkl.com), a group that meets monthly at Free Times Café on College Street in Toronto, to hear a guest speaker and enjoy a buffet lunch complete with latkes and blintzes, she beams when discussing the future of FOY.

"People say Yiddish is a dying language – it is not. At our events, you are surrounded by people with a passion and love for Yiddishkeit," she says.

Experiencing a growth in membership, FOY also hopes to attract younger members to its organization.

To ensure that the Yiddish legacy continues in Toronto for generations to come, FOY has created the Friends of Yiddish Endowment Fund at the Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto, offering scholarships for candidates of all ages who want to study Yiddish.

FOY's touching words about the need to preserve Yiddish culture are noted in the foundation's 2010 Book of Life: "We talk about the golden chain and the links that intertwine creating a beautiful expression of our Jewish identity. Yiddish is a piece of that cultural link that is the chain of Jewish life. It is our hope that this endowment will create the programs and provide the education that will preserve this magnificent culture."

FOY will be partnering with Temple Sinai Congregation on April 15 to present A Polyphonic Canvas, an afternoon multimedia experience of music, art and narrative on the life of artist Marc Chagall.

For information about Friends of Yiddish, visit www.jewishtoronto.net, e-mail Yiddish18@yahoo.ca or call Merle at 905-707-0470.

Playwright wins CBC short story competition

Cara Stern
Special to The CJN

Playwright and actor Daniel Karasik won the grand prize in CBC's short story competition last week.

"I found it very hard to process," Karasik said of his win. "I was very excited and also kind of overwhelmed."

His award-winning story is called *Mine*, and Karasik describes it as exploring the themes of love, fidelity and devotion.

He started writing the story when he was in Israel, travelling and studying at an egalitarian yeshiva. He had just finished a semi-autobiographical story, and he wanted to try writing from a different perspective.

"I was interested in imagining my way into the minds and hearts of this older couple," he said. "What does it mean to be faithful to somebody and to be devoted to somebody?"

Daniel Karasik

The couple in the story are Jewish, as are many of the characters in his stories. He said it's easier for him to write from within his own world.

"If you're going so far afield that you have to fill in all those sociological details with research or guesswork, I think you're less able to focus on the emotional and dramatic heart or core of the story you're writing," he said.

Though he began writing the story in Israel, he finished it in Paris, while visiting a friend he had met in Israel. In Paris, he said he found himself able to decompress and just write.

"At the risk of sounding heavily pretentious, I think the work I did in Paris, I remain quite happy with a lot of it," he said, adding that he thinks it's not so much that the city inspired him but rather his frame of mind while he was there.

Karasik, 25, who's from Thornhill, Ont., has won several awards. Most recently, he was the winner of the Canadian Jewish Playwriting Competition for his play *Haunted*.

The CBC prize comes with a $6,000 award and a two-week residency at the Banff Centre's Leighton Artists' Colony in Alberta.

He said he's not quite sure what he'll write in Banff.

"It's possible I'll write a bunch of poems... or it could just be I'll have the opportunity to continue in a slightly more focused manner on what I'm working on otherwise," he said.

Right now, he's working on a poetry collection that's slated for release next spring. He's also in the middle of writing a novel, which he said couldn't be more different from the themes he explored in *Mine*.

"It's an exuberant, funny comic novel about young people in Toronto, and ambition and sex," he said.

One of Karasik's plays, *The Innocents*, is opening in Toronto at the Tarragon Theatre Studio on April 26. The story is about a young wunderkind Jewish lawyer from Thornhill and his quarter-life crisis. *The Innocents* was presented in New York and is currently being produced in Mainz, Germany. The Toronto run, until May 13, will feature a new version of the story.

For more information about *The Innocents*, visit www.tangoco.net. To read *Mine*, go to the CBC website or http://bit.ly/zGQqvL.

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Peres likens Ben-Gurion to a latter-day Moses

Sheldon Kirshner
Staff Reporter

Shimon Peres, the current president of Israel, began working for David Ben-Gurion – Israel's first prime minister – in 1952. Having appointed Peres director-general of the Ministry of Defence when he was only 24 years old, Ben-Gurion obviously thought highly of him.

Ben-Gurion's faith in his protégé paid dividends as Peres went on to assume the most important positions, including the post of prime minister, in a succession of Israeli governments.

Ben-Gurion's admiration of Peres' talents was consistently reciprocated by Peres, one of his most loyal aides. Now in *Ben-Gurion: A Political Life* (Nextbook), a biography written in association with Israeli journalist David Landau, Peres adds yet more layers to this mutual admiration society.

Peres' sympathies are evident in the introduction, when he describes his mentor as a pragmatic visionary and compares him to George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. To Peres, Ben-Gurion, who died in 1973, was not only an emblem of the energy that created Israel, but a symbol of the leadership the country needs today "to find its way to peace and security."

In this illuminating biography, Peres traces the arc of Ben-Gurion's career as a Zionist functionary in Palestine and as a leader in the newly created State of Israel.

Ben-Gurion arrived in Jaffa from eastern Europe in 1906, when Palestine was still an underdeveloped Ottoman colony and the Zionist project was still in some doubt.

A Labour Zionist, he flirted with communism, but his Bolshevik leanings were forever laid to rest after a visit to the Soviet Union in 1923. A man of ideas who devoured books, he was so consumed by his official duties that he was an absentee father, his daughter recalled as an adult.

Under his leadership, the Histadrut labour union assumed great importance, while the Jewish Agency led the fight for immigration and independence and became a shadow Jewish government during the British colonial era.

A realist, Ben-Gurion warned against the illusion, prevalent in some Zionist circles, that Palestine was an "empty" land, devoid of Arabs who sought self-determination. "We do not dream of denying them that right or diminishing it," he said.

When 1930s Palestine was exploding in violence, Ben-Gurion called for a policy of *havlaga*, or restraint, in responding to Arab terrorism.

In common with mainstream Zionist philosophy, Ben-Gurion opposed the 1939 British White Paper, which restricted immigration at a time when fascism was driving Jews out of Europe.

But after Britain declared war on Nazi Germany, Ben-Gurion ordered the Haganah to stop attacks on British forces in Palestine and coined a now-famous slogan: "We must help the British in their war as though there were no White Paper, and we must resist the White Paper as though there were no war."

Unlike Zionist Revisionists, he accepted the concept of partitioning the land. Ben-Gurion's decision to embrace partition, Peres observes, was "a historic act of political wisdom whose logic is as cogent today as it was then."

As incredible as it may sound today, a number of Zionist leaders, notably Golda Meir and Meir Yaari, opposed the 1947 United Nations partition plan. Ben-Gurion disagreed, saying the Zionist movement would not be able to bring in Jewish immigrants in the absence of a sovereign state.

As war in Palestine loomed, he ordered the Haganah to modernize itself and dispatched emissaries to Europe and the United States to scour for weapons. He knew that Jewish statehood was not merely dependent on UN resolutions.

On the eve of Israeli statehood in May 1948, the future justice minister, Pinhas Rosen, argued there could be no declaration of independence unless Israel's borders were defined. Ben-Gurion challenged Rosen's logic: "We should say nothing about them because we don't know what they will be."

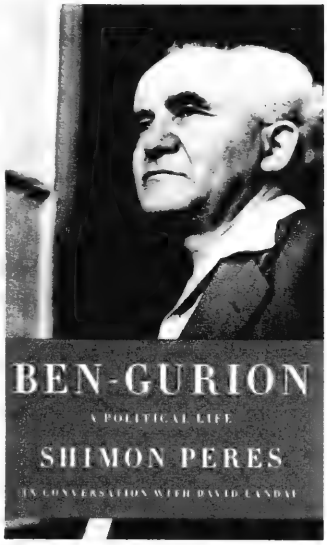
In hindsight, Ben-Gurion was right. During the war, Israeli forces captured land that the 1947 resolution had allotted to a Palestinian state. Israel was thus established in 78 per cent rather than in 56 per cent of what had been Palestine.

According to Peres, Ben-Gurion was not in favour of expelling Arabs from Palestine. "On the contrary, during the war I heard him speak in condemnation of this practice," Peres writes.

However, Ben-Gurion came out against the return of Palestinian Arabs to Israeli territory after 1949. Nonetheless, under a family reunification plan, Israel permitted close to 200,000 Arabs to return over the subsequent decades.

Although Peres strives to portray Ben-Gurion as something of a dove before and during the 1948 war, he discloses that the Old Man ordered the army to seize the southern part of the West Bank so that it could be attached to the northern Negev. The majority of his ministers objected, prompting Ben-Gurion to denounce their position as a *bechiya ledorot* (a cause for sobbing for generations).

Ben-Gurion's Mapai party won a plurality of 46 per cent of the seats in the Knesset in Israel's first election. Armed with this mandate, he devoted himself to encouraging unfettered immigration, a policy to which some of his ministers objected. But he pressed ahead and in a four-year period from 1949 onward, 686,748 immigrants arrived, more than the original Jewish population of the state.



The rising tension between Israel and Egypt in the mid-1950s is the subject of an intriguing chapter.

With Israel carrying out retaliatory raids in response to Arab terrorism, he and Moshe Sharett, the prime minister, clashed over tactics and strategy. Ben-Gurion, temporarily the defence minister, proposed that Israel should conquer the Gaza Strip. Sharett demurred, as did most of the other cabinet ministers.

Egged on by Moshe Dayan, the chief of staff, Ben-Gurion returned with a still bolder proposal: the capture of the Strait of Tiran, which Egypt had barred to Israeli shipping. Here, too, he was blocked by cabinet colleagues.

In the wake of the Six Day War, Ben-Gurion urged Israel to withdraw from all newly conquered territories except eastern Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, Peres says. "His essential worldview never changed. He always held that not pursuing peace was immoral, and that ruling over another nation was immoral."

Comparing Ben-Gurion to Winston Churchill and Charles de Gaulle, Peres likens him to a latter-day Moses, a shepherd to his people. "He led them across the desert toward the promised land."

Peres' description smacks of hagiography, but he can be forgiven for his effusiveness. Ben-Gurion, a leader of conviction and a man of action, guided Israel to nationhood against all odds, built and populated the country and died in the knowledge that his achievements remain unassailable.

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Israeli captures world windsurfing championship

Rami Hipsh
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TEL AVIV — Inclement weather forced the cancellation of the final day of races at the RS:X World Windsurfing Championships in Cadiz, Spain, last month, leaving Israel's Lee Korzits in first place.

Korzits was four points clear of Poland's Zofia Klepacka when the races were stopped.

"I'm proud to again be in the highest place in the world," a beaming Korzits said after being crowned world champion for the third time. "Now I will concentrate on my primary goal – London."

Soon she was fielding a series of congratulatory phone calls from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Culture and Sports Minister Limor Livnat, sports officials, friends and family. "I'm just happy to represent the country and hear the support I'm getting," she said.

Korzits finished the competition with 17 negative points, four fewer than her friend and rival Klepacka, who was runner-up last year as well. Italian Alessandra Sensini, 42, finished third. Israel's Maayan Davidovich finished eighth.

"It's a great feeling that I'm still not used to," Korzits said. "It was one of the most difficult tournaments I've raced in, with really strong winds. My body is covered in bruises. There is a payoff for all the hard work I've put in."

Korzits, who turned 28 last week, was returning to the site of her first world title nine years ago. "It's one of the best things I could ask for on my birthday," she said. "I really want to succeed in London. I hope I'll go there at the top of my form. That's the real target, without a doubt."

Many observers called the title – her second in succession – a tribute to her mental strength, noting she will need plenty of that as she travels to the Olympic Games in London later this year as Israel's greatest medal chance. Her previous appearance in the Olympics, in Athens in 2004, ended with a disappointing 13th place in the final rankings. But this time Korzits comes armed with experience and more maturity.

"This was a tremendous achievement, but the Olympics are a different story," warned Yehuda Mayan, head of the Israel Sailing Association. "The conditions will be different and the course will be longer, but she's certainly a [medal] candidate."

If winds in London will be strong, it would improve Korzits' chances, as she is considered a heavy windsurfer, as is her training partner, Klepacka.

Israel's male windsurfers have yet to qualify for London. Nimrod Mashiah finished the competition in sixth place, while his rival, Shahar Zubari, placed ninth overall after the final day of men's races was also cancelled.

The pair will have to wait until the fourth and final tournament in which they can achieve the Olympics qualification criterion, in the Netherlands in May.

Zubari, who represented Israel at the previous two Games, will have to take first or second place if he is to leapfrog Mashiah and book his ticket for London. A bronze will suffice for Mashiah.

Longstanding soccer academy changes its name

Paul Lungen
Staff Reporter

After more than 30 years, the Maccabi Toronto Soccer Academy is undergoing a name change. The organization founded and operated by Martin Scott since 1980 is now known as King David's Stars Academy.

The name change coincided with the announcement of a new partnership with Israeli soccer club Beitar Jerusalem. The arrangement will see King David's Stars Academy "serve as official and exclusive Canadian talent development" for the Israeli premier division team, said Scott.

Toronto-area youngsters will continue to be offered high-level coaching and development programs, along with competition in youth and elite soccer leagues, Scott stated. During the summer, King David's Stars players will compete in the Soccer Academy Alliance Canada (SAAC) League, while older kids will play in other outdoor leagues. The outdoor schedule will overlap with the winter program, in which Stars teams will head indoors for games at either the Downsview Park Youth Soccer League or the Toronto Futsal Association.

Scott said he is in the process of contacting 90 players currently enrolled in Maccabi Toronto Soccer Academy programs and informing them of the name change. In addition, hundreds more on the group's mailing list are being told of the shift. Some 350 kids have been trained at the academy over the last few years, he said.

Youngster enrolled in the academy's programs will benefit from high-level coaching and tough competition. Boris Krimus, who has extensive coaching experience in Israel and Canada, will serve as head coach and technical director. Other coaches include Izzy EidnDor, Alon Reef, a former Israeli national player, Dejan Vugrincic, a former Serbian national and Raffi Fell, as well as himself, Scott said.

"Our focus is on technical development," said Krimus "We identify areas of improvement, correct, encourage and celebrate each child's evolution. We build character and leadership as much as teach soccer. The environment is disciplined but nurturing."

If they're good enough, they will have the opportunity later in their careers to try out for Beitar.

Few Canadians have played in Israeli professional leagues, but Scott said several Maccabi Toronto alumni have tried out, some successfully, including Shmuel Hazan, Ilya Orlov and Alon Badat.

The Maccabi Toronto Soccer Academy is not related to Maccabi Canada, which is a separate organization affiliated with the Maccabi World Union and which recruits players to represent Canada at the Maccabiah Games in Israel.

President Shimon Peres visited the Olympic Experience museum where he met world windsurfing champion Lee Korzits, second from left, and Ariel (Arik) Ze'evi, right, who was Olympic bronze medalist in judo at the 2004 Summer Games in Athens. ***[Flash90 photo]***

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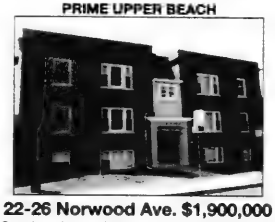

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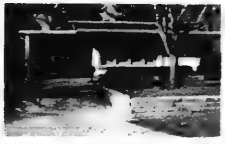

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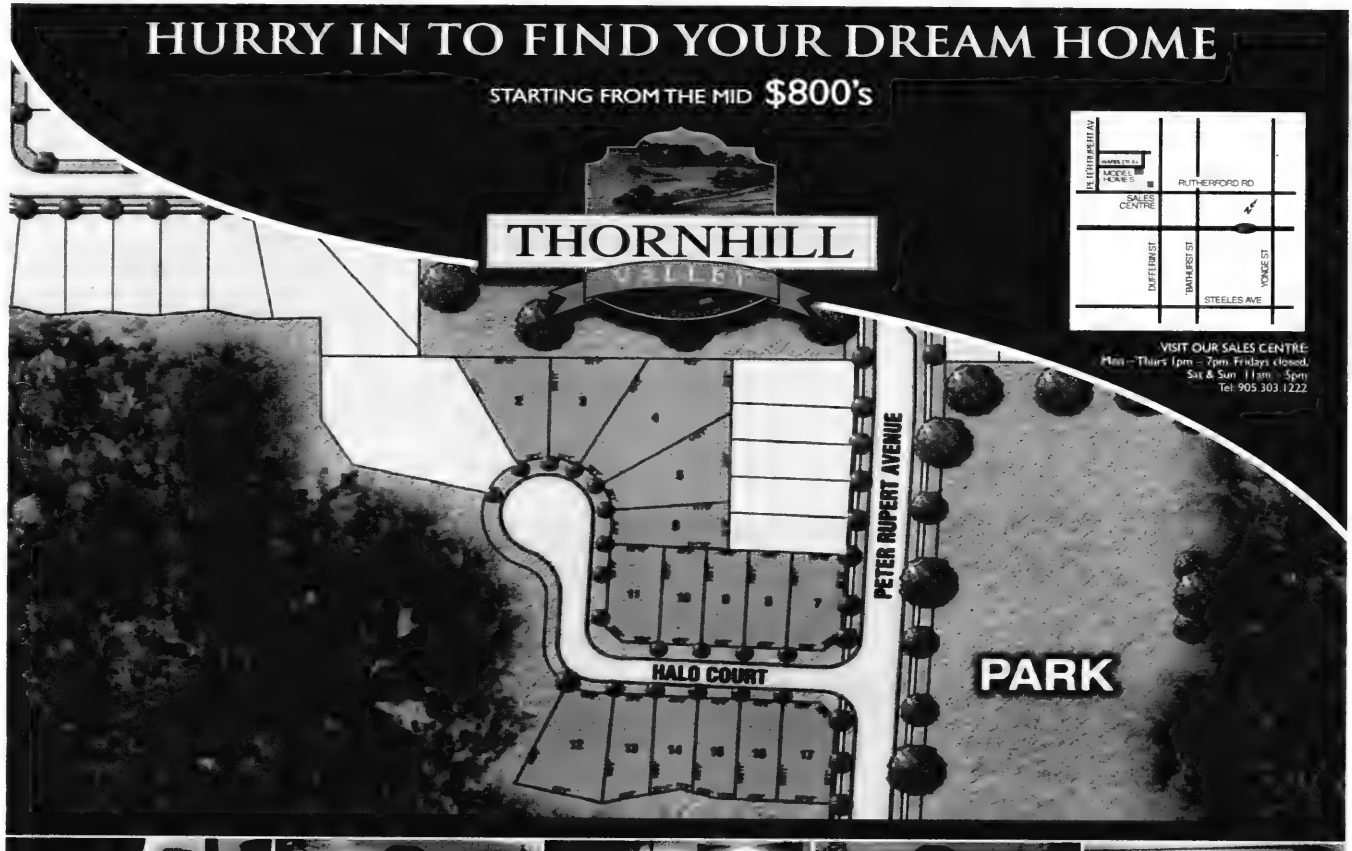

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'Um... a present? Is it ticking?'

"There's so much to do!" Meir sings happily, while flying from a pot to a pan like a hyperactive Peter Pan.

I gaze at him skeptically. It's the fifth year that we're having people over for *leil haseder*. In Israel, our extended family sat around our seder table, including eight siblings – with the fair share of eight to Meir and none to me. By the way, I didn't get along with all eight of them.

Last year, we invited seven people. This is how it went.

Rina is a very nice and warm woman. Rumour has it that she stole my potential job at a desirable Jewish institute. She comes with her very, very shy husband. Nobody knows his name.

New to Canada

Nina Shenhav

Rina: Hey, Nina! You look amazing! Have you lost some weight? I'm kidding. Of course, you haven't. Otherwise it wouldn't be our chubby, cutie, little Nina anymore! Brought you a present!

Me: Um... a present? Is it ticking?

Rina: Oh, you! (Looks around) I see you invited Nancy (Rina's shy husband smiles all of a sudden). I so hope she'll finally fall!

Me: Fall?

Rina: Fall in love! I mean, she's almost, I don't know how old, and still single.

Nancy is an adorable free spirit who's not self-conscious when it comes to attempting to steal other women's husbands, mainly mine.

Nancy (ignores me): Meir! You look amazing tonight. Again, you cooked all by yourself? No help? Nina (yet still not looking at me), where can I find me a husband like that?

Me: Try the lost and found.

Garry (thank God) enters with his wife. He's a smart, charming man who once borrowed a huge amount of money from us. We've invited him over for the last five years in hope that he'll finally remember to return it.

Garry: So, Meir, have you thought about new investments? Say, why not invest in my new invention? It's still a secret but, hey, we're among friends here. How 'bout a mechanical exorcist? Huh? Huh? I got rid of my two former wives this way.

Meir (warmly): I'll let you know.

Finally, Sharon and Mike arrive, a calm couple that made the intelligence decision not to have children.

Mike: Nina, have you thought about giving your kids up for adoption yet?

Me (apologetically): See, I was busy. Plus the thing is, we grow attached to them, so not this year, sorry.

Sharon: So at least send them to school far away. Mike's nephews are at this posh dorm in England, which Prince William's servant's friend once considered!

Me: I promise to think about it.

And so we sat at the table, smiling at one another. I know, some were trying to steal money, jobs and husbands, yet that's what made it so familiar and homey! Gosh, how I miss our dysfunctional families in Israel.

Happy Passover!

CANDIED WALNUT CHAROSET

1/4 c sugar • 1 1/2 tsp cinnamon • 1 c vegetable oil • 1 c walnut halves • 2 medium apples, peeled, cored, finely diced • 1/3 c sweet red wine

Line large baking sheet with parchment paper. In medium bowl, whisk together sugar and 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon. Set aside. In large skillet over moderately high heat, heat oil to 350°F. Stir-fry walnuts until golden brown, about 30 seconds, careful not to burn. Using slotted spoon, transfer walnuts from skillet to bowl containing sugar mixture. Toss walnuts in sugar, then spread on baking sheet. Cool 15 min., then chop roughly.

In large bowl, combine nuts, remaining 1 tsp cinnamon, apples, and wine. Store, covered, at room temperature until ready to serve.

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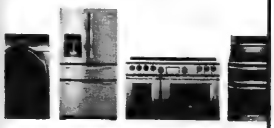

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On cjnews.com

The CJN's French-language reporter in Montreal, Elias Levy, writes about:

Simon Bensimon, who has been named the new executive director of the Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Eastern region.

Rabat, Morocco, where violent anti-Israel demonstrations broke out last week protesting the presence of an Israeli diplomat who was there to represent Israel at a meeting of EUROMED, a partnership of European and Mideastern countries that work toward a shared peace.

Exclusive to cjnews.com

The CJN's Hebrew-language columnist, Yosef Tastassa, writes about Israel's fence on the Egyptian border which is near completion.

Wine columnist Yonatan Sternberg offers a selection of alternative wines to try out this Pesach.

Web columnist Lauren Aginsky reflects on turning 40.

High school teams from around Israel build basketball-playing robots to represent their country in April's FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) World Championship in St. Louis.

Could it be me?

"And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very corners of your field..."

The man standing in the shade, the panhandler, looks like you.

I move forward and realize it is you. Not wanting to shame you, or me, I lean up against a pole, cross my feet and look away.

Urban Writer

Avrum Rosensweig

You see me. I expect you'll be ashamed and will run, but the opposite occurs. You're coming over to me, and while I didn't turn and rush away when I spotted you, I'm now wishing for a distraction. I'm hoping I'm asleep.

You shout my name. "Ha, Avrum, how are you doing?" almost as if we're at the supermarket bantering pointlessly about pomegranates.

I respond, "I'm good," in a cheery sort of way, but shrouded in "not really." I'm humiliated because I must be embarrassing you so badly. I'm so embarrassed. Your walls are gone. Build them up.

You were fine. We travelled to Israel together, and now you are an *ani*, a poor man. And the Torah has rules for how I am to respond to you: "Do not rob [hold back gifts from] the impoverished because he is impoverished." (Proverbs, 22)

You are "the most vulnerable."

What happened to you, David? Your children? Your home? The community? Your wife? Did she leave you? Did I fail you?

You're a step away from me now. I can see a square of earth matted in your hair. I smell you. You used to wear a distinctive cologne and we'd envy your tanned elegance.

But now your eyes have dimmed. You have whiskey on your breath like at our kiddush club. The rabbi wouldn't approve.

It was 8 a.m.

"David, I didn't know you were out here," I said, my voice weighted down by heartbreak. "I knew business was tough, but I hadn't heard about this," and I waved my hands at his plastic bags and stroller.

You didn't want to be distracted by my shock and curious despair. My intensity had no effect on your response. You stood carefree and broken. What happened next made me turn away in grief. You asked me for money. And while I jumped to hand you some, your new life booted me shamelessly in the shins. You are homeless, Dave, and only a short while ago, you supported our community's poor. You gave tzedakah. But you are "the stranger" now.

I had never been friends with a homeless person. The question of "could it be me?" had seemed so intellectual, like a warning to everyone else. What happened to you, David, that made it you? What was the turning point? When did love and community stop holding you together?

I handed you five $20 bills, and I believe I asked you to meet me at this spot tomorrow. In a lucid moment, the filmy transparency in your eyes disappeared and our sombre thoughts linked. We held our gaze and I felt an abundance of love, and I wasn't sure if it was for you, or for the poor, or for me.

I turned Dave's shirt collar down. I touched my hand to his cheek, to feel his skin, hoping it felt different from mine.

Ve'ahavta has launched the Could it be Me? campaign to help the homeless.

"....you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger. I am the Lord your God." (Leviticus, 19)

Avrum@veahavta.org

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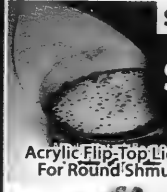

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Literary Supplement

The Canadian Jewish news

Passover Greetings

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Freedom

Wishing good health and happiness to our friends and clients during this season of celebration and reflection.

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Building a Jewish library today

Essay by Norman Ravvin

In the fall I asked a group of graduate students to appraise their own libraries – to sit in front of them and consider the shelves of books as a kind of self-portrait. One student said he could not do this, since he was avidly *getting rid* of his books. We do seem to be in a getting-rid-of period, like that when people jettisoned their record collections, or unloaded sets of encyclopedias in favour of what was online. But the bulk of the students found a fascinating archeology mapping their progress in the arrangement of text books, literary works, volumes they'd bought abroad, had carried with them from childhood or discovered in university classes.

The key revelation was how closely certain books were tied to periods in their lives. I found their discoveries a great relief – young as they were, books still anchored most of them, serving as both an expression of adventure and discovery, and as a memory bank. By simply studying the organization of their library, waves of memory came crashing in on them.

A Jewish library today – whether private or public – should provoke the same rush of adventure and memory. What follows is a proposal for such a collection, a version of which readers may have beside them now. Where you are sitting will predict the necessary titles, to an extent. No doubt, the key texts of a Montreal library – so heavily focused on the city itself – are a lot less relevant in Vancouver or Mexico City. The books of our parents refine things further; and if you have children, who, in their own way, help choose the contents of a home's library, this will provide further leads.

This essay provides a modest proposal. It is in no way a proscriptive list, but a descriptive one, inclined toward books that give pleasure and surprise, with a light sprinkling of those that exist, for the most part, to edify. For this reason, creative works outnumber non-fictional ones.

Everyone has a different definition of what a "Jewish book" is. In Ruth Wisse's intensely proscriptive *Modern Jewish Canon* she asserts that "Modern Jewish literature is the repository of modern Jewish experience," and so, since Marcel Proust's literary work does not mine this, she excludes him from the canon.

Reading "in the Jewish tradition," Wisse claims, "has always merged into a communal discipline." This is true to an extent — in Montreal, book clubs are numerous and active, in which groups (of women for the most part) gather to discuss books they have assigned themselves to read.

To my mind – and this is especially true for writers – reading is also a private undertaking. It takes its lead from models offered at home or in school or at the public library. But a personal library is constructed gradually, to an extent haphazardly, its influences shifting with time. I would propose, too (and I don't think there's much scandal in this) that a Jewish library ought to mine modern experience, as it relates to Jews. From this position, you will not be surprised to find books below by non-Jews. Everything in the proposed library, however, represents the best and exemplary texts relevant to a contemporary Jewish reader's yearning after adventure and memory.

The list appears chronologically.

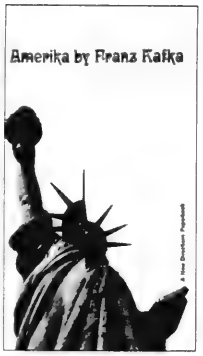
A Jewish Library Today

1. A good Chumash with detailed modern explanatory notes. The Soncino Chumash that was, for a long time, the bar mitzvah present of choice, is perfect for modern English-language readers who want to compare the Hebrew original to its translated version using influential commentaries.

2. A collection of the stories of I.L. Peretz or Sholem Aleichem. Apart from the pleasure these impart, and their usefulness for both adult and young readers, these writers convey the variety of prewar Jewish life in Poland and the Ukraine.

They counteract the romanticized stereotype of the shtetl, and reveal the basis of contemporary Jewish humour and story-telling. In them we find the root material of Woody Allen's comedy, Jerry Seinfeld's stand-up and I.B. Singer's fictional inventiveness.

Continued on page B4



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Spring is in the air
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EL AL wishes you a Happy Passover and looks forward to welcoming you on your next visit to Israel

Building a Jewish library today

Continued from page B3

3. Isaac Babel's Red Cavalry stories. Sometimes it's best to receive a book as it was first presented, and the Lionel Trilling edition, with Trilling's argument for Babel's relevance, is still remarkable in its impact. Babel's irony, his sensitive attention to Russian Jewish catastrophe in the revolutionary period, and his ability to straddle Jewish and non-Jewish worlds, are unparalleled. The hard edge of his prose is pure poetry.

4. Something by Dostoyevsky, because Babel's Russia makes more sense via a consideration of Russian writers he himself inherited. *Demons*, once called *The Possessed* in translation, is a gigantic, detailed portrait of the breakdown of Russian society, and the rise of left and anarchistic youth organizations, which appealed to many children of traditional Jewish parents. One can consider, too, the bizarre anecdote that Dostoyevsky claimed to have overcome his gambling mania after a late night ramble that ended before a stately synagogue.

5. The prewar central European experience is conveyed wonderfully in the now little read works of Stefan Zweig. Zweig was among the best-known Jewish writers of the interwar period, and his entanglement with German literature included his experience writing a late-'30s libretto with Richard Strauss, which Hitler ultimately banned. Zweig's *The Typewriter Girl* is a dark, moving novella, and his memoir, *The World of Yesterday,* conveys the darkest season in German Jewish culture.

6. Do people read Kafka as they once did? Certainly there was a time when every up-and-coming lover of literature worked their way through his stories, his posthumous and incomplete novels, even his diaries, with their musings on Jewishness, his failed love affairs and his dreary work at an insurance company. Maybe it is *Amerika* (now translated with the subtitle "The Missing Person") that connects us most vitally with the period in which Kafka imagined his own disappearance as a lost soul in a vast American city.

7. Just as Dostoyevsky helps us read Babel, we need other moderns to appreciate Kafka's era. Why not Joyce's portrayal, in *Ulysses*, of the day-long rambles of his Jewish-Irish Leopold Bloom? This masterwork, for a number of decades, seemed to sum up the entanglement of Jewish and non-Jewish culture in the postwar world.

8. Certainly, World War II looms over any contemporary Jewish library. Writers offer us the world before; the catastrophe itself; and the aftermath. A writer who links the first two in dramatic ways is Bruno Schulz.

Schulz was part of Poland's interwar modernist literary explosion, a compatriot of key figures such as Witold Gombrowicz and Ignacy Witkiewicz. His two slim volumes of autobiographical fiction are titled *Cinnamon Shops* and *Sanatorium Under the Sign of the Hourglass*. They are early magical realist myth about the Polish-Jewish oil town of Drogobych. Penguin recently released a collected Schulz with an excellent introduction by David Goldfarb.

9. The immediate moment in Poland before the war is brought home, as in no other book, by S.Y. Agnon's *A Guest for the Night*.

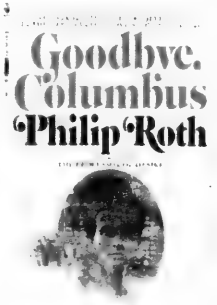
10. Of the war years there is too much to choose from. But the steady, honest, revealing works include: Michal Glowinski's *The Black Seasons*, about the Warsaw ghetto and the author's time spent hiding in a convent in the Polish countryside; Primo Levi's succinct *Survival in Auschwitz*; the wartime diaries of Emanuel Ringelblum and Janusz Korczak; Art Spiegelman's *Maus;* Vasily Grossman's dispatches, collected in *A Writer at War*.

11. Chava Rosenfarb's trilogy, *The Tree of Life*, written in Yiddish and published in English a number of years after the war, depicts prewar and wartime Lodz and the cultural and political undertakings of intellectuals in the Lodz ghetto.

12. Saul Bellow's early novel *The Victim* surveys the American scene in the postwar period.

13. I.B.Singer's stories and his early novel *The Family Moskat* mark the movement of a key Yiddish writer into the American mainstream. A later work that tackles the experience of survivors in America, in Singer's idiosyncratic way, is *Enemies, a Love Story*.

14. A book that has, on many fronts, been chased from Jewish libraries is Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem*. Appearing first in successive issues of *The New Yorker*, Arendt's study captures a shift in Jewish attention toward Israeli experience, the rise of Holocaust education, and a consideration of ethics and politics after the Nazi catastrophe.



15. Philip Roth is the writer who captures, most succinctly and with great humour, the new social opportunities available to North American Jews in the 1950s. His 1959 novella, *Goodbye, Columbus*, is a heartfelt, even elegiac portrait of suburban New Jersey. The stories often included with it –*Eli, the Fanatic, The Conversion of the Jews*– are equally dark and funny and like nothing else available from this period. Roth's later work is a series of masterpieces and near-masterpieces. *The Ghost Writer* picks up where *Goodbye, Columbus* left off, with the first truly original take on the legacy of Anne Frank in America. The two recent novels that bear rereading are *The Human Stain* and *American Pastoral*.

16. Who else in American Jewish literature from this period insists on our attention? Allen Ginsberg, with his great, strange long poems *Howl* and *Kaddish*. J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* retains its sting and prophetic view of the increasing role of youth culture in the 1950s and'60s.

17. Which Canadians should we include in our proposed library? Surely Mordecai Richler's *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* still rings true, whether it's read near the Main or overlooking the ocean on the west coast. Among Canadian precursors of Richler, and offering a contrasting take on Jewish identity in the 1930s, is Henry Kreisel's first novel, *The Rich Man*. Irving Layton's mid-1950s collections are an antidote, too, to the dominant Richler narrative. Published in 1959, but including poems from throughout the'50s, Layton's *A Red Carpet for the Sun* conveys his edgy, well-honed style.

18. After Layton, and with much more staying power, comes Leonard Cohen. His two novels, *The Favourite Game* and *Beautiful Losers*, are fine, strange, unique things. To best appreciate the effect of Cohen's early poems, the *Selected Poems* released by his Canadian publisher in 1968 offers a full variety of the work that made his reputation.

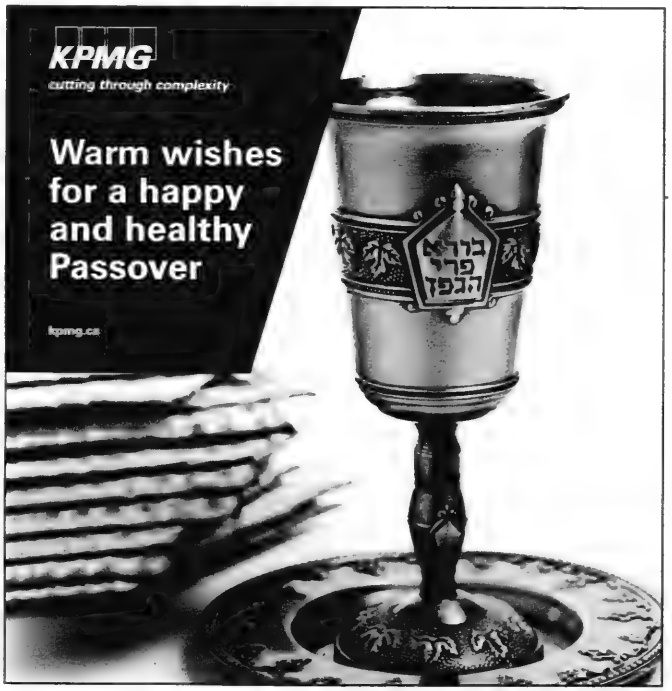
19. For the kids, and the parents too, Maurice Sendak's funny and wonderfully told early books: *The Sign on Rosie's Door, Chicken Soup with Rice* and *Where the Wild Things Are*.

20. The most worthy neglected Canadian writer of his era is Matt Cohen. His story collection *Living On Water* captures this country and the writing life, making use of Cohen's eye for the outsider. His posthumous memoir, *Typing: A Life in 26 Keys*, is a provocative summation of what it was like to be a Jewish writer on the scene as Canadian literary nationalism took hold. If anyone tells you that Toronto lacks its Jewish bard, Cohen's your answer.

21. The slim, tightly wound collections of Detroit-raised poet Philip Levine are full of unforgettable voices, portraits and elegiac memory pieces of an American youth. *What Work Is, The Mercy* and *The Simple Truth* are worthy of constant revisiting.

22. Because this list leans more toward pleasure and discovery than edification, it's short on non-fiction. The one indispensable book of Canadian Jewish history is Hesh Troper and Irving Abella's *One Is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe, 1933-1948*. It changed the way Canadian Jews view this country's government and public culture.

Norman Ravvin has dedicated himself to making books in Canada since the 1980s, including a stint gluing and binding them at Toronto's Coach House Press. Since then he has worked as a writer of fiction, non-fiction, as an editor and a journalist. His recent publications are the novel The Joyful Child *and the co-edited volume* Failure's Opposite: Listening to A.M. Klein.



The Cows of Pesach

Sylvia Solomon

My father told me this story many years ago, and given that it involves people, cows and intrigue, there's just no way I couldn't share it with you.

The setting is a work camp somewhere in Siberia during the Holocaust. Both of my parents had walked to Russia from their homes in Poland to escape from the Nazis, and because my father was supporting them by black-marketing – which evidently he wasn't so good at since he seemed to be arrested many times. So, there he was after being arrested for selling bras as ear muffs (yup, picture it: pull it over your head, stuff the cups with newspaper, and presto! your ears are warm).

It was sometime between 1940 and 1945. It was, of course, cold. Dad had been in the work camp for some months by the time Pesach was approaching. At that time, he was working in the ambulance corps; he'd volunteer – complete with past experience – for any work assignment that would get him out of the camp for part of the time. This way, he could continue to supplement life by what his wits could find about him.

Maintaining his Jewish lifestyle – even in a camp full of Jews – wasn't easy under the watching eye of his Russian captors. As so many others did, they just had to make the best of it. One evening, he was sitting talking with his comrades and they decided that they needed to do something special for Pesach. Baking a simulation of matzah was manageable; indeed it was pretty much all they could bake in their wind-swept, crowded barracks. But you can't just eat replica-matzah for eight days so, idea by idea, they hatched a plan that would have them all feasting on meat as they celebrated a freedom that was remote from their own day-to-day living.

A few days after they'd given birth to this rather outrageous plan, it was underway. My father's days were spent in the ambulance, driving out of the camp and into the countryside to pick up sick Russians who were in need of care. At least, that's what they were supposed to be doing. Seems that they spent quite a bit of time stopping at farms along the way, bartering for a few eggs here and some fresh milk there. On this particular day the stakes (or should I say steaks) were considerably higher. Now they were looking for a cow. Yup, a whole cow. An animal that could feed them all like princes for the few days of Pesach.

But how do you buy a cow without any money? Shirts. Lots and lots of shirts.

Back in the camp that evening, the collecting of shirts began. Each man who could, contributed one of the few items of clothing that he still had, and little by little, a sack or two (or maybe more) was filled. I don't remember exactly what my Dad told me a cow was worth in shirts, but I do remember that it was a number that astonished me.

The next time my father was out in the ambulance, they went back to the farmer they'd struck a deal with and – now that they knew just how many shirts they could gather – tried to make that deal a wee bit better. Of course there was considerable risk involved in doing this. Would the farmer decide that he'd be better off collecting some vodka from the guards at the work camp for tipping them off to this plan? Would he swindle them when it came to the actual exchange of animal for clothing? And then there was the big issue – how do you sneak a cow into a work camp?

Taking some chances, they struck a final deal and a date for the exchange – or at least an approximate date, since when they could get out of the camp with the ambulance wasn't really in their own control.

An aside for just a minute. Let me clarify what "ambulance" meant in a Siberian work camp. Not the vehicles we see driving through our streets today. Picture, instead, a cross between a jeep and a van, a big, heavy piece of equipment that could carry numerous injured or sick people at once. Something that could navigate the Siberian highways – to use that term very loosely. No windows. Drivers in the front. Passengers securely in the back.

Back to the story.

With sacks of shirts hidden in the back of the ambulance, my father and his friend went out to make a pickup. Of course, this was Step 1 of the plan because there was really nobody they had to pick up at all. Instead, they'd had the farmer communicate with the camp that there was a worker on his farm who was very sick with a high fever and vomiting who needed some medical attention before whatever disease he was suffering from spread through the district. So far so good.

When they arrived at the farm, the shirts were unloaded and counted. That was hurdle number 2, and with the farmer satisfied with his booty, they moved on to the trick-of-the-day, which was to load a live cow into the ambulance.

I can't remember all the details of how they got the cow into the van, mostly because as my father told me about it those many years ago, he was laughing so hard that the details became garbled. There was a ramp involved, and lots of pushing and cajoling. It took some time, but soon they had a rather subdued cow lying in the ambulance and they were heading back to camp.

Continued on page B6

Happy Passover

The holiday of freedom, the festival of spring, symbolizes new beginnings. Bank Hapoalim, Israel's leading bank, wishes all its clients, friends and colleagues a Happy and Joyous Passover with blessings for peace, hope and prosperity.

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The Cows of Pesach

Continued from page B5

The next challenge was to get into camp without having the guards at the gate look into the ambulance. Evidently the word "typhus" struck enough fear into everyone's heart on those cold Russian steppes that all they had to do was say they were transporting somebody who was very sick with typhus and they were waved through the gate.

Did they head to the hospital? No. Instead they drove the ambulance around to one of the barracks that was conveniently located in a spot that wasn't easy to see from the guard towers, and there the cow was walked off the van and into the waiting arms of a resident shochet, who'd also been arrested for some likely trumped-up reason. How lucky was that! I'm guessing there was at least one of whatever expert you needed living in that work camp, and likely more rabbis than you could put to good use.

By the time the ambulance was returned to its usual parking spot – with a little more bribery to the medical attendants who wouldn't inform the guards that no patient had been delivered that day – the cow had been sacrificed and cut into workable sized pieces for easy cooking over small fires.

They had replica wine, which they'd carefully aged from fermented potatoes. They had replica matzah. And they had real meat.

What a Passover that was. It was different from all other nights in more ways that the Haggadah recounts. As they sat together by evening candlelight and – from memory – retold the story of the Exodus, I'm guessing there were smiles on many faces as they tasted the succulent meat and remembered what freedom had once meant.

I'll be out buying my Pesach groceries before long, and each year, as I buy meat for the seder feast, I am reminded of my Dad's story about the cows of Passover. We often talk about this around our seder table, about the enormous courage and creativity and – yes, chutzpah – it took to survive the Holocaust. Thank you, father, for this legacy and this reminder of what our spirit as a people really is.

Hitler Defeated

To my mind, there are two kinds of people:
Those who are Holocaust survivors, and those who aren't.

To my mind, there are two kinds of survivors:
The ones who never talk about it, and the ones who cannot stop.

And then, it seems, there are two kinds of survivors who talk about it:
The ones who say "I am lucky" and the ones who say "Why me?"
Sometimes they might say both.

And then, there are two kinds of survivors who don't talk about it:
The ones who act like it is still happening and the ones who act like nothing ever happened.

There are also those who at first did not speak and, then, finally did.
And, it seems, those who initially spoke and then decided, for any or no reason, to stop.

But –
There is really only one kind of child of survivor:
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Chunky Matzah

Mark Binder

Reb Stein, the baker of Chelm, stared at the thing in his oven. It looked like a slightly scorched white square block. He slid his metal paddle under it and put it on the cooling rack next to some of the other scorched white square blocks. He sighed. It was time to ask the rabbi.

He pulled on his overshoes and coat and stepped out into the raging snowstorm. As he pushed his way through the gale, feeling the cold sting of flakes on his face, he went over in his mind what he was going to say.

By the time he arrived at the synagogue, his teeth were chattering and he was muttering to himself. Reb Levitsky, the caretaker, led him to the stove in the rabbi's study to thaw his fingers and toes.

"Reb Stein," Rabbi Kibbitz began, but he didn't get further than that.

"I didn't do it!" Reb Stein shouted. "It's not my fault!" Melting ice was dripping from the brim of his hat onto the rabbi's stove, where it hissed and evaporated. The air was becoming thick.

"So? Nu?" the rabbi asked. "What?"

Reb Stein sighed. "The matzah. It's rising."

"What do you mean it's rising?" Rabbi Kibbitz's face grew puzzled. "If it's rising, it's not matzah. Matzah is supposed to commemorate..."

"I *know*!" screamed Reb Cantor. "But every single matzah I've baked this year isn't flat, it's a chunk!"

"So, what are you doing wrong?" Rabbi Kibbitz asked, innocently.

Reb Stein spun around and faced the rabbi, a look of madness in his eyes. He opened his mouth, bared his teeth, took in a breath and then started to sob. "I don't know! I've been baking matzah my whole life. It's not that difficult. Flour and water. You mix it up, you roll it flat, you hurry and put it into an incredibly hot oven, you watch to make sure it doesn't rise and then poof, you're done.

"Not this year. Every single matzah is coming out cubed!"

At last, Rabbi Kibbitz spoke. "Show me."

They bundled themselves warm and pushed the synagogue's door open. Reb Kimmelman was busy shovelling the path, but they made their way past him and trudged the short distance to the bakery.

Rather than taking Rabbi Kibbitz inside, where the ovens kept everything warm, Reb Stein led him around back. He slid a bolt, kicked more snow out of the way and yanked open a large door.

At first Rabbi Kibbitz could see very little inside. The snow had been very bright, and the few windows in the building were high up and concealed behind stacks and stacks of boxes.

"Here!" Reb Stein picked up one of the boxes and handed it to the chief rabbi.

"What's this?"

"It's matzah."

Rabbi Kibbitz peered. This thing, if you looked at it directly from the top, the sides or the bottom, it looked just like matzah. It was that magical combination of smooth and bumpy and white and dark that promised eight days of crunch and crumbs. Except matzah was supposed to be thin. This was thick – very, very thick.

Rabbi Kibbitz searched for something nice to say. "It's very light."

"Of course, it's light," Reb Stein said. "A piece of matzah doesn't weigh anything. The first one that came out of the oven, I thought maybe was hollow, so I dropped it on the ground. It didn't break. A few crumbs come off. I hit it with a hammer. It still didn't break. I had to use a saw to get a piece big enough to taste."

"What's it taste like?"

"It tastes like matzah," Reb Stein grumped. "It would be good with butter or chopped liver, except for the fact that it's so wide you can't put it in your mouth!"

Reb Stein's voice kept rising. "I start baking the matzah right after Passover. It keeps for a year. If I have too much, I can sell some of it and make a little extra money. Every week I make a batch. Every week it's the same thing. I tried different flour. I tried different temperatures.

"I tried watching. You know what happened? The matzah was flat, it was flat, it was flat, and then I blinked and poof! It's a square. This happened over and over again! I filled the whole warehouse. Passover is next week! What are we going to do?"

Just then Reb Kimmelman burst into the room.

"Rabbi Kibbitz! The ceiling on the synagogue! It's buckling under the weight of the snow."

Right behind him was Mrs. Chaipul. "Husband," she said. "the roof of my restaurant is beginning to collapse from the snow."

Reb Cantor huffed in after her. "My shop," he panted. "The snow. Too heavy."

They all stared at the rabbi. "What do we do?"

"Here," the rabbi said, handing Reb Kimmelman the chunk. He quickly took two more and gave them to his wife and the merchant. "Take these. Make columns. Use them to prop up the roofs."

"What is it?" Mrs. Chaipul asked.

"It's matzah," Reb Stein said.

"Matzah?" All three visitors spoke as one. "Matzah is supposed to be flat."

"We know!" shouted Reb Stein and Rabbi Kibbitz. "Now go!"

Soon, a matzah chunk brigade was formed from the bakery warehouse to every home and building in the village of Chelm.

The chunks were light and strong and they stacked well. Although the roofs sagged, they did not fall.

For the week before Passover, everyone in Chelm tiptoed around their matzah columns, careful not to disturb the architectural support.

Reb Stein was miserable. The roads were covered with snow. No supplies could possibly get through. Every time he looked at the tower of matzah holding up the roof of his bakery, he moaned, "It's not my fault!"

Then, on the morning before Passover, the villagers of Chelm awoke to warm sunlight, the sound of snow melting, and piles of neatly stacked, wafer-thin pieces of matzah in their homes, barns and places of business.

One after another they came to Reb Stein and thanked him for saving their property, and so conveniently delivering the matzah.

"All that pressure must have compressed it," Reb Stein said to Rabbi Kibbitz. "But is it kosher for Passover?"

The rabbi looked thoughtful. "Did you see it rise?"

"No. I watched carefully."

"And it's flat now?"

"Flattened." Reb Stein nodded. "All of it." He took a bite of one piece. "Crunchy, dry and bland, too."

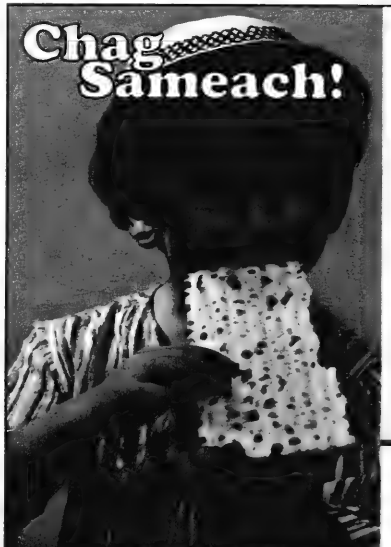
Rabbi Kibbitz took a bite and chewed thoughtfully. "It's perfect. "

And then, grinning ear to ear, both friends began to laugh while the crumbs of matzah flew around the room and danced in the air before settling to the floor of the bakery like a thin layer of snow.

Mark Binder is the author of The Mega Matzah, *eight Passover tales and* The Brothers Schlemiel, *a novel of Chelm. His collection,* A Hanukkah Present, *was the finalist for the National Jewish Book Award for family literature. All of these books are available in softcover and electronic editions through Amazon.com and for Android, Nook and iPad.*

A Very Happy Passover

Faigie & Rubin Zimmerman and Family



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Words

It all began with words
Then with sticks
Then with stones
In the end what they found
were Ashes
And mountains of bones
We are falling we are falling
Into a place called hell
We are calling we are calling
But no one hears the bell
Inside these chambers of gas
There is nowhere we can go
We are falling we are falling
Is everybody blind?
And the world slept while their souls wept
The world turned and somewhere on the
other side far away
Their books were burned
How morbid were those days
When for them the sun simply could not smile
It grew darker still the world turned
And the naked bodies
Of innocent men women children and
babies Burned
Six million Jews perished
Six million hopes dreams and possibilities
Shattered with the broken glass

Phd and J.H.F.D.

An illustrious scholar,
articulate and erudite
espouses wisdom
as the cameras roll.

His bookcase, displayed in the background,
boasts scholarly tomes – and also – the unmistakable black on yellow print, shouting:

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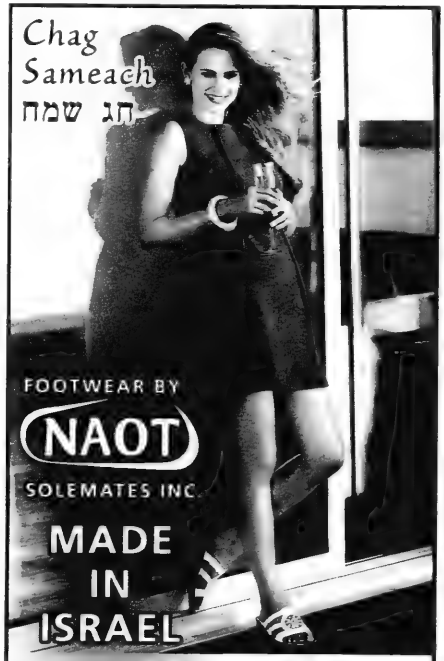
His (and her)
Story (of)
Four (matriarchs: Sara, Rivkah Rachel and Leah, three patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac

and Jacob and their some – million offspring, none of which are)

Dummies



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Horah

Sheryl Halpern

It's Saturday night in mid-October, and the black hats are dancing. Outside, in the handicapped parking section of the mall, just the men, with a folk-singer playing electric guitar at top volume. The bright lights of the stores make them all moving silhouettes.

In the IGA, where the harried cashiers are pushing through the last orders of the day, nobody can quite believe it. Two lanky, pimply bag boys in white jackets are playing with the metal rollers on the grocery chute and peering out the windows into the dark.

"There a special holiday on now?"

"Think security's going to get them?"

"They're partying, they've got a live band."

"Like you could see them. Black suits, black everything."

One of the cashiers, the one ringing up Sarah's groceries, mutters, "I wish they'd make them move. It looks like some weird cult thing."

"Oh, I don't know," says the lady in back of Sarah. "I think they should be all lit up, so that people can watch. I went past them on my way in, and they look kind of cute with their beanies and old-fashioned hats, and even those furry things. They look like something out of *Fiddler on the Roof*."

Kippot, thinks Sarah. Homburgs, fedoras, shtreimls. Not cute. Sarah, who's gone in for eggs and ended up with $98 of frozen dinners, gourmet cheeses and pasta salads, says nothing out loud. She doesn't know of any special holiday, and she isn't letting on she knows anything else. She's wearing her Saturday morning jogging outfit, oversize white sweatshirt, black stirrup pants, and if she looks different from anybody else in the mall, she can't see it.

The dancers out there look straight out of a folk tale, what you can see of them. They're definitely Orthodox Jews out there, maybe Lubavitch. They come by the mall all the time and ask shoppers if they want to recite blessings. But she doesn't say this. She keeps her head down, counts her change and looks interested.

Since it's not too chilly, she goes outside to wait for her husband and stand by the car-order stand, and she hears the music even more clearly. "*Ooray vanim li-vanechecha*," sings the guitarist. Straight out of her Hebrew-school days. She can't remember what the words mean, but she knows them. The Orthodox go round and round in a never-ending horah, arms around shoulders, kicking legs.

She remembers an old boyfriend telling her that a horah worked best if everyone spun to match the Earth's rotation, clockwise. Or was it counterclockwise? And why? She remembers being part of a wild horah at a wedding. It rotored round and round, and almost whipped off the ground. Lift-off. She remembers not being sure whose arms, whose legs, whose laughs were whose. No thinking, no distinguishing, all... If you whirled faster and faster, wouldn't you all blur together, the dancers one unseeable dancer, one holy human ring? Suddenly, she wishes she could dance out there, even in the dark. But those were Orthodox men. They wouldn't even dance with their wives – who were at home, wearing wigs and long skirts, taking care of their 15 or so children, and definitely not dancing. Well...

"There's security," says the car-order boy, but security, in his blue uniform with the walkie-talkie, stands in the light to watch the dancing, the men and boys in their Homburgs and fedoras, and then goes inside the mall where it's warmer.

"I really don't know what all that's about," Sarah says, getting into the car after all the bags have been loaded into the trunk.

"I don't either, but *you* aren't invited," says her husband.

"Maybe someone got married, or it's the end of a study session."

"Probably just the end of Shabbat."

"Maybe if I put my hair under a black hat and wore a black double-breasted suit, I could dance with them?"

Her husband glances at her. "I don't think so."

But in her head, she's in the suit and fedora, joining the circle. A strong arm around one shoulder, her strong arm around another's, and she whirls round and round in the dark, celebrating.

Kosher Wine Heaven

Brandon Marlon

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ranging from dry reds to fruity whites
to sacramental Concords for Sabbath rites.

For a capricious trice in the abbreviated aisle,
I behold alongside me eponymous ones:
King David, Rashi, and Ovadiah of Bartenura,
a triumvirate of storied vintners
thoughtfully appraising their namesake
Pinots, Rieslings, Shirazes, and Chardonnays,
muttering of vintages and kosher certifications,
their glances ultimately drifting across shelves,
implausibly compelled by the barefaced decadence
of Schmerling's dark chocolate liqueur.

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The sweat pours down my brow.
My donkey groans, as
I lift the heavy boards
Onto his back.

"Ridiculous, " I think to myself
As I shuffle my sandal-clad feet
Through the hot sand.
"Why do I need acacia wood in the desert?"

But Abba made me promise,
As he lay on his deathbed, when
The brutal marks of lashes
Oozed pus down his back.
"Today we are slaves, but one day we'll be free.
Take these boards with you
To build a house for the Lord
When you are freed from slavery.

My grandfather brought seeds from Canaan
When he proudly marched down to Egypt
With his white-haired father Jacob.
He planted the seeds and grew trees.
My father chopped down the trees
and prepared the boards.

Acacia wood. Atzei Shittim, in my language.
I laugh as I think of the word Shittim.
It comes from the root of the word shtus.
Shtus means ridiculous,
Narishkeit in Mama Loshen.

How ridiculous to carry boards into the desert!
Will we ever build a home for the Lord
When we wander through this infernal heat?

A cloud appears. It shelters me from the heat.
I hear Moses calling.
"Please bring me your wood. Acacia wood.
I need Atzei shittim to build the Lord a home,
A mishkan, a dwelling place
With us in the desert.

When we build with atzei shittim,
we remember that bending over backwards
to make this world a better place
No matter how ridiculous and difficult the task,
Will cause the Lord to dwell with us."
I hand him the boards and wipe my eyes.

Montreal 2012

My hands tremble as I stroke his face.
From behind long, dark curly lashes
A pair of eyes stare at me blankly.
Then he turns his head away.

I think of baby Moses
Floating on a basket in the Nile.
Alone. With no one to take him in.
Basya, daughter of the King hugs him
And takes him into her palace.

The Jewish people are reedemed
by Moshe, because Basya loved
A little, lonely boy.

Now it is my turn to take in
A homeless Jewish child.
"We need foster parents
But no funding is available.
We can take him to a group home.
He can sing carols under the X-mas tree
with the other little children.
We have present gaily wrapped
And lots of holiday food,"

How ridiculous of me to take in a child!
My children are all grown.
I can sleep in every morning
And vacation twice a year.
My floors sparkle with no one to scuff them.
My playroom , once filled with boisterous shouting
Has long become a silent den

I stroke the little boy's face once again.
I think of my ancestors carrying heavy boards
In the hot, dry desert
Accacia boards, shtus, narishkeit
The shtus of holiness
from which the Lord's home was build.

"I'll take him." I mumble.
"I'll do it." I whisper.
"I'll take him home with me" I shout.
I will build a house for the Lord
By doing an act of kindness,
No matter how ridiculous it may seem.
I will raise this child in a Jewish home.

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Shopping For Passover

Alvin Abram

I remember an experience I had a number of years ago shopping for Passover food. I dislike shopping – any kind of shopping. I'm a borderline klutz. I have a tendency to forget what I am supposed to buy and bring back items I wasn't asked to purchase. That's why Marilyn stopped asking me to go shopping with her.

But one year Marilyn asked if I would come Passover shopping with her. Not just regular Passover shopping, but after eight in the evening at what used to be Sunnybrook Market at a commercial plaza on the corner of Overbrook Place and Wilmington Avenue in Bathurst Manor. That evening was being billed as Midnight Madness. I don't know what motivated her to ask me to accompany her but, against my better judgment, I agreed to go.

When we approached the entrance to the store, Marilyn grabbed my arm and excitedly pointed to two deserted buggies tucked into each other. "Quick," she hissed, "grab one of those buggies." Her normally serene voice had a hint of panic.

I didn't understand why, but dutifully went for them anyway. As hard as I tried, I was unable to separate the two buggies. They were locked tighter than two dogs in heat.

"Never mind, never mind," she snapped, "I see another." She ran into the building and grabbed a lonely buggy that had just been discarded by its previous owner.

"Oh my God, all the good stuff will be gone!" she exclaimed, as she looked in the store at the many people quickly moving from aisle to aisle. "Follow me," she ordered as she plunged down the outside aisle into the noisy mass of clamouring people.

"Follow me!"

Before me, the narrow aisle was packed with bodies: tall, small, old, young, skinny and fat, and in the centre of the aisle sat several tables filled with an assortment of chocolates and other Passover sweets. On both sides of the tables, a slowly moving stream of humanity, packed tightly against the shelves, pushed over-sized buggies like gondolas in a narrow canal. As they shopped, they examined, smelled, squeezed and discussed the items in their hands. Moses could not have parted those bodies even with the help of divine intervention.

At that moment, I made a terrible mistake. I blinked in shock, and Marilyn disappeared. This was not the place for a non-aggressive person like me. Those behind me nudged me forward against my will. Hands crossed in front of my eyes as they stretched to the shelves or the tables, plucking selections from the mountain of goodies surrounding me. Several times my carriage got caught in someone else's, and then I was hit several times from behind by kamikaze shoppers.

Suddenly, a hand waved and Marilyn appeared ahead of me, beckoning. I zigged and zagged around the human obstacles, begged their pardon, and made my way to her. In her arms, Marilyn held the beginnings of her madness purchases. Her eyes were those of someone in a fight for her life.

I was rooted to the spot, enclosed on four sides by a wedge of bodies, as items flew into my buggy. Then, just as quickly as she had appeared, Marilyn disappeared again. I saw an opening and tried to manoeuvre forward. A heavily built woman approached me as if she were a snowplow, and the packed bodies parted to allow her access. I pulled in behind her, allowing her huge body to cleave a passage and, when we reached the bottom of the aisle, I tucked myself into a corner and waited for Marilyn to find me. She approached with her arms filled with an assortment of candies, marshmallows, chocolates and God-knows-what and unceremoniously dumped them into the buggy. Then she hurriedly turned the corner to the next aisle, filled with even more people than we had already passed.

Across from me, I spotted a deserted aisle that ran back toward the store entrance, and I quickly pushed my way into the aisle of calm. Others, seeing me enter, followed, only to discover the aisle contained no Passover items. As they tried to get back into the flow of people in the other aisles, they caused a lumberjack's nightmare. A wave of bodies floated by the entrance to the aisle, and I gazed at the bobbing heads from my position of safety, happy to be ignored by the passing madness that had overcome otherwise normal people.

A woman hurriedly passed. She stopped dead in front of me. Looked into my buggy and snatched an item lying amid the small mountain of goods.

"Where did you get this?" she demanded. She held the item up to my face as her eyes darted about, searching for it on a nearby shelf. I pointed back toward where Marilyn had been. She dropped the package and plunged back into the sea of bodies. I hovered protectively over my possessions. Now I was on guard.

Ten minutes passed. I was concerned Marilyn might have forgotten where I was parked, and reluctantly, I pushed my buggy back into the stream of people, each

Continued on page B12

Happy Passover

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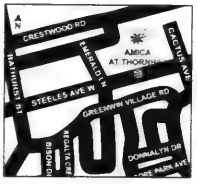

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AMICA at Thornhill

Continued from page B11

Shopping For Passover

yelling louder than the other. The volume of noise from the hundreds squeezed into this ravine of merchandise was as loud as water cascading down Niagara Falls, and I could feel all the symptoms of a gigantic migraine coming.

On my right was a "dead spot" leading into a room behind strips of thick plastic. I parked the buggy outside the opening. I saw Marilyn. Excitedly, I raised my six-foot-three-inch height onto my toes, hoping she would see me over the bobbing heads of the multitude.

She did not.

Barrelling along, though, was someone I had known for 20 years. Hair disarranged, he had the look of someone obsessed and on a mission. He stopped not more than 15 feet from me and scooped something off the shelf, his eyes swinging like a pendulum. He was trying to focus on everything without giving up the ground he had staked out.

I shouted his name. "Stuart! Stuart!" He stared at me as if I were an invader, smiled, which for him can be an effort, and disappeared into another aisle in pursuit of more items on the piece of paper he had clutched in his hand.

An elderly lady tucked herself beside me. "This is meshuge," she said, caught her breath and quickly left.

Marilyn found me and dropped off her next load of contraband, disappearing without a word, to bob and weave in search of other items. Finally, my torture came to an end when Marilyn threw the last items into our bulging buggy and we forged ahead to the lines waiting for checkout. As I watched $300 change ownership, Marilyn informed me she wanted to go to another store, one not next door, but at the corner of Steeles and Bathurst. By now my migraine was having its own headache.

The next store luckily was relatively empty. Marilyn led me up one aisle and down another.

"One more thing," she said.

I breathed a sigh of relief.

"Finished!" Marilyn said, as she plunked the last container into the buggy. Relieved, I turned my buggy toward the checkout line.

Finally finished, we returned home. I had been lucky enough to add one box of mandelbrot and one box of coconut marshmallows to the list without Marilyn being aware. I settled myself comfortably in front of my computer, an open box of coconut marshmallows hidden under a pile of papers, when I heard Marilyn bellowing my name from the kitchen. She claimed four items were missing. I insisted I had seen them being packed. Marilyn repeated that they were missing. A search of the house and the car resulted in the return of my headache – not the missing items.

Cash register tape in one hand and my car keys in the other, Marilyn returned once again to the second store where the items had been supposedly purchased.

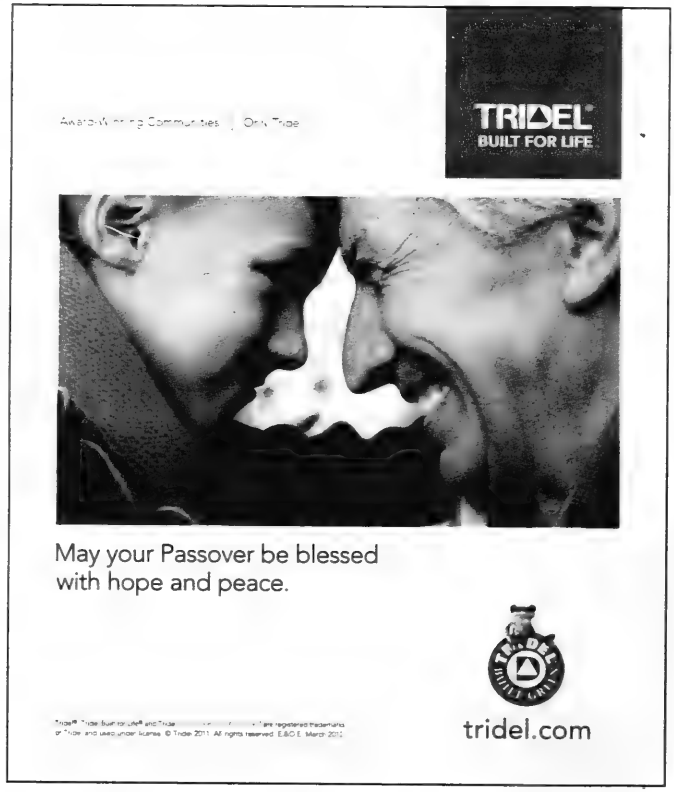
As a parting jab, I told her, "Try the buggy. I put it back in the rack in the parking lot."

I did not really believe she would find the lost items there, but a half an hour later, Marilyn returned with the missing four items. She had found them in the buggy, in the rack, by then jammed into a chain of many buggies and she had to get help to reach them.

Is there a moral to this tale?

No!

She said she would never ask me to shop with her again, but I don't believe her. She promised me that 30 years ago and didn't keep her word.



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Jewish Community Organizations, Synagogues and Schools join our brothers and sisters in Israel in celebrating a Happy and Kosher Pesach. We pray for peace with security and honour.

Act to End Violence Against Women
Aish Toronto
Beit Halochem Canada, Aid to Disabled Veterans of Israel
Beit Rayim Synagogue
Bernard Betel Centre
Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am
Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue
Beth Tikvah Synagogue
Bialik Hebrew Day School
Canadian Associates of Ben Gurion University
Canadian Friends of Bar Ilan University
Canadian Friends of Hebrew University
Canadian Friends of The Israel Guide Dog Center for the Blind
Canadian Friends of Yad Sarah
Canadian Hadassah-WIZO Toronto Centre (CHW)
Canadian Magen David Adom for Israel
Canadian Technion Society
Circle of Care
Congregation Darchei Noam
Israel Cancer Research Fund
Jewish Family & Child (JF & CS)
JIAS (Jewish Immigrant Aid Services), Toronto
Jewish National Fund of Toronto
Jewish Vocational Service
Jews for Judaism
Leo Baeck Day School
Lodzer Centre Congregation
Na'amat Canada
Netivot HaTorah Day School
New Israel Fund
One Family Fund Canada
ORT Toronto/ORT Canada
Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School
Reena, Batay Reena and Reena Foundation
Robbins Hebrew Academy
Shaar Shalom Synagogue
Shaarei Shomayim Congregation
Shaarei Tefillah Congregation
State of Israel Bonds
Temple Har Zion
The City Shul
The Pride of Israel Synagogue
The Toronto Heschel School
United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, Northeast District

The Annual Spring Ball

Eleanor Kunigis Moidel

Eagerly, the trees awaited the day and evening of the annual spring ball. Spring had arrived, the days were longer, the skies were clearer. They readied themselves by lapping up the dew that surprised them each morning; they examined each other's branches and leaves wanting to know which changes to their friends had taken place during the arduous winter.

The saplings were so excited. They had heard about the annual spring ball and were looking forward to joining the older generations of trees, knowing that they would have to pay close attention to the rules of the dance, the dos and don'ts. Being spry and agile, the saplings bent to and fro with each little wind that came up. The older trees didn't move as quickly. Only their top branches and leaves swayed.

The grass beneath their roots started to grow new shoots, young blades, emerald green in colour, thin but straight. The birds could be heard in the distance. They were starting to return from their southern migration. Not all of them; just the birds who were anxious to resume their spring and summer abodes. The sky was now bluer, the clouds whiter and puffier than during the winter, the sun remaining longer during daytime hours.

The long-awaited evening finally arrived. Although the saplings were too anxious to start their dance, they knew that the older generation of trees entered the dance floor first. The younger ones watched as the older, more mature trees bowed to their partners in front of them. And then they started to dance, at first slowly, bending just at the top. Then they, the majestic oaks and exotic maple trees, picked up speed and were now bowing from just above their trunks. Their partners, young virginal birch trees dressed in white, followed their lead and at first curtsied just with their top leaves; then when their partners displayed more energy, they too curtsied from their trunks.

The music conductor was the wind. When it could hardly be felt, the branches and twigs barely moved. As the wind picked up speed, you could feel the coolness of the breeze. When the wind huffed and puffed the young trees and saplings were afraid that they would break. The music provided by the birds was mesmerizing: musical and thrilling. They had returned to this scene joyfully, not wanting to miss any of the dancers' steps. The younger trees couldn't contain themselves any longer and started to move and sway to the chirping of the birds' voices. Their partners took their examples and also started moving to the music of the robins, sparrows and even the crows. The older trees watched with pride. They were ready to relinquish their seniority and allow the younger generation to be first during the following round of dancing. Every blade of grass was happy; the clouds came down just a little lower to show their approval; the sun smiled warmly at the participants; the blue sky blushed a cool blue.

The assemblage was waiting for something else. Each year at the end of their ball, they all looked to the houses just beyond. They knew when to stand still and listen. What were they waiting for? They were attentively listening for the first "mah nishtanah halaylah hazeh."

Each year the congregation of trees listened and waited for the seders to begin. Their dancing had stopped, but they were waiting to hear the niggunim from the Haggadah. They were familiar with them and knew when to bow, curtsy and sway. When the sun left for the west, the moon took its place. It too shone. It too smiled, happy once again to participate at the first seder of the year; the stars twinkled and provided the path to the Passover homes. It was once again calm and peaceful. The night held mysteries anew.

I Miss

I miss that exotic atmosphere
Full of history and melancholy
As the flowers spread their bloom
Over the hills of Galilee.

I miss the golden orchards
And their alluring fragrance
As the last rays of sun
Glimmer between branches.

I miss the timeless sea
As it heaves against the shores,
Whispering ancient stories.
Redemption for a Jewish soul.

Chag Sameach!

From our family to yours, we wish you joy and many blessings at Passover and all throughout the year.

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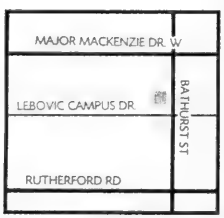


The Go-Between

Maurice Krystal

I was 13 years old when I first spent all day in shul for Yom Kippur with Dad. It was dark as we walked home. At intervals I could hear my stomach growl in hunger. It was the first time I was seriously fasting for the Day of Atonement. Dad stopped to tie a shoelace and I stopped beside him and waited. I knew even before he said anything that this was the moment for the reminder.

"When we get home, Mom will ask how you feel. You know how to answer?"

We had rehearsed it a number of times. I didn't want to get Dad in trouble.

"I'll say I feel pretty good. And when the food is served I won't eat too fast."

"If you eat too fast you'll get sick. And she might ask if you feel dizzy or your head aches. You will have to convince her that fasting and going to shul was your idea."

"It was my idea," I complained.

There were a whole number of scenarios I had to be prepared for, because religion was a very sensitive issue in our home. My parents argued almost nightly at the kitchen table after my brother and I were sent to bed.

His voice was like papery whispers while hers were gale storms of emotion. He eventually became quieter, disengaged and seemed to disappear.

I would only understand it much later, but even as a child, without reading any psychology books, I grasped the root of the conflict. The Holocaust affected my parents in different ways. As they searched for family survivors after the war, my mother lost her faith in God. "What sort of Creator would allow this?" she yelled. "What sort of religion encouraged followers to go to the slaughter like lambs?" she cried. Dad became more devout. There were no grandparents, only one uncle and one aunt left from two large families. For my father, it became an obsession that I continue the tradition so those who perished did not die in vain.

So I went with my father primarily out of guilt. I think I always supported the underdog. He needed help against an overbearing wife.

My religiosity, or the lack of it, has gone through many phases in my lifetime. During my teenage years I would agree with my mother: religion enslaved us to primitive superstitions. In my 20s, with philosophy courses under my belt, I became more tolerant but still drew the line at God and miracles.

Today, I see Judaism as part of my culture and a link to other Jews whose descendants experienced a common history. So in a way, I have completed the circle, because I think my Dad felt the same way.

* * *

The table had been set when we walked in the house. I could smell the cheese blintzes as soon as I walked through the front door. My mouth started watering like a leaky tap. I knew Mom would be watching my every move and I promised Dad to control myself. I followed Dad to the kitchen sink to wash my hands. I avoided looking at the food; I didn't trust my will power.

Seated at the kitchen table, Dad slowly cut the bread. Mom was unusually silent. Most of the talking was from Michael, my 10-year-old brother. He had wanted to go with us to shul, but was told he would have to wait another three years before he could attend the all-day services for Yom Kippur. He wanted to know what went on, he was impatient to grow up.

"What was the best part?" he asked me as he passed the plate of cheese blintzes.

I took three but then remembered myself and put one back.

"The best part? I guess that would be the blowing of the shofar."

"How many times do they blow it? How big is the ram's horn?"

My brother's eyes lit up. He was excited. Mother, on the other hand, was flushed and her lower lip twitched. I sensed danger. I cut a small piece of blintz and slowly put it in my mouth and chewed carefully. I could hear my stomach gurgle.

"They used a big black one." I stretched my arms some two feet wide. "It's curved, but about this big. During Rosh Hashanah it's played many times. The whole congregation yells out which notes to play. There's *tekiah*, *shvarim*... and some others I forget the name of. But for tonight, they blew it only once at the very end. What's the note called, Dad?"

But Dad was in a staring contest with Mom. We played staring contests in the schoolyard. The one who blinks first loses. I had never seen Dad stand up to her before. I heard the ticking clock on the wall – time froze. Michael was oblivious.

"What does it sound like? Do the walls shake?"

"Almost," I grinned. "Next year you will have to come with us to hear it for yourself. You don't have to fast until your bar mitzvah."

Mom pulled away and looked at me. I could see her eyes scrunch up and her face turn beet red.

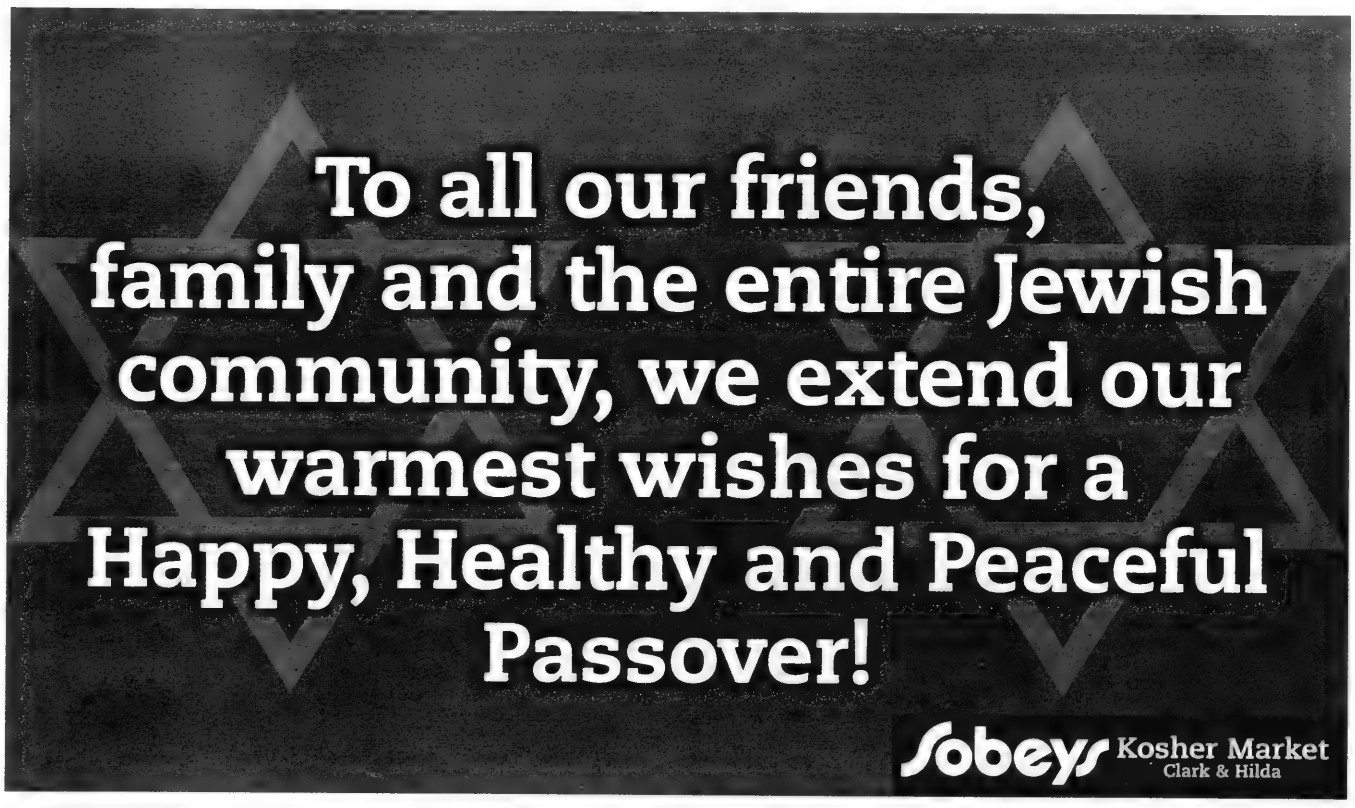
"Tell your father," she began slowly, "tell him I won't let him corrupt the next one with superstition. Tell him he will only take him away from me over my dead body!"

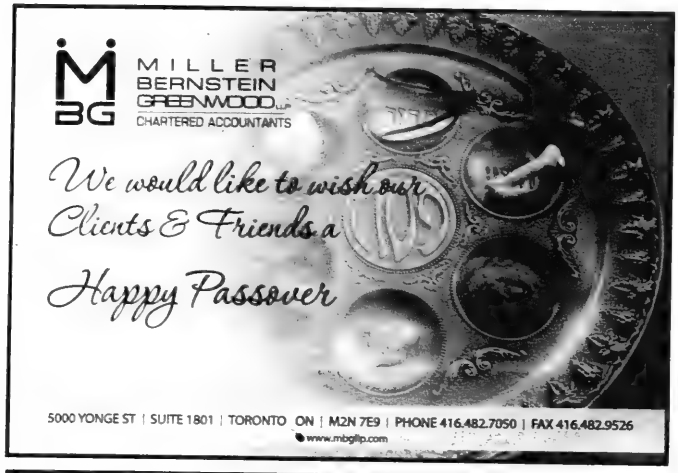
She got up. A few minutes later, we heard our parents' bedroom door slam shut. The walls of the small apartment vibrated and the glasses in the cabinet tinkled together.

I looked at Dad. His eyes looked down at his plate with the blintzes and chopped egg. They seemed sad and tearful. After a few minutes of silence his shoulders rose and he faced his two sons and gave a sheepish grin.

"Eat," Dad said putting another forkful in his mouth. "Your mother has her views and on certain issues I have mine. She'll eventually calm down."

My mouth was watering and I took that third blintz back.

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חג שמח

Celebration

Paul Philip Brown

The wind bit, whipping half-frozen snowflakes with surprising force against the skin of his face. Muttering silently to himself against the cold, he trudged the last few steps, touching his gloved hand to the mezuzah as he passed through the doorway.

Enveloped suddenly by the warmth of the synagogue foyer, he shivered momentarily, removed his coat and Muscovite hat, left them at the coat-check and strode purposefully toward the sanctuary. He removed the tallis from its bag, pronounced the blessing silently and draped it around his shoulders.

"Shabbat shalom, Tsavuah!"

Tsavuah was greeted warmly by his shul comrades as he settled into his usual place near the front of the sanctuary. Since they rarely saw one another during the week, they had much catching up to do on their weekly day of rest. For his part, in addition to the latest current events news, Tsavuah had several newly completed and prospective business deals he was itching to discuss, not to mention his son's recent acceptance into medical school. Not that he wanted to brag, of course, but wasn't it natural for him to want to trumpet Shimmy's success after the family had been faced with so much anxiety and uncertainty about his future? And, to be sure, his shul friends would have their own news to share as well.

"Did you hear the latest from Iran, Tsavuah? I saw the *Globe and Mail* this morning on the way over and the report said..."

"Listen to me, Ben. If you think that's bad, my brother just returned from a holiday in Israel and on the trip back, the plane was forced..."

"Shhhh! Gentlemen, please!" The trustee glared at them from the aisle, pointing to the open siddur in his hand. Tsavuah hadn't yet managed to take one from the low shelf on the back of the bench in front of him.

"Le'hodot lecha ule'yachedcha be' ahavah," intoned the chazzan as he gathered together the fringes on the four corners of his tallis into one hand in preparation for the recitation of the *Shema*, the central statement of God's oneness.

Now that the trustee had moved down the aisle, however, the trio resumed their conversation, certain that no judgmental eye was being cast upon them.

While engrossed thus in their personal and business affairs, all track of time lost, the Shabbat morning *Shacharit* service was concluding with the removal of the scroll of the Torah from the holy Ark.

"And Egypt shall know that I am the Eternal," chanted the reader some 30 minutes later, the sculpted silver yad, a miniature extension of his own hand, pointing at the Hebrew text of the Torah scroll.

"Can you believe what's been happening to the price of gold?" queried Tsavuah.

"Am I sorry I didn't listen to my broker last month," wailed Lou.

"And the Eternal said unto Moses, 'Go unto Pharaoh, and thou shalt say unto him, "The Eternal God of the Hebrews hath sent me unto thee saying, Send away my people, that they may serve me in the desert."'"

"There's nothing to choose between in this election," plainted Tsavuah in a half-hearted attempt at a whisper.

"And I will distinguish in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no insects shall be there, in order that thou mayest know that I am the Eternal in the midst of the earth."

"That's exactly what he said, Ben, if you can believe it."

"Some maven."

Scarcely controlled laughter. Faces turned, some glaring, most simply staring, among them the face of his son, Shimmy, seated with his friends several rows back.

At the end of the *Musaf* service, the rousing hymn of praise, *Adon Olam*, filled the sanctuary. Tsavuah joined in as he usually did, singing heartily.

"Let's be going, Shimmy," urged the father as they edged their way through the crowded foyer toward the doors. Tsavuah touched his hand to the mezuzah on the doorpost. An icy gust of wind greeted him, but the vibrant warmth of his voice was unmistakable.

"Ahhh!" Tsavuah Kadesh sighed deeply, with great satisfaction. "Thank God for the synagogue and for prayer, Shimmy. I feel so spiritually refreshed after a Shabbat morning in shul."

Wending their way home together, Shimmy was silent.

What is a faithful Jew

Rachel Mandel

What is this faith,
They say I've not known?
What is this faith?
I've not been shown.

This is what they say,
It means to be a faithful Jew.
Because, as they tell me,
There are things that one must do.

Among the most important,
One must belong to a good shul.
And by day the children must,
Attend a Hebrew school.

Light the candles, have a feast,
On Fridays for the Shabbos.
One must visit and rejoice,
With the Saftas and the Sabbas.

Only order kosher foods.
Only shop at kosher stores.
And on Passover you must,
Sit with feathers on the floors.

Recite the prayers each day,
They must be spoken in Hebrew.
In which you must be learned,
To be a faithful Jew.

I think about this long and hard,
And I offer no criticism,
Though I am inclined to disagree,
On the true meaning of Judaism.

More important than attending shul,
Is to keep a growing, open mind.
And attain other values learnt there,
Such as being tolerant and kind.
Teach our children not to gossip,
Not to spread lashen hora.
And at the start of each new day,
Give pennies for Tzadaka.

Praying doesn't have to be in Hebrew,
First what you're saying must have clarity.
Prayers need not come from a holy book,
So speak from your heart – all that matters is sincerity.

To embody the morals and the values,
Might be the most holy thing to do.
For I cannot think of anything better,
Than to be a faithful Jew.

Zion of Love

Brandon Marlon

If ever you should grant me the chance,
I would efface the script of infidels
from the tablet of your heart;
my shielding arms would enfold you,
as mountains surrounding Jerusalem;
my nibbling lips at your inviting earlobe
would whisper a Knesset of sweet-nothings;
my guardian legs would enwrap you,
like Hinnom and Kidron round the Old City;
I would enter you as a Promised Land,
till our lovescape flowed with milk and honey.

Eleanor loves Frank Sinatra.
Her favourite food is chocolate.
It's also her favourite colour.
She's been a ballet lover since '68.
And a widow since '92.
She starts the day with a yoga class
and finishes with a glass of sherry.
She's Living Life

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Who is Ringelblum

Anita Lerek

If none of us survives, at least let that remain.

- Emmanuel Ringelblum
b 1900 in Buczacz, Galicia
d 1944 in Warsaw

Who is R-i-n-g-el-b-l-u-m
Chik a dee dee dee
You are naked In the forest.
you are the witness,
hawks flapping above,
the longer the notes, the scarier.
Danger.
Dee dee dee dee dee dee dee dee

Caged into 10-feet high walls with barbed wire tops,
Jewish lives: religious, assimilated, converted, rich,
stooped, proud, convict, singer, smuggler, furrier,
doctor, thief, prostitute, historian, writer, orphan;
200,000 people per square mile,
all sealed in, Nov 16 1940, Warsaw, Poland

You are the eyes of the people. You see
the captives saluting the occupiers, dancing
on one foot, doing push-ups, beaten, then
lying down in the mud to kiss the pavement

You help to shape the story first, then record it,
then preserve it

Help, help, to organize a self-help society, house committees,
underground newspapers, secret schools, orphanages,
women's circles, courtyard theatres,
flower and vegetable seedings

Small birds all lightness and strength
flitting along the branches,
nestled inside tree nooks,
how free you are to come and go
and fly away from intruders

Your flock is typhus, quarantine, lice,
stripping, shivering, delousing;
shaving/burning away all the intimates

Slow steps toward swelling and apathy: from certificate to voucher
to registering to ticket to lining up for tasty warmed water, here at the last
station, the soup kitchens. No money to feed everyone. Who
to choose? The choosing between scarcity and starvation.

Ever the historian. You create the Oyneg Shabes team.
to mark the joy of the Sabbath, to mark the people
of the Sabbath, to make a record

The birdsong ranges from
brief warning calls to multi-phrased songs.
The greatest challenge is attaining
the species song in captivity

Ringelblum, you are objective. It's all in the details. Analyze
the facts. Not enough time for your ill wife, Yehudis,
or your son, Uri. The truth is seen In the mirror
of your words, the truth of the flock in peril,
in totality, these people, any people

Continued on page B19

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Sam Coppa
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Who is Ringelblum

Continued from page B18

The things you collect –
candy wrappers, tram tickets, ration cards, theatre posters,
restaurant menus, invitations, photos, postcards,
comedies, poems, accounts of a starving
mother eating her dead child

On Sabbath eve, April 17 1942, Gestapo agents knock on the door
of your close friend, statistician, Menakhem Linder. Nothing
serious, they say. Just take a toothbrush and a change
of clothing. Then just out of the car, they shoot him
plus go back for fifty-one other Jews.
Why them why, why?

The claws tighten on your future. You and your team rush, fly, to create
proofs of existence before the vanishing. Questionnaires, artifacts,
essays on The Future of the Jews/TheJewish Woman/The
Ghetto Street/Economics of the Ghetto

You have the children interviewed:
What does war mean to you?
Not eating till two in the afternoon... hunger tortures me... no work, just hunger...
I don't want to beg, so I smuggle... police put the barrel of a pistol to my head

Help, the life space is shrinking.
Lists, stats darkening the whiteness. You are the marker

1942

Jan 8 – News of poison gassing deaths in Chelmno, near Lodz
May 5 - An invitation to a children's program at the Femina Theatre: "Spring Has Come"
June 6 - Shootings in Lida, Pabianice, Zdunska Wola and Krakow
July 14 - Invitation for the grand opening of a Hebrew-language preschool
July 18 - Invitation to Tagore's *Postman*, performed by Janusz Korczak's orphanage children

July 22: **Start of the Great Deportation**

The hawks are spotted in the forest.
Chik a dee dee dee dee dee dee dee.
Take cover or their talons will pierce
your organs and break your bones

The small birds in the ghetto are being hunted down, trapped inventory,
waiting to fill quotas of Jewish lives for deportation

Chik a dee dee dee dee dee dee dee.dee dee dee dee
They're blockading whole blocks, set for destruction... need to leave home quickly or I'll get shot... can't go home or I'll get shot... seized, if I wander the streets... one hour to pack my whole life into a 15-kilo bundle... Jewish police herding us into the wagons

The woman is taking her baby for a stroll. Needs to get some air or she'll go nuts.
Her street is clear. She tucks in her blouse, straightens her shoulders,
pats her baby's cheek and moves forward. A coal wagon passes,
piled up with elderly people, strangely silent in early mourning. No,
it would never stop for her, impossible. The creaking force lands
in front of her, swallows her up and her screams, leaving baby
and carriage behind as sidewalk litter

Continued on page B20

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Who is Ringelblum

Continued from page B19

- Hurry, to the trains, to the east, for resettlement, work. We promise you 3 kilos of bread and a kilo of marmalade.
- Bring me back, cry the notes flung from heartless trains

July 22 – 6,250 Jews deported
July 23 – 7,300 Jews deported
July 24 – 7,400 Jews deported
And so on until Sept 12

Not a single shot in protest. Not a single German killed. The only resistance, in the recording by you and your comrades, Lewin, Kaplan, Gorny and Opoczynski.

Hiding in apartments, hiding against walls outside, invisible, packing, moving, watching
the wagons, worrying, panicking, and writing and writing, the writing endangering, the writing empowering, keeping the spirit open and receptive enough to bear witness to the experience, to ache, to see the loss, world crumbling, not
to shut down in denial or suicide, to document the historic cry,
to be the body of words immune to starvation and shooting

By September you witnessed the loss of more than 300,000 Jews.
You were a privileged slave with your work certificate from a ghetto carpentry shop. Yes, you helped save some intellectuals.
What did you do for the masses?

Lists for lists. You lived to make the lists of the taken and the takers,
rows upon rows of markers, a cemetery of words. The ghetto
is amputated; a quarter of the population remains

But you and your band captured it all. You saw the pillow, the doll,
the brown pants, the brocade chair, the baby carriage,
the orphans, all joined together as one crying
out for their missing selves

Aug 3 – You had the first cache of the Oyneg Shabes Archive buried under a friend's school at 68 Nowolipki

1943

Jan 18 - The Nazis return to the ghetto to fill a quota of 8,000 Jews for deportation.

The captives set out without protest to the deportation point.

Jewish fighters suddenly spring out from the crowd. Joyful, grenades, clubs, steel pipes, sulfuric acid and the revolvers. Finally the hardness, the power, the thrust, the pounding, a small seed inside exploding. Jewish fighters, such crazed little creatures, flying from district to district, mobbing and piercing and shooting and shooting at the enemy, such risk in the trying, such release, finally freed from the mind of their elders –
of hope of the future,
of hope of life at any cost for self
of hope of begging or buying help from others

The fight as a flock for an honourable death,
the redeeming sacrifice for their people

Jan 18 -21 The human kill is stopped at 6,500

An account of this action is deposited in the Archive

Feb – You have the second part of the Archive buried in 2 aluminum milk cans under the same Borochov school building at 68 Nowolipki

Feb – You escape with Yehudis and Uri to a hideout, Krysia, on the Other Side, the Christian side

April 4 – A third part of the Archive is buried under 34 Swietojerska

Continued on page B21

Who is Ringelblum

Continued from page B20

1944

March 7 - A lovers' quarrel between the Krysia's owner and his girlfriend leads to the betrayal of the occupants

You enter the list, arrested and jailed. Trapped chickadee is offered an escape, just for you, not your family

- *Is death difficult, you ask, turning down the offer*

March 9 - The residents of the Krysia bunker are shot, including Yehudis and Uri and you

Sept 1946 - Your first cache of documents is brought out of the earth. Birth of 10 tin boxes covered in clay, securely bound in string, 25,540 pages of materials

Dec 1950 - The second part emerges. 9,829 pages

The third one is waiting in the ground

- Who is Ringelblum?

You are the bird of humanity's captives,
soaring high above
and deep inside,
sending out the warning,
the witness's cry,
flock attacked,
siren calls.
Then notes lengthening,
commingling into melodies
of sadness and continuity.

We breathe in your songs
chick a dee dee dee,
fee fee deedee deedee
and fly again

Emmanuel Ringelblum

Grateful acknowledgement is made of the following resources:

- Study of Ringelblum by Samuel D. Kassow: *Who Will Write Our History?*
- The diary of fellow Oyneg Shabes writer and martyr, Chaim A. Kaplan: *Scroll of Agony*
- Emmanuel Ringelblum: *Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto*

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Fascinating Images

Judith Shakar

A wind blows from the East
I hear its whistling nearby ...
An ancient refrain steals
Into my heart and breaks it.

I see before my eyes
A glorious Land,
A magnificent blue sky
And a shimmering setting sun.

Fascinating images light my mind,
Living alongside my days,
Lucid under my eyelids
Even in darkness of night.

And like the blossom that follows
The first breath of spring,
So in the warm bosom of my Land
I would emerge anew with joy and serenity.

And were I a little dove,
I would fly over the ocean,
Carrying in my beak an olive branch
Offering it to my people as a symbol
of lasting peace.

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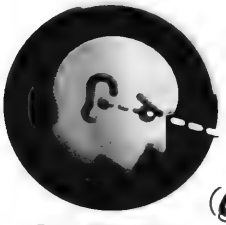

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Passover

Ron Cluteh

On Pesach, it is said,
the home becomes a synagogue,
but not until after the endless tidying,
cooking, and negotiating are complete, not until the hosts
decide where to seat the sisters whose families don't get along
or the brothers-in-law who had the falling out
or the young cousin awkward in groups of more than two –
then wondering for a terrified moment
whom this year they forgot to include.

In the seders of my youth,
famished elders made a virtue of mumbling
the Passover story in thick Ashkenaz,
short-shrifting the Haggadah Hebrew
eager to arrive at the festive meal.
They seldom paused, as we now do,
to illuminate the symbols
adorning the sacred plate.

Thank God for the Four Questions.
Even the family leader fell hushed
like everyone at the double long table,
as the youngest, for once, escaped being shushed,
and stood on a chair for a first performance
he had worded by heart.

Ah, the scent, the spirit,
the ruach of the occasion:
pungent red horseradish *chrayn*
suffusing apple/walnut charoset,
a mock mortar sealing
two walls of brittle matzot
as parched lips served as sounding bells
for the minor chords and gutterals
of the Hebrews' ancient tongues.
What magical effects,
hunting the afikoman matzoh
as Manischewitz or Carmel red wine
tingled a still-developing brain
– any child could feel the prophet Elijah
brush by to the proffered cup of wine,
the sign that bedtime was long overdue.

To the unsympathetic,
our yearly recitation of the Ten Plagues
is the oldest grudge in the world.
Not so at the seder of my adult years where
every portion on our collective plate
has a name someone alive remembers in family blood:
the Holocaust, the Russian exodus,
the release of the Falashas from the kingdom
of Ethiopia, the freeing of American slaves,
each hearkens back to the ancient revolt
that forged a nation out of servitude,
as Moses led his dispossessed
through forty years of desert,
torn between a golden calf
and a God only visible in achingly
brief pillars of smoke and fire,
but who gave of himself to his people
in a rain of heavenly manna
and a parted sea of grief.

At this seder may our story compete
with the daily demands of life.
Let food vie with song
for pride of place in the spirit.
May the last of our blood to be spilled
be an overturned glass of concord red
on a tablecloth of finest linen
stirring a frantic search for a mound of salt
in the middle of this, our people's freedom
and its great golden age.

For all that, for all that, I, the father, find my seat
at the table's side, and I invite my cousin's wife,
a fine teacher, to lead our family seder, "Order,"
I joke, "never having been my thing."
But all those rabbis' elderly eyes looking on –
and I ask myself, how can I stand there holy?

from *Forgetting the Holocaust*
published by Frontenac House, 2011

Happy Passover

To all our friends, family and the entire Jewish community, we extend our warmest wishes for a happy, healthy and peaceful Passover!

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A Song To Jerusalem

Marlene Maashaal

This special sky,
what else – just this sky.
I fade into myself, and fold away –
take it all in as an olive tree spreading
branches and roots into the earth of your body,
past prayers that can be felt seeping through your breath,
to where prayers speak to your white harp, your hills of dress –
I am in painted songs caressed by the filament of your beauty.
You are a mountain refuge for the heart, my eye.

How do I sing to you, Jerusalem?
You are just not anyone.
It's just the heart, and I have no reason to –
I'm not out, or in, or part –
It's just that the world bends gold across your city
a few miles strong, and yet away,
and neither stars, this child hope,
this peace burning in my breast,
your songs of gold like an ocean shell
around David's tower, seems real.

My eyes cannot fully ever understand
your stones of white, your desert
hills and the olive earth, or the birds
by the Wailing Wall climbing
with wings of unending prayer on high.
I am in your dream just like an olive tree.
In the points in my eyes, you are
my branch of gold, my arm of light.
Your blanket of sky is the comfort to my head
and the ground of your hidden fortress is
the mattress for my back. Inside your roots,
I always dream I can hear the grass grow.

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Shame

Tilya Gallay Helfield

A week or two after school started in September 1944, a new boy joined our class. He was small and thin with black eyes and enormous hands and feet dangling from skinny arms and legs that jerked like a marionette's on strings. I knew who he was. At dinner the night before my parents had discussed the arrival of the new rabbi and his family from Baltimore. The boy's name was Chaim, but when Mr. Furey, the principal, introduced him to the class, he pronounced it "Chame" as though it rhymed with *shame*.

Mr. Furey showed Chaim to his desk and he told him, "A gentleman removes his hat indoors, Chame."

Chaim sat down at his desk, but he didn't take off his skullcap.

"I said, take your hat off, Chame." Mr. Furey's face turned red, as it always did when he got angry.

"No." Chaim said.

We all gasped. I kept my head down, avoiding everyone's horrified eyes. No one talked to a teacher like that, especially Mr. Furey, who reached over and tried to snatch off the offending skullcap. Chaim ducked out of reach.

A shock of Mr. Furey's shiny black hair fell over one eye. "Out!" he roared. "Get out of this classroom! And don't come back without your father!"

The next day, Chaim's father, the rabbi, came to school and spoke to Mr. Furey, who reluctantly allowed Chaim to wear his skullcap in class. He wore a baseball cap on top of it outside of school, but the skullcap stuck out the bottom and all the gentile boys made fun of him. He never paid any attention, just kept on walking, eyes staring straight ahead. None of the Jewish kids came to his defence. We walked ahead of him or behind him or across the street, as if he were a lightning rod that would attract trouble onto his narrow shoulders and away from us.

Chaim was the only boy Mr. Furey picked on. He preferred to single out a girl and watch her until he caught her doing something she shouldn't. Then he'd pounce. "Writing in our textbook, are we?" His eyes would bulge out of his head and his long pointed nose would flush with indignation. "How dare you damage school property! Don't you know there's a war on?"

Mr. Furey was one of the few men his age not in uniform, which may have accounted for his obsession with the war. He would pace up and down the aisles, his tall skinny frame bent over, making sure we all wrote on both sides of every piece of paper and used our pencils right down to the nub, and he conducted weekly bottle and newspaper drives for the war effort. What we hated most were the constant bombing and fire drills he held during school hours, especially in winter.

In the weeks before Christmas, Chaim refused to sing Christmas carols. Mr. Furey insisted at first, but Chaim was finally excused from carol singing after his father came to school again and complained. After that, Mr. Furey made Chaim sit outside in the hall doing extra math during the singing. When Chaim came back into class, Mr. Furey wrote extra, more difficult math problems on the blackboard, which Chaim solved with embarrassing ease.

The rabbi's dispensation from carol singing apparently applied only to Chaim, because Mr. Furey made it clear that he expected the rest of the Jewish kids in the class to sing. They all made a great show of mouthing the words, but I was the only one who actually sang them out loud.

Chaim told me, "If you sing, God will strike you dead."

I didn't believe this for a minute, but I thought I'd better check it out with my father.

"An old wives' tale," he snorted. "This is not the way to improve relations between Christians and Jews. Terrible things are happening to the Jews in Europe that are never reported in the newspapers. We must make sure that kind of thing never happens here in Canada. Do you understand?" I wasn't sure, but I nodded. "Anyway, what harm can come from singing a few songs? Even I can appreciate a pretty tune."

Actually, my father couldn't tell an oratorio from a beer commercial, but if there was any chance that I could actually help prevent antisemitism here in Canada, I thought I'd better sing the carols. To tell the truth, I was far more comfortable singing with the gentile majority than sitting silent with the other six Jewish kids in the class who wouldn't.

My father, a self-confessed iconoclast and "a small-L liberal," believed that science superseded "that religious mumbo-jumbo." On the Jewish holy days, when all the other Jewish kids stayed home, my father laid down the law. "You children cannot play in the street with your friends. You may go to synagogue, if you wish. However, in my opinion, you'd be much better off going to school."

The other Jewish kids resented my going to school on the Jewish holidays and the teachers couldn't understand why I attended and they didn't.

But Mr. Furey was delighted. He refused to review old work when the Jewish kids were absent like the other teachers did, but went ahead with new lessons. When the other Jewish kids returned to school, he'd nod in my direction and say, "You can ask your friend here for the work you missed. She came to school even though it was her holiday too."

"You're ashamed of being Jewish," the other Jewish kids accused me after school.

"I am not. My father says it will help improve relations between Christians and Jews. He says that's the important thing."

My father kept reassuring me, "It's not important what other people think. You must do what you think is right."

After Christmas, my father decided that the Jewish Sunday school, which I had

Continued on page B26

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Shame

Continued from page B25

attended for the past two years, was inadequate. He enrolled me in the Jewish day school that was held in a room in the basement of the King Edward Street synagogue every weekday after school except Friday, and every Sunday morning. How I hated it! The pupils ranged in age from five to 13, but because I could neither read nor write Hebrew, I had to sit with the five-year-olds in the first row. David Reich and Herby Levin, who were in my class in public school, teased me unmercifully, and even Harold Lipshitz, who was two years younger, snickered when I had to stand and recite the alphabet aloud with the babies.

But the worst part of every day was the six-block walk along York Street to the Jewish day school. The gentile boys followed all the Jewish kids, pushing the girls off the sidewalk and snatching the boys' skullcaps and yelling, "The Jews are so dumb they have to go to two schools a day!"

They kept it up all the way to the basement door of the synagogue, until Reverend Krantzberg ran out on his short legs, coattails flapping, waving one arm in violent circles as though he were shooing away birds, one plump hand on his skullcap to keep it from flying off his head.

In the weeks before Easter, Chaim objected to the Bible passages that Mr. Furey read from the New Testament every morning, especially the ones that accused the Jews of killing Christ. The discussions made me feel uncomfortable because I thought they emphasized the differences between the few Jewish kids and the gentile majority in the class. Chaim would never actually quote from the New Testament but he knew his Bible and it was hard not to be proud of him when he stood up to Mr. Furey, who always started off with the same quotation:

"'And there arose certain, and bare false witness against him.' Mark 14:57."

Chaim argued, "But none of their witnesses agreed with each other."

Mr. Furey's face reddened and he said, loudly, "'Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, "What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye?" And they all condemned him to be guilty of death.'" Mark 14:63 and 64."

Chaim said, "But in those days Jews were not allowed by law to put a man to death."

Mr. Furey said louder, "But Pilate answered them, saying, 'Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?' For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy. Mark 15:9 and 10."

Chaim said, "The high priest knew that the Romans demanded a Jew as a scapegoat because of their fear of the Messiah."

Mr. Furey yelled, "'When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, 'I am innocent of the blood of this just person; see ye to it.' Then answered all the people, and said, 'His blood be on us, and on our children.' Matthew 27:24 and 25."

Chaim said, "This was just..."

Mr. Furey slammed the Bible shut and roared, "Get out your math texts at once! We can't waste valuable class time on nonsense when we have important work to do!"

One early spring day after school, I started out for Jewish school as usual. I was carrying my books and my jacket because it was so warm. I was late because I'd been working on a geography project and the other Jewish kids were far ahead of me. One of the big gentile boys from Grade 7 came lurching down the street behind me, pretending to be drunk. He banged into me, knocking me into the gutter, where my books fell open and my stencils and maps scattered into the street. Another boy kicked my books until the pages flew into the air and fluttered down like crumpled leaves.

"Oh, so sorry, Jew. Did I step on your stencil?" He ground it under his heel.

The boys picked up handfuls of gravel from a driveway nearby and began to throw them at me. The sharp stones burned like bee stings on my bare arms and legs. I started to cry. A fat woman passing by, carrying two shopping bags, stopped to stare. The boys ran off, leaving me kneeling and sobbing in the gutter while I tried to gather up my books and papers.

When I got home that night, I told my father what had happened. He was outraged and insisted that I tell Mr. Furey at school the next day. "Those boys were students from your school. He'll soon sort them out."

When I arrived in class the next morning I went straight to the front of the room and stood before Mr. Furey's desk. He looked up and glared at me. "Well?" he asked impatiently. "What seems to be the problem?"

I described what had happened the day before. When I showed him the cuts on my arms and legs and my torn notebooks, his face turned very red and I remember thinking with satisfaction that those boys were really going to get it now.

"What do you mean by coming to me with this ridiculous story?" he demanded in a loud voice. Everyone in the class stopped talking and stared at me. "I despise tattletales!"

I was too stunned to speak. A fiery heat suffused my chest and throat and burned two hot spots into my cheeks. "What do you expect me to do about it? This didn't occur on school premises. Go back to your seat at once and don't let me hear any more of this nonsense!"

I slunk back to my seat and tried to ignore the whispers of the others. But Chaim caught my eye and shrugged in a gesture I recognized as one of acceptance and solidarity, as if to say, "See, you're a member of the tribe after all."

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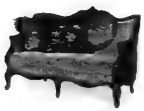

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Daughters Should Never

Sylvia Solomon

Daughters should always
Go back:
To hometowns filled with memories of light.
They should play where mothers played,
Stroll along well-travelled paths,
Pass old friends in greeting.

Daughters should always
Go back:
And imagine their mothers in days of ease and play,
When life was simply surrounded
By love, and safety,
And joy.

Daughters should never have to
Go back:
To see their mother's horror and pain,
To places where no children lived
For all were older than time,
Where safety and joy were overcome
With things too dark to know.

And in this place
To which
Daughters should never have to
Go back:
Perhaps they'll make a story whole,
Perhaps they'll see
What daughters
Should never have to see –
Except in a world like ours
Where daughters
Have to
Go back.

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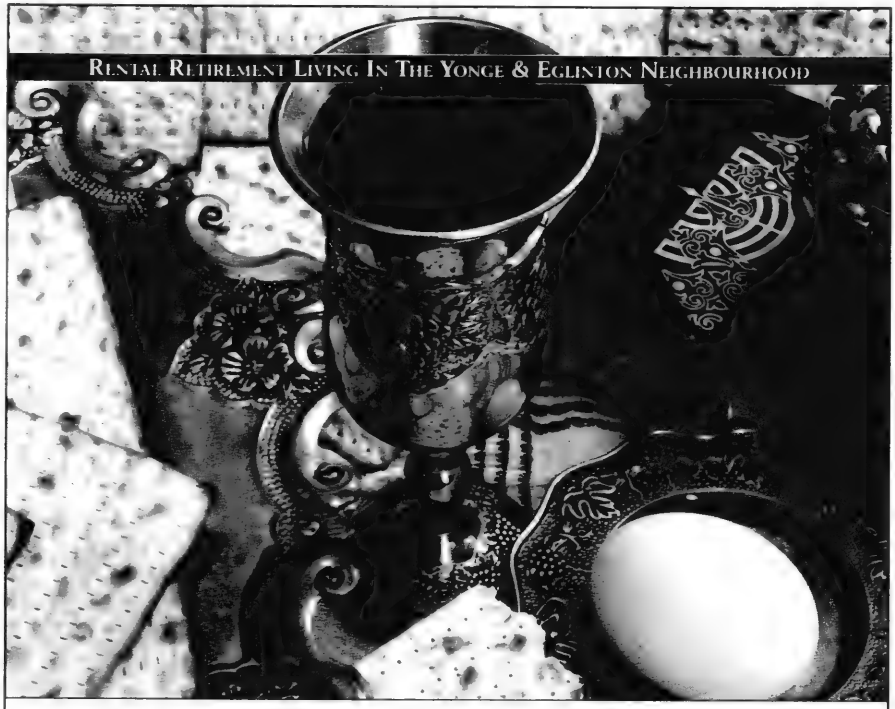

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Ayn Od M'Levado

Jennifer (Janka) Hoffman

Bumper stickers in the Holy Land:
Ayn Od M'Levado: there is none else.

The golden light of the golden hills
of Jerusalem spills over layers of sand-coloured
buildings undulating like lazy Mediterranean
waves. In the distance, a golden dome
caresses ancient stained glass windows
in ancient synagogues.
On the new Rapid Transit which runs the seam
between East and West Jerusalem
Chassidic men with payes, sassy girls in mini-skirts,
men quietly fingering rosaries, Greek Orthodox
priests in flowing black robes, smokey-eyed women
wearing niqabs, and camera-slung tourists.
The announcements are in Hebrew and Arabic.

At Damascus Gate we smile at the shouts of *asara, asara*
which we once mistook for a call to prayer, rather
than the price, ten shekels, for the bounty of fruit, herbs,
vegetables, clothing, shoes, electronic devices;
we meander past stalls spilling aromatic herbs,
Turkish delight, halvah, dates, figs, olives, carpets,
tapestries and ceramics onto the incessant crowds.
We move towards the Western Wall.

Bumper stickers in the Holy Land
Ayn Od M'Levado: there is none else.

The bumper stickers disappear
in a cloud of belching exhaust fumes
and pushing, shouting crowds.
I want only dates and honey plucked
from bee's lips; I want the sun to be
serene, and to cast no shadows.
I want the Wall to welcome men and women,
Arabs and Jews with equal Abrahamic
hospitality. I want the streets to be free
of plastic bags and litter, the overflowing garbage
bins not to house an infinite number
of feral cats. I want to be welcomed
as I greet men and women of all faiths. I want
my wide-eyed hope not to be scorned.
I want to dance fearlessly at the Gaza border
knowing that my dancing will dissolve
boundaries of hatred; I want the centuries
of intolerable conflict to dissolve in the love
of the One God.

And it seems that all I get to do, as I walk
the streets of my beloved Jerusalem
is pray: help me accept
Ayn Od M'Levado: there is none else.

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Couriers of Courage

Sarah Fine

There were women
their names can be mentioned here
who risked their lives
carrying messages

Tosia Altman, age 25
died in the Warsaw Ghetto

Young women
21, 24, 27 years of age who
bravely took chances
using fake papers of identity

Lisa Magun, age 23
died at Ponary

Posing with blond wigs
as Aryans
or because their features did not
like their brothers
mark them as Jews

Sonia Madeysker, age 28
died in Vilna

These women worked
in the Polish Resistance
in the forests

Gola Mire, age 32
died escaping from Krakow Prison
There were women
their names can be mentioned here
runners in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising
carrying messages, false papers, weapons
to help the Jews fight back

Lonka Kozibrodska, age 27
Wanda Majewski, age 25
Tema Schneiderman, age 26
Fruma and Chancza Plotnicka, age 29

To help the Jews escape
There were women
their names can be mentioned
Here.

Tosia Altman

Lisa Magun

Tema Schneiderman

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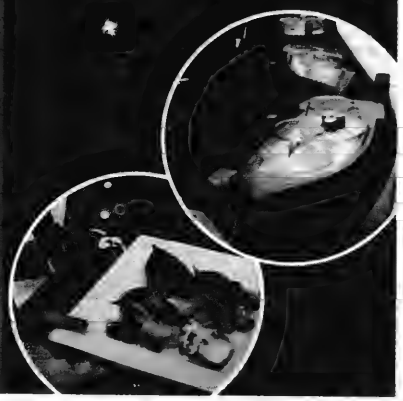

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Myrala

Miriam Preszow Weiner

It's two hours before dinner
And we're headed for the train
My daddy's coming into town today

I just can't wait to see him
And hear him call my name
It's been a whole week since he's been away
I remember every summer
At the cottage by the woods
Every Sabbath was my special time with daddy
I remember sitting with my daddy by the river stream
He would tell me all his stories
And I'd begin to dream
Tell me all your stories daddy
Of so long ago
How did you get that hole upon your arm?
Tell me daddy tell me please
Because I want to know
How is it that you came to such great harm
He looked at me tears in his eyes
As he began to sing
He sang about a violin that couldn't play a string

His younger brother blessed with talent
Way beyond his years
Was dragged of to a prison camp
Filled with people's tears

He said that those were darkened times
When stars had left the sky
He hid deep in the forest
In trees so way up high
His heart was filled with terror
And agonizing pain
He didn't know if he'd survive
Or ever sing again
Years later you were born, my child
Again the stars shone bright
And I would sing you lullabies
Each and every night

Who oh daddy why I asked did they do that to you?

The Nazis did it Myrala because I am a Jew

It's two hours before dinner
And we're headed for the train
My daddy's coming into town today

Jewish Music, My Mirror

Barbie Davies

Jewish music beckons me
old world notes enter and
expand
inside
my whole being

ancient *niggunim*
filling up the raw
empty,
jagged
spaces.

its mysterious magic
inhabits
old cavernous
yearnings.

I float
above the note
hovering,
it releases and
fills me up
again

wave
after note
after
wave
after note
massaging and releasing
visceral otherworldly knowings.

unearthing the places
deep within me and
reawakening them
as if
never forgotten

balming the bloating
acid of anger and aloneness

the orchestration's my
inner conversation,
mapping tangled emotions
birthed through breath and sound

Jewish Music, my Mirror.

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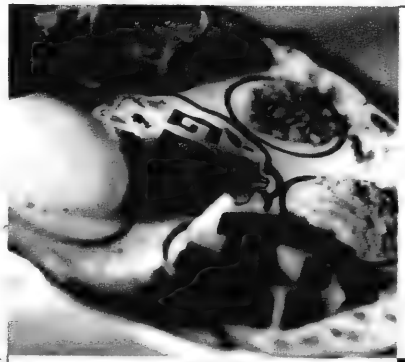
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The fleeting of time

Rose Romberg

As I leafed through my weekly edition of *The CJN*, I noticed, to my chagrin, a heading that gave me quite a jolt:

The Passover literary supplement for authors and poets.

Once again, I was struck by the essence of the fleeting time. In mind and heart's eye, I found it difficult to fully grasp that we are almost on the threshold of Pesach. It seemed to me as if it was only yesterday that my granddaughter and I, in festive mood, had walked along the long hallway to open the door for Elijah to enter.

Walking back hand in hand to join family and guests at the table for the blessings of the fourth *koyse* of wine with our illusive guest of honour, I was overcome by the emotional force of sobriety.

What if... what if I would be conspicuous by my permanent absence next year. After all, I had reached the hoary age of 94. Who can ask for anything more? It was a time to say "Dayeinu."

"Mother," my daughter broke my reverie. "Are you feeling OK?" she asked with concern in her voice.

"I'm fine dear. Why do you ask?"

"You're so quiet suddenly," she guardedly observed.

"I guess I am a bit tired."

The past two days I had cooked the gefilte fish, made a large jar of pickled beets (that they are so fond of), baked two huge sponge cakes and one honey cake, prepared the seder platter, and if all that weren't enough, baked several dozen of everybody's favourite mandelbroit.

Since my unfortunate accident, I have become a semi-invalid and have gotten into the habit of retiring by seven o'clock, usually with tea in bed.

Needless to say, I didn't mention any of this. However, I thought this was an opportune time to mention once again, and with feigned courage I said, "Honey, this time I will leave this singular treasured seder platter for you to keep as an heirloom. It is one of my special possessions. It was given to me by a charming English gentleman, but that's another story and I don't want to hear your usual rebuttal." My children refuse to face reality – the inevitable.

And so, our happy and meaningful first seder has come to an end, and my adult grandchildren are scurrying around in search of the afikoman. Dayeinu!

To be continued, God willing, next year...

Well, it appears that the Good Lord has seen fit to have me present at yet another seder. I suspect He is testing my faith. I truly believe I am living the Book of Job. And so, like a flash of light, we are once again almost on the threshold of Passover.

This past year has not been kind to me. It has been a year of six changes in residence, with much enervation. My mind is in constant conflict with my body, but what the hell... It means I can look back and reflect on a past rich in myriad of happenings... From the depth of despair to moments of joy, almost reaching a star... Dayeinu. The so-called Golden Years have become extremely tarnished. Nevertheless, I count my blessings. For I have reached the Golden Age of 95. Sakes alive!

Now once again, I shall have the privilege to prepare the contents on the seder plate. A jar of pickled beets and, of course, Unger's gefilte fish. But the cakes and mandelbroit will have to be ordered.

God willing, I will sit at my cherished daughter's table, opposite my favourite son-in-law, who, in his booming voice, will conduct the seder, from the 11 Dayeinus to the fourth *koyse* of wine. Escorted by my grandchildren, I shall once again, if the Good Lord wills it, open the door and, from beyond, Elijah's spirit will enter our home and taste with us again the wine of endless promise. Dayeinu!

PASSOVER GREETINGS

Leslie & Anna Dan

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In God's shoes

David Reich

This Erev Yom Kippur, the evening beginning the Day of Atonement, would be different for Rabbi Yosef and his wife, the rebbetzin. They usually started the fast after a ceremonial meal together – only the two of them. In privacy they could discuss the year that had passed, transgressions they had committed and inadvertent slights, errors and omissions that might have been hurtful or blasphemous. Then they would walk to the synagogue prepared to beg forgiveness from the Almighty and express heartfelt contrition.

This year they would not be alone. They would share their meal with a guest.

Shmuel Rastopovitch had asked to be invited. His request was unprecedented. He met the rabbi frequently to discuss community needs and special problems of their co-religionists. But never socially. Shmuel was not a social person, not given to small talk. He attended cocktail parties and banquets only where his absence would be an insult and he left early. In keeping with his usual manner, he had apologized profusely for his intrusion on his rabbi's privacy on the most solemn day on the Hebrew calendar, but it was a matter of urgency.

Shmuel was not simply another member of the rabbi's congregation. His wealth, piety and generosity were legendary, but it was his retiring modesty that was regarded with baffled awe by his fellow congregants. He occupied a seat in the last row of the synagogue and attended services faithfully, but politely turned down numerous invitations to read from the holy scrolls. His home was small and unpretentious, he'd never married and had no known family. There was no reserved parking space for his modest car in the large lot behind his factory, and his clothing was indistinguishable from that of his workers. And he had many workers. His large and prosperous clothing company supplied men and women's apparel to the country's largest department stores. His income, although unannounced, must have been vast. His contributions to his community were munificent and, where possible, anonymous. His private office, adorned only by a faded photograph of his father and mother, was only closed when he found time to study some sacred text.

Although he was largely responsible for building the synagogue, he declined the honour of turning the first sod or of laying its cornerstone. His name didn't appear on the honour roll displayed in its marble-clad lobby. But when his gifts couldn't be concealed, he neither sought nor accepted scrolls, plaques or other traditional tributes. Quiet and unassuming, he never aspired to any office. No buildings carried his name, he sat on no board of directors, made no speeches and declined any interviews. He hardly existed, except to his fellow workers and to a discreet agent who distributed his many benefactions. He was content to be Shmuel, nothing more.

His private endowments were never publicized, but word-of-mouth affirmed that no deserving family departed from his door in need. His shrewd appraisal could unmask fraudulent requests, but if he erred, it was on the side of generosity. His employees heaped praise on his fairness. Any in difficulty could come to him and be sure of his heartfelt assistance. His reputation, despite his reticence, grew with time and assumed mythical proportions. He never asked anything for himself. Therefore his unexpected request to share the rabbi's meal before the start of the Holy Day was welcomed. It was a signal honour.

A light knock announced his arrival. Shmuel was a slight man, with no distinguishing features. His pinched watery blue eyes peered through deep wrinkles earned over many years; no one knew how many. Those not aware of his reputation might overlook his presence. His voice was low, and although he wasted few words, they were attentively heeded.

"Thank you and your rebbetzin for receiving me on this sacred evening," he murmured. "I wouldn't have asked had it not been of the greatest importance."

Continued on page B33

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In God's shoes

Continued from page B32

"You're welcome any time, Shmuel."

The meal was served with appropriate ceremony. Conversation was about community concerns and future needs for institutions and individuals that Shmuel supported. After tea, the rabbi leaned back and waited.

Shmuel came to the point immediately.

"Rabbi, I'm greatly troubled. First, let me say that I have a cancer. My doctors have warned me that it cannot be treated and the end will be soon."

The rabbi was shocked. "Surely something can be done. There are other specialists, experimental treatments..."

"I assure you nothing can be done. I'm many years past three score and 10 and my time has come. This is not my greatest concern. It's the hereafter that troubles me."

"Surely not. Your life has been an inspiration for all of us. Our community and many of its individuals have benefited from your generosity. Your place in paradise is as assured as any man's can be."

"Not so. My life has been a fraud, a pretense. What you cannot know is that I once killed a blameless man. Yes, I'm as guilty as if I'd fired a bullet into his brain."

"Surely, there were extenuating circumstance. You aren't a murderer."

"Listen, rabbi. There were no extenuating circumstances; it was for my benefit, mine alone. You know I passed three years in the death camps of the late war. The deprivation, the suffering, the humiliation were indescribable. Death could only be delayed by instant obedience to our overseers. Those unable to obey were either gassed or they perished from disease, hunger or from the inability to labour for the Third Reich. Emaciated corpses were stacked every day to be incinerated. I found my own father there as I was marched to the quarry where we laboured. I couldn't even pray over his body. The strongest survived longest, a fortunate few lived to be liberated. I was one of them.

"We were fed only enough to keep us alive while we crushed stones with hammers 10 hours every day. We were constantly on our feet. Those who faltered or fell were shot. The ground was covered with sharp stones. Without shoes, our feet would be shredded; footwear was a constant concern. As my soles wore down, I used rags, wood slats – whatever I could find. You must understand that materials were not at hand. Sometimes bribery helped, or theft. Even murder. Shoes meant life or death.

"One evening, in search of an acquaintance, I entered a barrack. It was empty except for several wretches lying on their wooden shelves. I recognized one: an old man I had seen several times, hammering rocks. Apparently he was a new arrival, unused to our conditions. He lay exhausted, his eyes closed, his head supported on a pair of almost-new shoes placed carefully under his head for safekeeping. They would fit my feet. I couldn't take my eyes off those shoes. With those shoes, my miserable existence might be prolonged. I could think of nothing but those shoes. That old man's skull rested on my life. I hesitated only a moment, then carefully eased his shoes from under his unconscious head. He didn't move. As soon as his shoes were in my hands, I ran from the barrack. Those shoes saved my life.

"I never saw that old man again. Death must have taken him the next day by any of the shortcuts to the hereafter provided by our oppressors. But by saving myself I killed him.

"I came to this country with nothing. I worked hard. God rewarded me at every turn with financial success. But every day I saw that old man's face and knew I lived in his shoes. I gave my riches away as fast as I earned them. I couldn't offend the Almighty by taking credit for my alleged generosity. As I said, I was a fraud, a pretender – deserving nothing.

"Now I am dying. I have no regrets, except that I killed an innocent man. How will I face God? Atonement isn't possible for this crime. I can't confess it to the community. They look to me as an example. Rabbi, advise me."

The rabbi's face lit up.

"Shmuel, God has sent you to me. You may know that at the start of the war my father had placed me with a gentile family before he was transported to the same camp as you. He died there. My father was a doctor. One of his grateful patients, a fellow prisoner who had been deported with him, gave me the particulars of his fate. My father was not strong. The few days in the camp exhausted him beyond measure. One night, a week after his arrival, he lay down on his platform, removed his shoes from his swollen feet and put them under his head for safekeeping. Next morning he was dead. He had died in his sleep. His shoes were gone. No one knew how. Now you've completed his story. You stole shoes, but from a dead man."

"But I intended to steal. I gave no thought to the old man's life."

"If we're to be punished for our intentions we'll all pass eternity in hell," the rabbi said. "Atone, and know that you killed no one."

Shmuel blessed the rabbi and departed with a restored spirit. He could face death fearlessly.

The rebbetzin had listened in silence. Now she turned to the rabbi. "Yosef, you told me that your father had successfully been hidden by a sympathetic family until the war ended. He then redeemed you and brought you to this country. He died at home, in his own bed."

"Yes, that was the truth."

"Then you lied to Shmuel."

"I did more than lie. I sinned. I judged another human and cleansed him of a mortal sin. How can I atone for that?"

"But your intentions were honourable. You relieved a good man of his anxieties. No one was harmed."

"True, but, as I said, intentions are not rewarded or punished. Shmuel only put on another man's shoes. I put on God's shoes. The Almighty is strict. He punishes transgressors. He'll judge both of us."

"Yosef, I must be frank with you, although I betray a confidence. Your father swore me to secrecy – he didn't want you to know the horrors he had survived. He hadn't been hidden, as he'd told you. He'd been a prisoner in that camp, he'd been worked almost to death and he'd slept with his precious shoes under his head. Yes, they'd been stolen during the night but he survived their loss. It was his good fortune that the very next morning prisoners who were doctors were taken to work in the camp hospital. He told no one of this. He didn't want it known he'd worked for his oppressors. Shmuel killed no one. You forgave him for a sin he didn't commit. You have nothing to repent."

"My dear rebbetzin, Father never told you any such story. It's an invention. You lie now, to protect me."

"Have I lied to you before? And now you don't know, you can't be sure."

"But God knows."

"Then God will judge me. The Almighty is a loving God. He forgives transgressors. He reads our souls and considers intentions as well as deeds. Let Him do His work. That's why we praise Him, blessed be His Name."

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I hear
the wisdom of the warm sun
the loving song of the rustling leaves.

I feel
the comfort of the soft sand
the support of the tender grass

A vast body of water spreads before me,
offering the openness and wonder of possibility.
The natural sources of this body of water springs from a divine essence.

Warm and inviting.

Refreshing and exhilarating.

I jump in.

The Beautiful Burden

Brandon Marlon

How can any individual, any people, be worthy
of implementing and executing the divine plan?
I despair at the heady thought of attempting
to fulfill the charge of actualizing scripture.
Who is man, even high priest, even saint,
to assume the mantle of heavenly emissary?
Shall we not shudder at the prospect of the load,
of carrying out the sublime and eternal will?
We have not the resources, nor the mortal hours,
to realize the supernal dreams of the Most High,
yet we are bequeathed words of water and flame,
that we might employ modest means to exalt
Him:
A people apart, willingly laden with onerous
Torah,
must gratefully succumb to the beautiful burden.

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The last survivors

Stanley Weissberg

And when the last survivors
Of Germany's Extermination Camps
Have died.
Will there will be no one left
To proclaim
"I was there"?

Will there be no one left
To proclaim
"I saw the bodies
Of my neighbours
Being stacked
Into large ovens"?

Will there be no one left
To proclaim
"The smell of burning flesh
Was everywhere"?
"We all knew where
It came from."

And when your Gentile friends
Suggest that "This all happened
A long time ago" Remind them that
before World War II.
Germany was the most progressive
country in Europe for Jews to live in.

Zaidy's Visa

Chana Rochel Sugihara

My grandfather, HaRav Avraham Mordechai ben HaRav Avraham Mordechai, said:

I have only been jealous of one thing in my lifetime – to have a *memory* of a living father.

My grandfather, born in Kodne, Poland, 1916
Was the sole survivor of his family of hundreds.

His passport to freedom was issued by Chiune Sugihara,
a God-sent diplomat serving as Japanese consul in Lithuania.

Zaidy escaped through Shanghai
at age 23 with a group of Yeshiva boys who merited life.

Mr. Sugihara granted salvation to more than six thousand Jews;
an eternal hero, he lives on through untold generations

I keep a copy of Zaidy's visa together with mine.
I, Chana Rochel, named for Zaidy's grandmother –
also have my passport because of Chiune Sugihara.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish all of our patients, family and friends a healthy and happy Passover. And may we see peace in Israel and around the world.

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Dr. Sharon Perlmutter
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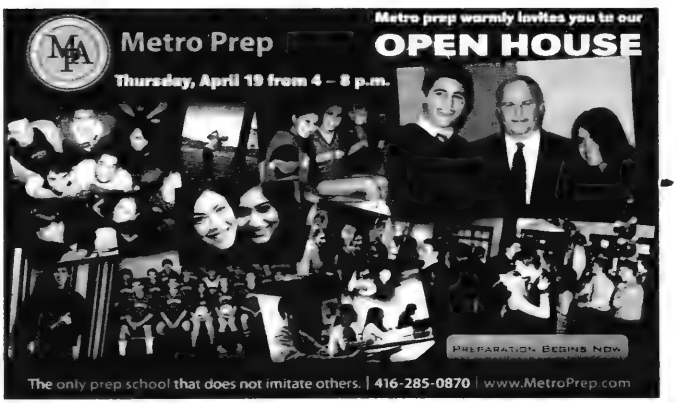
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The Gold Ring

Rachel Piuti

We had a party going in our house. A warm summer breeze blew gently through the open windows making the soft, sheer curtains swing lightly as if in a dance. On the window sill stood the borrowed gramophone with the horn-shaped tube from which flowed the velvety voices of such popular singers as Hanka Ordonovna and Jan Kiepura. Young people, and many not so young – uncles and aunts – their faces lit up by smiles, were milling around with glasses of wine held high, shouting, "L'chaim! To life!"

It was the July 11, 1939, and we had a double celebration: my sister Sara had turned 16 that day, and she had matriculated from high school that June. Our parents were extremely happy and relieved, because for almost a year there was a question of whether the Ministry of Education would allow her to matriculate before 16, since the required age was 18. However, her marks were very high, and, the school system was in the process of changing: a number of students were younger than 18, so, when our school principal intervened with the authorities on her behalf, the ministry decided in her favour.

My sister was so much younger than her fellow students because she was very unhappy when our brother, Shiyek, started school. He was 16 months older than Sara and they had been constant companions. When Shiyek went to school the first day, Sara cried all morning until he came back at noon. The next day was a repetition of the first. Apparently nothing could console her nor divert her, not even my appearance – the newly born baby.

A few days later, our Mother went to the school with Sara and asked the principal to allow Sara to sit in the classroom with Shiyek. She explained the situation, how close they were; she assured him that Sara was bright and wouldn't disrupt the class.

The principal, Dr. Hurwicz, was a good and understanding man, and he agreed to let Sara sit in Grade 1 at the age of four. When the school year ended and Sara knew everything that the other children had learned, and to read and to write, the teacher asked Dr. Hurwicz what to do about Sara, her brightest student.

He said: "We will let her go to Grade 2 next year. One year, when she will find it too hard, we will keep her back."

Sara had never been held back. There was never any reason to keep her back. She was always the top student in her class. Here she was now, 12 years later, happy and excited, and we, her family, were very proud of her.

The party was lively. Drinks flowed. Toasts were drunk to Sara. To our parents, to uncles and aunts, to teachers and to friends. A table laden with fish, meats, vegetables and fruit tempted everyone with its colours and aromas. Nobody was shy. Everybody ate their fill.

Toward the end of the evening, my parents presented Sara with a gift: a gold ring with her initials engraved on it. It looked very elegant on her finger and she was thrilled with it. From relatives and friends she received scarves, perfumes, books and many other lovely gifts too numerous to mention. But the ring she really cherished.

I remember that summer of 1939 as a very happy time. Many of Sara's and Shiyek's friends came to our home. We had a garden with room to play volleyball and other games, unlike friends who lived in apartment buildings in the centre of the city. There was constantly something going on in our home. We put on plays that many of the neighbourhood children came to see.

One afternoon in late August, Sara, Shiyek and a few of their friends played volleyball. They played a long time and came into the house perspiring and hungry. They went to wash up a bit while mother prepared a light supper. Suddenly I heard Sara scream: "My ring! I lost the ring!"

Nobody thought about supper anymore. It was still bright outside, and we all spilled out to look for the ring. It must have slipped off her finger while she was playing ball. The poles with the net stood on the grass. We began combing the area, looking, moving the grass with our hands until it got too dark to see. We would look again tomorrow, we decided. Supper didn't taste very good, in spite of the fresh rolls and colourful salad, nor was the conversation as lively as usual.

I heard Sara toss and turn during the night until I fell asleep, and didn't hear anything more. By the time I got up in the morning, Sara was already combing through the grass. The search went on for many days and then, occasionally, for many weeks.

The war broke out in September. We continued living in our house until the spring of 1941, when we had to move to the ghetto. Father was now a worker in our tannery and he went there every morning. The German director of the tannery moved into our house. One day, the Polish man who tended to the garden for the German director approached my father furtively.

"I have something that I believe belongs to you. I was digging in the garden around the walnut tree and I noticed something shining. I bent down to pick it up and saw that it was a ring."

He handed my father a small object wrapped in a piece of brown paper. Father looked at it and was overwhelmed. It was Sara's ring. He couldn't believe it. The ring had been found after two years. It was lying there all this time and nobody had seen it. But he was moved even more by the honesty of the man. He could have taken the ring and nobody would have known.

When father returned home that evening and gave Sara the ring, she started crying. She could never forget that she lost the ring. It was for her a symbol. It was given to her in recognition of her abilities and achievements. And now it was restored to her. It was restored together with a belief that there were still good and honest people in the world, and that maybe one day, the world would come back to its senses.

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Winter

Rachel Piuti

It was Monday morning in early December, 1939. I slid slowly from under the warm cover. The soft fur of the shaggy mat beside my bed caressed my bare feet. It felt good. I stepped into my wool-lined slippers, wrapped the still-warm comforter around my shoulders and went to the window. A blanket of snow covered the ground as far as my eyes could see. The tree branches, bereft of leaves but heavy with fresh snow, had a silvery-mauve hue in the early morning sun. Big snowflakes kept falling quietly.

I heard voices coming from the kitchen. Breakfast was being prepared. Time to get up. Get up to what? There was no rush, there was no school. Not since the war began. I could do the homework that Sara assigned me but I didn't really feel like it. Being instructed by my sister was not the same as going to school. It was boring. I sometimes couldn't stop yawning. Yet I had to do it. Mother insisted that I study and be ready to resume normal schooling when the war ended.

I got dressed and joined the family in the dining room. We were seven now instead of five. Uncle Avram, my father's oldest brother, and Aunt Feiga were staying with us. They had to vacate their apartment on Zeromskiego street. It was the main street and Jews had been forbidden to live there since the Occupation. We ate our breakfast. We still had plenty of food. There was fresh bread, butter, cheese and jam.

"No herring?" my brother Shiyek asked.

"We should be grateful for what we have." Mother said." Many people are worse off."

A welcome warmth flowed from the fireplace. It took time for the coals to turn red and give off heat. We were lucky we still had coal. Some people didn't have any. We could take some from the pile of coal that fed the two furnaces that produced steam for our tannery machines.

"Could you maybe go today to Mr. Krakowski?" Dad asked Mom. "He owes me 200 zloty. Could you spare the time? Rachel could go with you. You would be safer together. You could hold on to each other not to slip on the ice."

"Yes. I have lots of time, and so does Rachel," Mother said

We got ready to go. We each put on a woolen sweater, scarf, hat, gloves, coat and boots. We had to go because it was dangerous for father to do it. Since the Nazi occupation, raids occurred almost every day and men were taken away or beaten up.

I held on to my mother. It was slippery under the falling snow. The wind got stronger as we walked. The skirt of my coat blew open. My bare thighs felt numb below the short dress. I had a sensation of being pricked by pins. My eyes began to water. I didn't say anything. Mother probably suffered as much. How far did we still have to go? I wondered. But I didn't want to ask. I hoped not too far.

We arrived in less than an hour at Mr. Krakowski's tannery. The doorman escorted us to the office. Mr. Krakowski welcomed us with a bright smile, kissed Mom's hand and shook mine. He was a tall man with graying hair. Perhaps my father's age? He looked at us with friendly blue eyes.

"You are freezing," he said, while rubbing his hands. "Yan," he called to the doorman, "bring two glasses of strong, hot tea. No, bring three. I'll have some too." He cleared papers off a couple of chairs, and asked us to sit.

"How is Mr. Najdik?" He looked at us, searched for an answer in our faces. "He didn't dare to come? Times are bad. Who would have thought it would come to this?" he asked, shaking his head.

We sat beside the massive brown desk and sipped sweet, hot tea. It felt good. A red-hot iron stove with a long tin pipe hissed and gave off a delightful warmth. My cheeks began to burn.

"How is your family?" Mom asked Mr. Krakowski.

"My son was in the army. He was taken prisoner but is back home now. He works with me in the tannery but his heart isn't in it. He is restless. Hates the Germans. My wife is worried about him. But I know that you have it much harder. We are aware of what is going on. Mrs. Najdik, I know that you came for the money I owe your husband, and that you are anxious to go back home."

He opened a drawer of the desk and counted out two hundred zloty.

"I wish you good luck. Let us hope for better times," he said as he gave the money to my mother.

I looked up at the wall above the desk and noticed a space a shade paler than the rest of the wall. I recognized the shape: it was the outline of the White Eagle, the Polish national emblem. The White Eagle must have been hanging there for many years and had to be taken down because of the Occupation. Who would have thought?

Mom got another kiss on her hand and I got a strong handshake. We began our trek home. The wind was still blowing and howling as we passed open fields. The sun was now higher in the sky, but it was a pale and cold sun that shone on us.

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An unexpected encounter

Judy Weinryb

The small package sat on the broken sidewalk in front of the Haimishe Bakery in the Boro Park section of Brooklyn. Wrapped in plain brown paper, with several strands of string holding it together, it was drenched from the rain that was pouring down on this dreary Friday morning.

Sara Mendlovitz found it when she arrived at seven o'clock. She noticed that it was addressed to Chaim, her husband and business partner. At first glance, she hesitated to touch it, but as it did not look particularly suspicious, she scooped it up and took it inside. After leaving it on a shelf in the pantry, she got to work, setting out trays of pastries and challahs that had been baked before her arrival. Chaim was attending a bris for a neighbour's new grandson and did not arrive until eight. In good spirits after a hearty breakfast, he rolled up his sleeves and began working alongside Sara on what was traditionally their busiest day of the week.

Chaim's family had been bakers in Hungary for generations. His father, Meir Mendlovitz, had been the sole survivor of his family after the Holocaust. Fate had spared him as he had been sent to live with relatives in England in 1933. He moved to the United States in 1960 with his wife and children, the eldest of whom was Chaim, and settled in Brooklyn. He decided to follow in his family's footsteps and opened the bakery soon after he arrived. Chaim and Sara were introduced by a matchmaker and married in 1985. After Chaim's father died, they took over the running of the bakery and worked hard to keep it going.

In November, sundown came early. Deadlines needed to be met, and deliveries would have to be made promptly before closing up shop at 2 p.m.

"Bronstein bar mitzvah's this Shabbas. I need six-dozen chocolate rugelach and a large box of mixed fruit danishes." Sara paused for a moment and reflected on the occasion.

"Little Shlomo Bronstein, can you believe it, bar mitzvahed already? The way he reads from the Torah, he reminds me of his grandfather, Reb Moshe Bronstein, of blessed memory. I heard him practising yesterday at his grandmother's apartment. What a pleasure." As she spoke, she placed unbaked cinnamon rolls evenly on trays.

"Isn't it amazing," she continued "that two members of the same family can have so much in common, even though they've never actually met?"

This comment resonated deeply with Chaim. He often wondered whether he would have had anything in common with his relatives who had been murdered by the Nazis before he was born. Sometimes he imagined what it would be like to attend family gatherings with them, their children and even their grandchildren. He was immersed in his thoughts when the sound of Sara's voice drew him back to the present.

"Chaim!" she exclaimed excitedly, "I forgot to tell you. I found a package for you outside the store this morning. I meant to give it you when you arrived, but I was so busy it slipped my mind."

"A package for me? Seems odd that someone would leave it outside"

Peeling off the layers of soggy paper, he uncovered a silver kiddush cup, intricately designed with delicate-looking flowers and vines winding around the perimeter. It was tarnished and looked as if it had seen better days.

"This poor little cup, it needs to be polished so badly," Sara remarked. "I wonder how it got into this state?"

Chaim found a note taped to the box. It read, "This cup belonged to your grandparents, Solomon and Sonia Mendlovitz. I am sending it to you as I know you will care for it as is befitting a family heirloom." It was signed "Sonia Mendlovitz."

Chaim was dumbfounded. As far as he knew, his father had been the only surviving member of his family after the war. He had been told that his father's oldest sister, Sonia, had died at Auschwitz. Could this be a strange quirk of fate, a miracle of sorts? Or was it merely a scam, a cruel attempt to obtain money under fraudulent circumstances? How had the sender of this package located him, and if his aunt were alive, how much time could she possibly have left? By all accounts she would be at least 95.

Chaim tried to put the mystery out of his mind as he still had much work to do. Later on, as he was cleaning the counters in preparation for closing, he heard the front door open and saw a tall, blond woman in a grey business suit walk into the store. She appeared to be not much older than 40. She was carrying a briefcase, so he assumed she intended to sell him baking supplies, insurance or even a new furnace. He would be clear with her that he was not interested in buying anything, especially on a Friday afternoon.

"Mr. Mendlovitz, may I have a few minutes of your time?"

As her eyes locked with his, the woman's voice quivered, as though she was begging rather than simply asking him to speak to her. She began to move closer when her left ankle gave way and she stumbled, then grabbed on to the counter to steady herself.

"Sit down, madam, please. A glass of water for the lady, Sara!" he called to the back room where his wife was busy doing her calculations of the day's sales.

Continued on page B39

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An unexpected encounter

Continued from page B38

"I'm sorry," the woman said quietly as she sat down on a chair nearby.

Her business-like facade had melted away. Chaim thought there was something oddly familiar about her, but he could not figure out what it was. Perhaps it was her eyes, something about the way she looked at him. She took a deep breath and began to speak.

"My name is Sonia Frasier. I live in the Bronx and I am your cousin. I was named after my grandmother, Sonia Mendlovitz, who died in Auschwitz and until a month ago, I had no idea that I was Jewish. Chaim stepped back and stared at her as if she was a ghost.

"I've startled you. Please, let me explain. You see, my father died barely a month ago. Before he died, he told me the truth about my mother's past. She had, unfortunately, died 10 years earlier. Maybe this will help you understand what I want to tell you."

Sonia opened the briefcase she was carrying and pulled out a small, tattered-looking book.

"This was my mother's diary. After the funeral, I found it among my father's belongings. It was yellow and faded, but I was still able to make out the words."

She opened the diary and began to read.

May 15, 1963

Yesterday, Suzi told me that I am not her real daughter. What a shock! She said that my mother and father were killed in the war. Suzi worked in their hat shop and knew them well. When the Nazis began rounding up Jews, my parents left me with her. She loved my mother very much and was crying when she spoke about her.

I feel so lost and confused. My life is like a puzzle that has broken into pieces. I need time to reassemble the pieces in a way that makes sense to me.

"Over time she grew to accept what Suzi had told her. She found a job in Budapest and, soon after, met my father. Here is an excerpt written around that time."

June 23, 1965

Carl and I met at a dance two months ago. He is in Hungary as a visiting professor in mathematics and is going back to America in two weeks. Last night he asked me to marry him. Of course, I said yes right away! He is a good man and understands the turmoil I have gone though in my life. We are planning a church wedding in New York, where he lives. I can hardly wait.

"Two years later, she wrote this entry."

Aug. 12, 196-

We have a sweet daughter whom we named Sonia, after my late mother. I have asked Carl not to tell Sonia about her Jewish heritage. I feel it would confuse her, and besides, it is a cruel world and she may be better off not knowing.

"Still she never forgot her parents. She wrote these touching words years later."

Sept. 18, 1993

It was very courageous for my parents to leave me with Suzi, not knowing if they would ever see me again. I cannot even imagine how they must have suffered. I will never know their true fate. Perhaps it is better that way.

Sonia looked up at Chaim with tears in her eyes. "Although she could not remember details of her childhood, my father told me she experienced flashbacks and unbearable nightmares over the years. I believe she longed for her parents, even though she could hardly remember them.

"Her adopted mother gave my mother a letter from her parents that described where some family heirlooms were buried. Because of it, she was able to locate a few pieces of jewelry and religious articles. The silver cup I gave you was among them.

"It was also from her diary that I learned that she had been born Faiga Mendlovitz. I only knew her as Frances, the name she adopted in America. I also learned about my poor grandmother Sonia, after whom I am named. In honour of her memory, I've decided to adopt her family name, and, although I have not yet changed it legally, I signed my letter to you as Sonia Mendlovitz."

Chaim was feeling uneasy. He had to ask Sonia an important question. "How did you find me? That must have been quite difficult."

"It was my father, not me, who did that. He felt sorry for my mother, as she was completely alone in the world, so he began to make enquiries without telling her. He found out about the archives at Yad Vashem. He discovered that your father had moved to the U.S. but had already died. Eventually, he located your bakery. He told me he dropped in here a few times and tried to start a conversation with you. He felt awkward, and even though he really wanted to tell you who he was, he just couldn't. My mother died soon after, so he never came back."

Chaim stood silently, feeling at a loss for words. Sonia seemed like a lost child searching for a home. He felt amazed and bewildered, at the same time. Meeting her was a like a miracle of sorts. He did not quite know what to make of it.

"After I left the package this morning," Sonia added, "I went home. Later on, I thought it over and decided to come back and introduce myself to you. I'm glad I did." She stood up and began to walk toward the door.

At that moment, Sara rushed frantically into the bakery.

"Chaim, I just remembered, I have to pick up my sheitel from Mrs. Berman's for the bar mitzvah tomorrow."

As she turned toward him, she stopped dead in her tracks. He looked different. His face displayed a look of contentment generally reserved for Friday evenings at the Sabbath table, when he was seated with his family around him.

"Sara," Chaim said cheerfully, before she could utter a word. "This is my cousin, Sonia. She came from the Bronx to meet me. Perhaps she will consider joining us for dinner. She brought us the kiddush cup that you found outside this morning. It belonged to my grandparents in Hungary. What a simchah it would be if we could use it together to bless the Sabbath Queen."

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When I'm 64

Harold Pupko

It was the '60s.

More specifically, Times Square, Dec. 31, 1966. Midnight approached.

Socrates Berlin did not like waiting.

Unwilling to be controlled by the drop of a ball, Socrates Berlin opted to drop to one knee and ask the love of his life, Bella Rose Gershwin, to spend the rest of her life married to him. The people surrounding the couple responded with overwhelming support for the proposal before Bella had a chance to fully consider the offer. She was swept up by the enthusiasm of the crowd, and her fate was sealed.

A late June wedding was planned.

As the wedding date neared, Socrates proposed to Bella again. Pointing out to his beloved that, after marriage, their journey would be as one, he suggested that they both adopt a new last name to reflect their status as a couple united in life. Socrates and Bella were quite aware of the degree of importance that their families placed upon the sacred process of naming. They were both the only children of Holocaust survivors, and their first names reflected that fact.

For Socrates' parents, the art of asking questions was not just an essential survival skill for navigating a potentially hostile world: it was the core element of their understanding of Judaism. They did their best to teach their son to master this skill. By naming him Socrates, they hoped that he would grow up to emulate his namesake by posing painful questions of a world that masqueraded as a civilization, and that those questions would contribute to moving the planet forward on its slow march to maturity.

And why the name Socrates, rather than a nice Jewish name like Hillel? That was precisely the point. The Berlins wanted Socrates to be able to blend into society without suffering the limitations of antisemitism, so they gave him a name that they thought would protect him from being overly identified as Jewish. They failed to calculate what schoolyard bullies would make of the name.

Because of the Holocaust, Socrates was robbed of any living connection to his family's roots. He only understood the concept of grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins on a theoretical basis, never having enjoyed the benefit of the real thing.

Socrates learned to love the theoretical.

Bella's parents came from Belarus, a land decimated of Jewish content by the Nazi plague. With so many dead relatives to name their only child after, Bella's parents deliberated at length on an appropriate name for their daughter. Influenced by their love of music, the name Bella Rose emerged as a homophonic symphonic *Kaddish* in memory of the kedoshim of Belarus.

Bella Rose, who should have grown up peacefully in Belarus, eventually made her way from a displaced persons camp to the freedom of America and the love of Socrates, providing a practical balance to his overactive imagination. Finding that balance was often challenging, and Socrates' project to name their union pushed the couple's creativity to the brink. The names Bershwin and Gerlin were quickly dismissed, and all subsequent proposals failed to light the flame of satisfaction for either party. As time moved on and plans for the wedding became the priority, discussions about the joint last name were put on hold. Socrates promised to give the matter further thought, while Bella hoped in her heart that her future husband would spend his energy on the more practical issues in their lives.

The pressures of the wedding preparations soon became mixed with the tensions of the time. As the wedding date approached, dark clouds of doom began rolling in off the horizon. Another potential Holocaust for the Jewish people seemed imminent, as Arab states threatened to find a solution to the "Jewish problem" by wiping the state of Israel off of the map. The joy of the upcoming nuptials was tainted by a hatred generated thousands of miles away but historically too close for comfort.

War broke out in early June 1967. The darkness of the first day of the Six Day War was replaced one week later by the giddiness of having witnessed a miracle, for there was no other explanation for the military victory. Across the world, Jews as a people were experiencing something they had not felt for thousands of years, a sense of unity, a sense of strength, a sense of pride. Swept up in the spirit of '67, Socrates' mind was flooded with exuberance. With less than two weeks to go until their wedding, he suggested to Bella that they change their last name to

Continued on page B41

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When I'm 64

Continued from page B40

Israel. Bella half-jokingly remarked that the name Israel was not a bold enough statement to capture the essence of the wave washing over the Jewish world. She suggested that they name themselves Jewish, and Socrates, not getting the joke, thought to himself that his wife was a genius.

And so, Socrates and Bella Rose Jewish were married in June 1967.

Having married Jewish, the next step of their unified Jewish adventure was to plunge themselves into study. They spent week after week reading every book they could find on their religion, their culture, and their history. It became apparent that Jewish tradition taught that understanding ideally came about through experience, and so they decided that their ultimate education would come through raising a Jewish child together.

On Tu b'Av, the Jewish festival of love, in the year 1967, Socrates and Bella conceived a child. One month later, the discussion began as to what that child should be named. By Rosh Hashanah, a unique name for their offspring continued to elude them. Socrates turned for inspiration to the Torah reading for the New Year. Within those texts there were traditional names like Abraham, Isaac and Samuel for a boy, and names such as Sarah, Rebecca and Hannah for a girl, but those names failed to capture the imagination that made up the Jewishes' marriage of minds. They were looking for something unique in a first name to match their unusual last name. Socrates thought that that the name of Abraham's brother's son, Yidlaugh, sounded like a perfect unisex name, but Bella quickly extinguished that creative spark.

And so, Yom Kippur came and went, and, faster than you can spin a dreidel, Chanukah arrived and departed. Reflecting on the Greek influence of that festival, and pondering the Greek origin of his own name, the seed of an idea was planted in Socrates' head. Perhaps there was wisdom in his parents' choosing to name him after a famous Greek figure. After all, the precedent was there in the Talmud, with many a rabbi having a Greek name. Inspired by the burden of suffering carried by his parents and his in-laws, Socrates spent the months after Chanukah contemplating naming his offspring Pathos, the ancient Greek word for suffering. On Purim, he raised that possibility with his wife.

"Just think about it," he suggested to Bella. "Every day in roll call at school, the teacher will call out to our child's fellow students: Jewish, Pathos. That act alone will serve as a lesson for our child's classmates, and hopefully stimulate much worthwhile discussion on issues such as sympathy and empathy for the Jewish People, two concepts rooted in the word pathos."

Like his father before him, Socrates failed to take into consideration the schoolyard bully factor in the process of naming his firstborn.

Bella, suffering from iron deficiency and numerous other pregnancy-related challenges, was exhausted and cranky by the time Socrates came up with his pathetic idea. The pressure of having to prepare their home for their first Passover as a family, as well as the anxiety of hosting her first seder as a married woman, did not help the situation. Her response, rooted in irony, was aimed at shutting him up.

"Listen, when God named the first human, he named him Adam. When God chose a man to bring monotheism to the world he chose Abraham. Both of these beginnings started with the letter A. What was good enough for God is good enough for me. So, based on your idea, we should name our child Apathy, which literally means the absence of suffering, which is what we both want for our child. I don't want to discuss this any further until we are done with Passover. Understand, Mr. Jewish?"

Socrates was intrigued. He liked the name and Bella's explanation for it. He decided that eventually Bella would too. So Socrates focused on helping Bella begin to prepare for Passover and did not give the naming process any further thought.

The joy of the night of the first seder was mixed with anticipation for the upcoming addition of to the Jewish household. Both sets of in-laws marvelled at the miracle that was Bella's bulging belly. At one point in the past, the grandparents–to-be could barely imagine surviving the hell of Europe, and yet, there they were, awaiting the birth of a grandchild while celebrating the Jewish festival of freedom in freedom.

Near the end of the festivities that evening, the three women went to the front door of the house to participate in the tradition of welcoming Elijah the Prophet to their home. While the women stood at the door, Socrates stood at the head of the table and began to recite the 79th Psalm. Just as he uttered the words "pour out," the Jewish baby took that as its cue, and Bella's water broke. Apparently, like its father, baby Jewish did not like waiting, and decided to arrive in the Jewish world earlier than expected.

Elijah followed the Jewish family to the hospital and told Socrates the following tale in the waiting room.

"After the final chapter of the story of Cain and Abel played itself out, Eve suffered in silence at the loss of both of her children. Barred from returning to the Garden of Eden by angels brandishing flaming swords, she settled into a life of acceptance in her new home east of Eden. When she gave birth to Seth, her labour was terribly hard. All of the physical pain that God had promised her as a consequence of the snake incident was combined with all of the emotional pain that comes from losing two children, and she screamed so intensely during the birthing process that she blew out the flames of the swords of the angels. The angels, seeing the flames disappear, assumed that this was the result of divine intervention, and, believing that their job was done, ascended back to heaven.

"One day, while working the fields after the birth of Seth, Adam saw that the entrance to Paradise was unguarded and told Eve. After some discussion they decided that they did not care to return to Eden. Having accepted their fate, they lost their opportunity to return to Paradise.

"Adam and Eve did not recognize the apathy that disguised itself as acceptance."

When hospital protocol allowed Socrates to visit with the mother of his child, he shared with Bella the strange tale told to him by Elijah, and looked to his wife to help him interpret its message. After a prolonged labour, Bella did not have any energy for theoretical explorations with her husband, so she asked him to let her rest and suggested that he, too, get some sleep to clear his head. Socrates decided that the best way to clear his head was to do something, so he proceeded to the nursing station and filled out the paperwork required to register the name of the newborn.

And that is how, in 1968, two decades after the regeneration of the Jewish state and one generation after the Holocaust, Jewish, Apathy was born.

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Missing at this time

Jan Cutting

At this time, the candles
shine and shiver
on silver platter polished
for the occasion.

At this time, the wine is
arranged in red glass
cups neatly poured
and waiting.

At this time, the feast
prepared and displayed
on lace tablecloth
pressed and crisp.

At this time, the Haggadahs
piled high
as a pyramid
ready to tell the story.

At this time, the family
polished and dressed
hushed and expectant
but missing him.

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Entering Warsaw

Sylvia Schneider

It shouldn't be me
Seated softly in this bus
Cruising the streets of Warsaw.
It should be my father;
Who walked these streets before,
Who knew the lanes, stores, trees,
Who grew to swiftly ended youth
And slipped away from all he knew
And loved.
It shouldn't be me.

It shouldn't be me
Living softly in my life
A visitor to Warsaw.
It should be my aunts;
Four faces never seen,
Four voices never heard,
Eight hands that never touched
The niece they never knew
Or loved.
It shouldn't be me.

It shouldn't be me
Thinking softly in the night
Of the family from Warsaw.
It should be the grandparents,
Cousins, uncles, friends never known,
The teachers, writers, rabbis,
Artists, dancers, dreamers –
who lost the world they formed
And loved.
It shouldn't be me.

It has to be me
Speaking softly in the night
Of the terrors of the past.
It has to be me.
They cannot weep the tears.
They cannot tell the tales.
They cannot ever touch
The hearts of those who live
And love.
It has to be me.

It has to be you
Listening softly to the words,
To the silence of the past.
It has to be you
Who turns history to truth,
Who teaches, shares what really was,
Who ends the hatred that denies -
Gives honour to the souls that lived
And loved.
It has to be you.

Balalaika

Joseph Peretz

There is an old Yiddish song in which a young man asks: "What can cry, cry without tears?" and the answer is, "A heart can cry, cry without tears – *tumbalalaika, shpiel balalaika, freilich zoll zein.*"

For the past few years, I have had and still have plenty of practice, ever since my wife entered Baycrest, probably the best institution for the care of Alzheimer's patients.

Play Balalaika

We are both survivors of the Holocaust, and my darling suffered bouts of depression for many years, which she seemed to gradually outgrow.

The terrible war years left an undeniable impression when at the age of 16, she was left without family, all deported, and had to fend for herself, while I was interned in a German labour camp. But faith and fate brought us together. We were the first couple to have a chupah as soon as our city, Antwerp, was liberated six months before the end of the war.

Without anybody from whom to ask advice, we had to make all the decisions ourselves, one of them being the resolution to immigrate to Canada, the best country in the world, far away from the city where every street, every house, every corner, every park bench, brought back the painful memories of our dear loved ones who perished in Auschwitz. Once settled, we were inseparable, eating, sleeping, even working together, since she became the secretary in my burgeoning business.

We lived a beautiful life and saw our daughter get married. She gave us two granddaughters who in turn presented us with five great-grandchildren. We vacationed in Cape Cod and Ogunquit, travelled across Canada and California. We cruised the Baltic and the Mediterranean, celebrated anniversaries in Israel. We had subscriptions to what was then called the O'Keefe Centre, the Royal Alex Theatre and the symphony at Roy Thomson Hall.

Our happiness was marred by recurring bouts of what we thought was depression, which gradually worsened.

When playing Scrabble, my Baby (that is what I have called her since our first kiss in 1940) started putting words on the board that were not words at all, the first sign that something was very wrong. It got to the point that we had to hire a caregiver, a charming Ethiopian lady who became very devoted to my darling.

As her condition worsened, on the advice of my daughter and her physician husband, we inquired about admitting her to the Baycrest Centre. Initially, she was put on a waiting list and we were advised that it could be a long time before a room would be available.

Like a thunderclap out of the blue, the call came, much sooner than we had expected.

I wished that we both could have died. I cried with tears and without. My heart was breaking when we brought her to Baycrest, two days later.

Shpiel Balalaika

When a few days later, my daughter visited, my love asked her, with a smile, "How is your mother?"

A heart can cry without tears...

On days when her caregiver was off, my love would ask me to take off my shoes and lie down on the single bed and hold her. In a book of poems for seniors, it explained that that is also making love.

And now, her speech is affected and when she tries to say something, it sounds like "duh, duh, duh, duh, duh," while I try to understand what she is trying to say. And it kills me.

And then, some mornings, when she sees me come in, the words come out very clear when she says: "I love you," and I break down and weep. Weep without tears.

Tumbalalaika, shpiel balalaika
Tumbalalaika, freilich zoll zein.

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Moses

The story of Moses was no bed of roses
But oh! How he helped all the Jews
God appeared in a cloud, and made — good and loud
An offer he couldn't refuse

That was when Moses was a grown up man
But here is the way the story began
Pharoah of Egypt had issued some orders
Kill all Hebrew boys inside of our borders
Moses' mother made a nice little boat
Entrusted her baby in hopes it would float

A little baby in a cradle floating in a stream
Pharoah's Daughter near the water
It was not a dream
The baby would belong to her for better or for worse
A little girl who lived nearby found a baby nurse.

Of that little girl we later learned that baby was her brother
And the baby nurse she found for him was no one but her mother

So Moses was breast fed (no need for analysis)
And grew up like a prince in luxurious palaces
But he never forgot his kith and his kin
And so when God called him, he said, "God I'm in!"

There followed a tale of incredible bravery
And Moses led Hebrews out of Egypt and slavery
There were plagues, there were Matzohs, and parting of seas
Forty years in the desert and much worse than these
The story in symbols is there on the plate
And now we will tell it— the tsimmes can wait.

Autumn

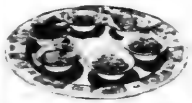
Lord, I cannot look
Upon Your glory,
But I can see
The Laurentian Mountains
In the fall
Covered with blazing maple trees;
They are the shield of Your magnificence.

Taschlich

Blasts of shrill, screaming wind
rip bright yellow leaves from elms
and maple and poplar,
fling them in the creek overflowing
with the deluge
as black clouds loose the weight of our regrets,
each drop a tap, tap,
tap counting missed chances.
The storm-dredged creek is purged of debris;
trees are stripped clean and spare,
clearing the way for ascending light.

Happy Passover

Wishing you a Chag Kasher v'sameach



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Survival

It might have been a dream, a childhood dream.
But children dream of things they wish could be.
And close their eyes to things no child should see.
It had to be a dream, a fearful dream,
Where innocence would vanish in a flash,
And fantasies of childhood turn to ash.
Now, lest my soul should break, I must awake.

Little flower, little flower,
Let me hold you in my hand.
Bud of life, you spring from ashes,
Bleak and haunted, less than sand.

From a time too dark and brutal
For a carefree heart to know,
From a place too stark and futile
For a living thing to grow,

Sheltered by a hidden bower,
Nourished by a secret rain,
Little flower, little flower,
Holding you, I live again.

Magic seedling, tiny flower,
Trampled on and viewed with scorn,
Miracle of heaven's power,
You were destined to be born,
From the ashes . . . and a dream.
My Israel.

My Land Is

My Land is:
Like a young beauty
With sun sparkling
On her face,
With stars twinkling
In her hair.

My Land is:
Like the summer
Wearing a mantle
With brilliant colours
And a mystery veil
Of ancient splendour.

My Land is:
The reflection of the sea
And her waves of love
Are mirrored in the heart
Of everyone who once
Touched her Holy ground.

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Synagogue of past

Sophie Seal

We were just kids, I well remember, just little girls decked
out in our meagre finery, playing out front of the little shtibel,
where our parents prayed for a better year, for something
more suitable than this; this darkening night ahead;

inside, papa, one among the men draped in their taleisim,
frenetically swaying and swirling and chanting before
their sacred Torah, looking up to a supposedly present
God, praying in the ancient tongue of their fathers—which
hardly anyone understood but understood as something
sacred—for a kinder fate. kids were allowed in that
forbidden world to women—if only they kept real quiet...

upstairs, behind the black curtain of the women's section,
full of familiar faces seeking forgiveness and salvation,
mama sitting at the right side of her mima Bessie, her
favourite aunt, a woman of valour; the only woman
learned and righteous enough to merit the task of
davening on behalf of the women; voice beatifically deep
and melodious, punctuated by the women's wails,
beating fists upon their chests, swaying back and forth,
back and forth, mama shushing us to not say a word
in the presence of such solemn protocol. how holy
it all seemed then; a refuge, a somewhat calm retreat
from the calamitous outside...

oh, where are those days; those devout and sanctimonious
days, when dimly-lit, dingy, little sparse edifices paled
the modern-day temple colossi regaled in their fine
decoration, where irreverence of temple services pandering
to the timorous and commercial are facing various degrees
of extinction; where congregations attired in their newly
purchased fineries, come duty-bound and hollow-hearted,
just for the sake of "tradition"?

From: yesterday runs always through it: poetic reminiscences of my life and times Published by Publish America

The hand of the scribe

Brandon Marlon

Seated on woven rugs or stone benches,
hunched over vellum and parchment,
the scribe's face reflects oil lamplight,
his wrinkles shadowed through the night.
In the quietude of his Babylonian village,
the diligent amanuensis peruses scrolls,
double- and triple-checking passages,
scrutinizing scripture for consistency.
Midnight learns of a civilization's history,
commemorated deeds of clans and tribes,
morals enmeshed in generations of narrative,
the epic saga of a nation now mired in exile.
Pausing to relieve trembling phalanges,
the scrivener glances through lofty aperture,
contemplating the royal past of his people,
searching the heavens for clues to their futurity.

Best Wishes for a Happy Passover from Richmond Hill Council!

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Majdanek

Sylvie Solomon

I saw ten thousand soles today
On shoes in piles, in piles, in piles.
And all the soles cried out to me:
I want to walk.
I want to dance.
I want to skip and run a race.
I want to proudly cross a stage,
Or walk beside my papa to the chupah.
I want to creep into my daughter's room
And place her shoes beside her bed.
I want to tiptoe to the tiny crib
And see my grandchild's shining face.
I want to go to places that I dream of
And come home again to those who love me.
I want to walk.
But all the shoes lay still
In piles, in piles, in piles.

Chag Sameach! Happy Passover!
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This Week

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Consul general wants Diaspora Jews to connect to Yom Hazikaron. *Page 3*

Deepening our Judaism by engaging with Israel. *Guest voice.* *Page 12*

Books

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Brad Cotton turns his passion into a career. *Page 44*

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Welcome to Israel

Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein, standing, right, founder and president of the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews, and Natan Sharansky, the head of the Jewish Agency, greet newly arrived immigrants from Ethiopia as they take part in a preparatory, mock Passover seder at an absorption centre in Mevasseret Zion, near Jerusalem, on April 2. *[Flash90 photo]*

Canadian champions Sephardi heritage

Reva Kaiser
Special to The CJN

Next month, an event at the U.S. Capitol building will pay tribute to Sephardi Jewry and its contribution to American Jewish culture and society.

A select group of individuals is slated to be honoured for their personal achievements within Sephardi society, and among them will be a Canadian, Yehuda Azoulay of Toronto, who will be recognized for his contribution to Sephardi literature and his involvement in Sephardi causes.

Azoulay, only 25, has already authored three books on Sephardi rabbis (one-fifth of his planned series) and countless articles on Sephardi leaders and history, in his mission to educate Sephardim (and all Jews) about Sephardi heritage.

He'll stand out as the youngest honoree at the May 16 luncheon, which is being organized by the Friedlander Group, a public relations firm that specializes in working with American Jewish groups, and will feature members of U.S. Congress. But Azoulay will be in heady company: the event will also be honouring two prominent Sephardi rabbis, Israeli Internal Affairs Minister Eli Yishai and fellow MK Nissim Zeev.

Brimming with the optimism and vigour of youth, Azoulay is enthusiastic about discussing this seminal project and directs me to his compact home office. Tidy, but crammed bookshelves cover every vertical space, except for a portion of wall showcasing a life-size portrait of Rabbi Ovadia Yosef. The former Sephardi chief rabbi of Israel is considered by some to be the foremost present-day Sephardi leader and a reviver of Sephardi identity and pride

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Yehuda Azoulay
[Yoni Oscherowitz photo]

Pesach
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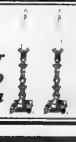
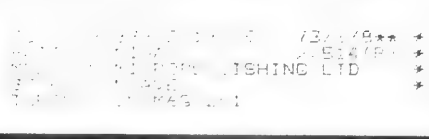
Havdalah: 8:45
Greater Toronto Area





Gov't orders Ottawa prof extradited for 1980 Paris bombing – see page 35

CANADA

Divon Appointed

TORONTO — The Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (CFHU) has named Elan Divon, son of former Israeli ambassador to Canada Haim Divon, as executive director of its Toronto chapter, it announced last week. Elan Divon, a former senior campaign consultant for United Jewish Appeal in Toronto, will promote academic partnerships between Canada and Israel, CFHU said.

WORLD

Chain Drops Ahava

OSLO — A major retail chain in Norway has stopped selling "products originating from settlements in occupied territories," including Ahava cosmetics. The drug store chain VITA, which has 160 stores in Norway, made the move March 30. VITA is the main retailer of Ahava products in Norway, the Norwegian People's Aid and the Norwegian Union of Municipal and General Employees said in a statement on an Israeli boycott movement website, adding that "this decision will be a serious blow to the sales of Ahava products in Norway." The two groups lobbied VITA to make the move.

Sermon Slurs Jews

KUALA LUMPUR — An official government sermon delivered in mosques across Malaysia called Jews the "main enemy." The sermon, prepared and distributed by the federal Islamic affairs department and delivered March 30, said that "Muslims must understand Jews are the main enemy to Muslims as proven by their egotistical behaviour and murders performed by them." It also urged local leaders to increase awareness of the Islamic importance of Jerusalem.

Mezuzah Reversal

STANFORD, Conn. — A Connecticut condominium association has reversed its decision to prohibit mezuzahs on the doorposts of residents' units. The Stanford, Conn.-based California Condominium Association's agreement with residents had allowed the display of items on doors but not doorposts. This meant residents could affix Christmas wreaths and crucifixes to their doors, but Jews could not affix mezuzahs to their doorposts. The association had threatened to fine Jewish resident Barbara Cadranel $50 a day until she removed her mezuzah from her doorpost. Her lawyers said April 3 the matter was resolved. The association apologized to her and to the Jewish community for the discrimination, saying it wasn't aware of the significance of mezuzahs to Jews.

German Poet Slams Israel Over Iran

Gunter Grass

BERLIN — Gunter Grass, Germany's Nobel Prize-winning author, published a poem claiming Israel is endangering world peace by threatening Iran.

Critics, including Jewish leaders and politicians, charged Grass, 84, with turning truth on its head with his prose-poem claiming that "the nuclear power, Israel, is endangering our fragile world peace."

Published April 4 in Germany's *Suddeutsche Zeitung* newspaper and international papers, the poem, titled *What Must Be Said*, condemns German Chancellor Angela Merkel for subsidizing the sale of more submarines to Israel "justified as reparations."

Grass also said his reluctance until now to speak out against Israel was due to his own sense of connection with the Jewish state and that "the charge of antisemitism" is easily flung at those who criticize Israel.

In 2006, Grass admitted he had joined the Waffen-SS as a teen at the end of World War II. He was criticized for hiding the fact while accusing others of the same.

The Israeli Embassy in Berlin said the poem was in the "tradition of blood libel ahead of Passover," while Israeli Interior Minister Eli Yishai said Grass is unwelcome in Israel and barred him from visiting.

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Yom Hazikaron ceremony to be upgraded

Important for Diaspora Jews to connect with Israel: consul general

Andy-Levy-Ajzenkopf
Staff Reporter

Israelis abroad and the Jewish state itself have been lax in conveying to Diaspora Jews the cultural importance of Yom Hazikaron, says Israel's consul general for Toronto and Western Canada, Amir Gissin.

He wants to change that.

Yom Hazikaron, Israel's Memorial Day, which commemorates those who have died in defence of the Jewish state and its victims of terror, "is probably the most important civic day on Israel's calendar," Gissin said. "To many Israelis, it's as important as Yom Ha'atzmaut [Israeli Independence Day, which is celebrated the next day]. It holds a central place in the Israeli psyche. Every Israeli either comes from a bereaved family or knows someone who has fallen in one of the country's wars," he said.

Gissin's family has lost six members to Israel's wars.

Speaking to *The CJN* at his downtown office last week, Gissin said creating a cultural rapprochement on Yom Hazikaron – April 25 this year – between Canadian Jews and ex-pat Israelis in Canada was one of his last and most important projects. (Gissin's term is up this summer, when he will return to Israel. He will be succeeded by D.J. Schneeweiss.)

Amir Gissin

He said there's a gap between the perception of the importance of the holiday in Israel and the way it is perceived in the Toronto Jewish community. It's a gap that needs to be closed, he said.

"The way to do this is to invest in an effort to bring the [Toronto] Jewish community to the Yom Hazikaron ceremonies" held around the city every year, he said.

As a result, he said this year, the consulate has helped move the major Yom Hazikaron ceremony to a larger venue that can hold up to 5,000 people. Beth Tzedec Congregation has agreed to host the ceremony, in conjunction with Holy Blossom Temple. In the week before the holiday, the consulate is launching a major advertising blitz targeting the entire Jewish community.

It's the first time the consulate has endeavoured to bridge this gap. And Gissin said this may end up being the largest Yom Hazikaron event in Canada, and perhaps even outside of Israel.

Continued on page 18

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Meet David Goldbloom

From the editor's desk...

In 1953, the famous British theatre director Tyrone Guthrie became the founding director of the now much celebrated and internationally renowned Stratford Shakespeare Festival of Canada. On the ship that brought Guthrie to Canada, he met and befriended Alton Goodrich, the stage name of an accomplished Shakespearean actor as well as scholar of the Bard. Goodrich was from Montreal, a highly respected pediatrician and medical lecturer. He was also Alton Goldbloom.

Some 60 years after that chance encounter on the Atlantic ocean-liner between the Shakespearean actor-pediatrician from Montreal and the soon-to-be founding director of the Stratford Festival from London, England, the pediatrician's grandson has become the chair of the board of governors of the Stratford Festival of Canada.

The CJN recently met with the grandson at a restaurant near the University of Toronto, where he is a professor of psychiatry, to talk about the Stratford appointment.

David Goldbloom is a scion of a medical family that has now brought four generations of healers and physicians to the world. His dedication to restoring the health of others who are ill is widely known throughout psychiatric medicine and among his peers. His contributions to the field are legion. I mention merely some of his most recent contributions: in 1998, he was appointed inaugural physician-in-chief of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto. When his five-year term expired, he was appointed the centre's senior medical advisor, education and public affairs. He has written more than 100 scientific articles and book chapters and has edited two textbooks for use by psychiatrists. As of two weeks ago, on April 1, Goldbloom has assumed the chairmanship of the board of directors of the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC).

David Goldbloom is clearly a very distinguished scholar and leading practitioner of mental health. And he is very clearly quite busy. He accepts with earnest purpose the advancement of all of the causes for which he volunteers, of which chairing the board of governors of the Stratford Festival is an excellent example. It reposes very deeply in his heart.

"When I sit in the theatre, I feel great *nachas*. The *kvell* opportunities are legion and I feel part of a large family. The lights go dim. The audience disappears. You are drawn into the stage. I simply love the place and the people," Goldbloom told *The CJN* with a reverence for the theatre and the company that nearly shone from his face. "As soon as I arrive on Ontario Street [in Stratford], I feel a state of transcendence and calm," he added to emphasize the point.

David Goldbloom

In addition to Goldbloom's medical pedigree, he has also been stamped with a multi-generational imprimatur of music and theatre. It dates back to his grandfather, Alton, his great-aunt Ellen Ballon (the Montreal-born pianist/musician prodigy of the early 20th century) and his own father, a serious musician in his own right, as well as successful doctor.

Goldbloom grew up in a house of music. He studied piano for more than a decade until his mid-teens. He also studied acting in Montreal at Dorothy Davis and Violet Walters' school of drama. His acting "career" led him, as a teenager, to CBC television and later, during the summer, as a behind-the-scenes CBC announcer. During the exciting and heady days of his undergraduate years at Harvard University, he acted in musical comedies and immersed himself in theatre, literature and music.

"But, as an actor at university," Goldbloom said with a self-deprecating, straight face, "I received a lot of encouragement to go into medicine."

Years later, the arts, theatre, medicine, healing, literature, mental health activism and music permanently intertwined into his personality and character, David Goldbloom is serving the Stratford Festival. He now brings his uniquely articulate and helpful manner "to get people even more engaged" with the theatre company that his grandfather's friend Tyrone Guthrie helped found.

"I want to bring Stratford to the world, and along the way, bring the world to Stratford," he said. "I take immense pride in what happens on our [Stratford's] stages."

Using concepts that spring from his dedication to healing disorders of the mind, Goldbloom said, "Stratford gives us all the chance to explore the boundaries of the imagination because the theatre is not constrained the way real life is."

And then using a musical figure of speech that also obviously sprang from another part of his upbringing, he concluded our conversation by effusively, proudly, saying, "Stratford plays second fiddle to no one."

–MBD

SeeJN

LAUREEN HARPER MAKES MATZAH

Laureen Harper, seated, the wife of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, recently enjoyed making matzah with children from Chabad's Westboro Jewish Montessori Preschool in Ottawa. Afterward, Harper was given a tour of the school.

Pakistani journalist presents positive image of Israel, Jews

Paul Lungen
Staff Reporter

A recent English-language item on Tariq Khan's news website, geared to a Pakistani audience, was a sympathetic story about Eva Sandler, whose husband, Rabbi Jonathan Sandler, and two children were killed by a terrorist in Toulouse, France.

Scan down the page and you'd find an article headed "Peace-loving Israelis march in Tel Aviv against war with Iran," along with another about the second concert Madonna has added during her tour of Israel.

Tariq Khan

In the Urdu-language portion of the website, there's an image of the Israel Defence Forces emblem and another of the Israeli flag. Nobody is burning the Israeli flag or stomping on the IDF logo.

On the contrary, said Khan, the Weekly Press Pakistan website (http://weeklypress-pakistan.com) offers stories that cast a positive light on Israel and the Jewish People. Khan believes the Ajmi, non-Arab Muslims, have no beef with Israel or Jews.

"We have nothing to do with the Palestinians. We have no feelings [for] them, and they have no feelings for us," he said.

A veteran journalist who worked for the Nawaiwaqt group of newspapers in Pakistan before moving to Canada in 2000, Khan believes there is no reason Jews and Pakistanis should not be friends. In Canada, he is dedicating himself to inter-community relations, and serves as director of the Christian-Muslim Forum of Canada. He has started a Shalom Israel group to promote friendship between the Jews and Muslims.

Jews, Muslims and Hindus got along well on the Indian subcontinent, and there is no reason that should not be replicated in Canada, he said.

So far his overtures to the Jewish community have been met with some hesitance. Jews, he said, have been "a little cautious and careful."

There's no ulterior motive, no hidden agenda. "We announced it in the online paper that we want friendship with the Jewish People, the Israeli people. We recognize Israel as the Jewish state. We want friendship – that's it," he said.

Khan has met so far with members of Congregation Darchei Noam and visited the synagogue. He's also consulted with Avi Benlolo of the Canadian Friends of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, who has been receptive – and cautious – about the overtures.

Khan has visited the organization's offices, Benlolo said. What's more, Khan has included articles Benlolo has provided on his website.

Since then, the centre "has had international Pakistani journalists contacting us for information on issues or to put us on an e-mail list," Benlolo said. They seem to be interested in learning more about Jewish history, Israel and the Holocaust.

The relationship with Khan is at a very preliminary stage, Benlolo continued. "Any opportunity to dialogue or build bridges with any community is a positive step… This is all step by step and [we are] as optimistic as we can be."

The chair of the Jewish unity committee of Darchei Noam, Andrea Spindel, has visited Khan's home and hosted Khan and other local Pakistanis at her home. Spindel believes Khan is genuinely interested in establishing good relationships with local Jews and changing the perception of Israel and Jews among Pakistani intelligentsia.

Several of Spindel's articles on Jewish life, including one explaining Chanukah, were published by Khan.

Through her work with Kulanu Inc., an NGO that aids Jews in remote communities, she's met Khan's nephew, Navras Aafreedi, who lectures on Jews and Israel in northern India. Both Khan and his nephew are ethnic Pashtuns, and they believe the Pashtun people are descendants of the lost tribes of Israel, Spindel said.

Khan does not deny the connection. The "Pashtuns are one or two" of the lost tribes, he said.

So is that why he's trying to improve relations with the Jews?

"The Ajmi Muslims have no bad feelings towards Jews… You have a problem with the Arab people."

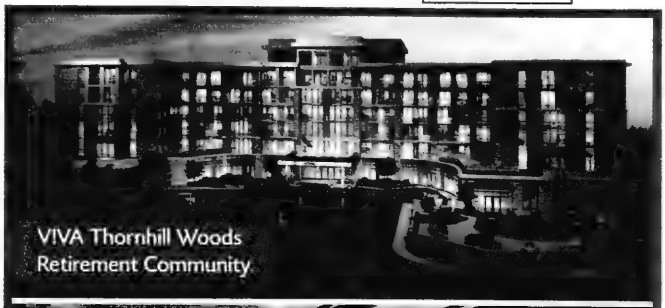
Khan said that presenting an alternative, positive view of Israel and Jews in a Toronto-based website can have influence back in his homeland.

He intends to stir debate among Pakistan's top journalists, many of whom worked under him when he lived in Pakistan. He pointedly noted that when he worked in Pakistan, he constantly received Urdu-language press releases from a variety of sources, but never once from Israel.

It's clear his views on Israel and the Jews have prompted a debate, but judging from the comments in a Pakistani journalists group on Google, which carries his online newspaper, a good number of the reporters remain hostile to Israel and Jews.

Under the heading "When Pakistan will stop considering Israel as enemy?" several posters revived classic antisemitic stereotypes in the discussion. Not all the postings are negative and Khan believes his reputation in Pakistan will influence some journalists to take another look at their attitudes about Israel and Jews.

"Jews are the enemy of nobody," he said. Jews are behind many medical advances and "I don't know how many good things they are doing and passing it to all people."



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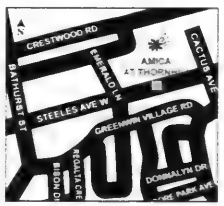

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AMICA at Thornhill

New Vaughan JCC almost ready to open

Frances Kraft
Staff Reporter

The Schwartz/Reisman Centre – the Jewish community centre (JCC) being built on the Joseph and Wolf Lebovic Jewish Community Campus in Vaughan – will open officially Oct. 14. But the centre, located at 9600 Bathurst St., north of Rutherford Road, will be open for some programs June 1 and will be the new home of Centre Camp this summer.

The day camp, which was housed near Avenue Road and Lawrence Avenue West following the closing of the Bathurst Jewish Community Centre in 2009, has been renamed the Jack and Pat Kay Centre Camp.

The new 200,000-square-foot, $51-million building in Vaughan is adjacent to the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Hebrew Academy of Toronto's Kimel Family Education Centre. It includes a kosher café, three saltwater swimming pools (one outdoor and two indoor), a daycare centre, two full-size gyms, a conference centre, multi-purpose rooms, and underground parking for 350 cars, as well as an above-ground lot with 100 spaces.

In addition to JCC facilities, the building will also house the Koffler Centre of the Arts, Jewish Family & Child, JIAS, JVS, Circle of Care and a Mount Sinai Hospital wellness centre on the third floor.

Reena will be leasing space to run its adult programs in the centre as well.

David Sadowski, executive vice-president, Jewish Community Properties of Greater Toronto, describes the building as a "community mall" with the JCC as its anchor tenant.

The three-storey building was designed by Guela Solow-Ruda, who also designed the adjacent TanenbaumCHAT building.

The Schwartz/Reisman Centre features "an enormous amount of glass," and virtually all the components are Canadian-made, including limestone walls from a small quarry in Owen Sound, Sadowski said. He added that the east wall (facing Bathurst) is designed so that the building can be expanded outward. A theatre complex would be the last piece to be built, he said.

Sadowski also noted efforts to make the building inclusive. "You'll see a lot of wide corridors," he said, adding that the number of washrooms for people with disabilities is above the required code.

As well, the centre has adult change tables and a Snoezelen room, which is geared to people with a variety of special needs, noted Carol Seidman, director of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's Tomorrow Campaign, which helped raise the money to build the facility. The room is "a place of calming down, it's very therapeutic and we're really proud to have one," she said.

Seidman added that the centre has been built with money from donors and both the federal and provincial governments. "Every one of the [donor] gifts is a unique story. There are opportunities at every level to get involved.

"I think there's a misunderstanding that, unless you have hundreds and thousands or millions of dollars, you can't participate." She added that all gifts are payable over five years, and some are relatively modest amounts.

The centre and the surrounding Lebovic campus is one of three Jewish campuses that have been or are being built as part of what started as a $150 million campaign, Seidman said. "We changed the goal to $400 million, and we've raised $300 million."

From left, Sherry Kulman, David Sadowski and Carol Seidman in the soon-to-be-opened Schwartz/Reisman Centre. *[Frances Kraft photo]*

The other two campuses are downtown and on Bathurst just north of Sheppard Avenue.

This past January, more than a year after the Bathurst Jewish Community Centre (BJCC) was torn down, construction had yet to begin on the building that will replace it, and federation officials were saying it won't open until 2016. Construction on the new JCC is set to start in 2013, but fundraising for the $110-million complex was about $40 million short as of the beginning of this year.

In Vaughan, the 50-acre Lebovic campus was purchased 12 years ago for $6 million, with funds donated by 44 families, Seidman said.

Sherry Kulman, executive director of the centre, said it has 1,350 individual members so far. "We are exceeding our targets," Kulman said. She expects to have more than 1,600 members by the time the centre opens, and said that the centre is financially viable.

Individual membership costs $69 a month, while a family membership is $144 per month. In addition to full membership, partial memberships are also available, such as pool and gym only.

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April 25, 2012 - 8 a.m.
Bayview Golf and Country Club
Tickets/RSVP call CHW Toronto at 416-630-8373

CHW Kitchener/Waterloo
Annual Campaign Dinner
with Special Guest Speaker Judy Zelikovitz,
Director, Local Partner Services for the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs; Secretary, CHW Board of Directors
May 17, 2012 - 6 p.m.
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About CHW Canadian Hadassah-WIZO (CHW) is Canada's leading Jewish women's philanthropic organization. Founded in 1917, CHW is non-political, volunteer driven and funds programs and projects for Children, Healthcare and Women in Israel and Canada.

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Your Annual Campaign gift goes directly to projects for Children, Healthcare and Women in Israel and Canada - read a few stories from our beneficiaries, below.

Ben, an affectionate toddler attends the CHW Terry Schwarzfeld Ottawa Daycare Centre in Acco. Recently, it was discovered that Ben suffers from a degenerative eye disease, which will lead to his eventual blindness. Because of this, Ben receives one-on-one assistance so that he can participate in activities with the other children; he also receives guidance to help him with his disability. As Ben's family suffers financially, the daycare staff sends home leftover food, bread and vegetables; also advocating for the family when needed.

Because of CHW supporters, like you, Rachel received same-day testing, faster treatment and care.

Rachel, a 40-year-old, who recently arrived to Israel from Ethiopia, came to the CHW M. Fanny Breast Care Institute at Assaf Harofeh Medical Center after discovering a skin lesion on her breast. Biopsy results revealed that Rachel had Paget's Disease, a malignant condition. Further imaging found ductal carcinoma. In this instance, the only course was a mastectomy. Rachel was informed of her condition, and after consultation with her family and doctors, she decided to proceed with surgery, and breast reconstruction. Rachel is recovering well and is hopeful for an improved life with her family.

Because of CHW supporters, like you, Maya receives counselling, ensuring that she and her child thrive.

Maya, mother of 3-year-old Ora, noticed that her daughter was becoming increasingly aggressive, physically acting out, and talking back. Worried, Maya turned to the director at Ora's daycare centre, who suggested the WIZO Parental Hotline. Maya called and as she spoke with a volunteer, Idit, it was discovered that Maya's recent job loss and other stresses were affecting Ora. Idit suggested parenting techniques, such as setting boundaries and encouraged Maya to call back in a few weeks to discuss their progress, which she did.

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What must be said

Time and again we have seen that Nobel Prize laureates may have skill, talent, extraordinary knowledge, brilliance and even genius in specific areas of endeavours. But none of these qualities, singly or cumulatively, guarantees in them wisdom, common sense or even good taste.

Thus, we saw the octogenarian German Nobel laureate for Literature and former Waffen SS member, Gunter Grass, last week pose politics (and prejudice and polemics) as art in an utterly offensive poem called *What Must Be Said*. The poem was published in several European newspapers last week.

Grass' key message to the world, what he considered so urgent for all of us to hear, what he ordained so imperiously must be said, was an indictment of Israel. It was the Jewish state's putative nuclear capability and not that of Iran that presents a threat to world peace. As a result, he urged his government to refuse to further sell any submarines to Israel that might add to Israel's arsenal.

The poem appropriately evoked wide criticism at home in Germany and abroad in Israel. German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle said of Grass's views that "putting Israel and Iran on the same moral level is not ingenious but absurd." Marcel Reich-Ranicki, one of Germany's leading literature critics, said Grass' poem was "disgusting."

Israel's prime minister offered his own literary criticism of the Grass poem. "His declarations are ignorant and shameful and every honest person in this world must condemn them," Benjamin Netanyahu said.

"In Iran there is a regime that denies the Holocaust and calls for the destruction of Israel," Netanyahu added. "It is Iran, not Israel, which poses a threat to world peace. It is Iran, not Israel, which threatens to destroy other countries. It is Iran, not Israel, which supports terror organizations that fire missiles on innocent civilians. It is Iran, not Israel, which supports the massacre that the Syrian regime is carrying out on its civilians. It is Iran, not Israel, which stones women, hangs gay people, and ruthlessly suppresses the tens of millions of citizens in its country."

Israel's interior minister, Eli Yishai, declared Grass to be *persona non grata*, offically unwelcome in Israel. Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman said of the poem and of its writer that it was the "egoism of so-called western intellectuals, who are willing to sacrifice the Jewish people once again." Nor did it go unnoticed by the Israeli embassy in Berlin that the poem was published on the eve of Passover, suggesting it carried on the odious "tradition of blood libel ahead of Passover."

The simple truth of the poem of course and its publication is that it pulls away the very thin veneer from Grass' foul-smelling pedantry and transparent posturing. Grass has a high reputation as a writer. But what he peddles is unembellished and very low anti-Israel politics. This is what really must be said.

25 years ago in *The CJN*

Chaim Herzog went on a five-day official visit to West Germany, becoming the first Israeli president to set foot on German soil. As part of the trip, Herzog went to the site of Bergen-Belsen, the Nazi concentration camp. He was an officer in the British Army unit that liberated the camp.

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Assad champions human rights

It seems as if the entire world watches and observes on a daily basis the slaughter of innocent civilians in Syria at the hands of the Bashar Assad regime. The one exception is the United Nations and its associated body, the Human Rights Council (HRC), where there is an inability and an unwillingness to condemn the Syrian government for the atrocities being committed over the past year. To add to this absurd situation, is the fact that on March 23, the HRC formulated a resolution denouncing Israel for alleged violations of human rights on the Golan Heights. The issue was brought before the council by a representative of the Assad regime. This, while more than 8,000 Syrians have been murdered by Syrian government forces and tens of thousands of Syrians have sought refugee status and asylum in Israel's Golan Heights. It should be noted that 55 per cent of the members of the HRC are Muslim countries. The membership includes Libya, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Cuba, China, Kyrgyzstan, Uganda, Djibouti, Senegal, Mauritania, Malaysia and Russia. Of course, it is universally recognized that these countries are the bastions and protectors of human rights within their own countries.

Bert Raphael
Thornhill, Ont.

* * *

Author rejected chassidic roots

I was greatly saddened by the article "Breaking away from the Satmar" (March 29), about Deborah Feldman's bestselling book, *Unorthodox*, in which she chronicles her rejection of the Satmar world of her childhood and embracement of secularism. Orthodox Judaism encompasses a spectrum of philosophies and lifestyles. While, arguably, the Satmar represent one extreme, there are multiple Orthodox communities in which one does not encounter primitive "gender roles, restrictions in education, racism, homophobia [and] anti-Zionism." It is a pity that Feldman thought she had to become completely secular in order to "achieve authenticity and self-determination." One can enjoy the richness of secular culture, embrace diversity and find fulfilment as a woman in horizons beyond one's home and community, while still keeping the beautiful, daily rituals that have preserved Judaism throughout the ages and serve as a constant reminder that we are beings created in God's image and must behave accordingly.

Ellen Warner
Toronto

* * *

More on Schwartz's

I found the article "Landmark deli Schwartz's enters new era" (March 15) very interesting and thought I would add my two cents' worth to the history of Schwartz's. Seventy-eight years ago, I was a student at Devonshire Public School, in Montreal. My parents owned a lunchroom, but every Friday my mother gave me 15 cents to have lunch out. As soon as the lunch bell rang, I would dash out to the Montreal Hebrew Delicatessen, where I enjoyed a smoked meat sandwich and a Coke. The article is correct – the deli was owned by Reuben Schwartz. It consisted of a store with four tables. At the time, there was another deli owned by a Mr. Schwartz, where Schwartz's is now. I don't know the reason for his leaving the store, but that is when Mr. Reuben moved to the present location and the legacy of Schwartz's began.

Sol Cartman
Cote St. Luc, Que.

* * *

LET THEM GO...

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz

Teaching the Holocaust

I strongly commend the efforts of the Holocaust Museum Houston in running the Butterfly Project ("Butterfly Project recalls children killed in Shoah," Feb. 24). Working with survivors and volunteers to gather 1.5 million butterflies to commemorate the deaths of the 1.5 million children who were murdered in the Shoah is an important mission. As a 15-year-old history student who is learning about World War II, I realize the importance of carrying on the memories of the Holocaust. It shocks me that there are young people whose knowledge of the Holocaust is limited, and the steps that the Butterfly Project is taking to change that are truly remarkable. It infuriates me when people claim that the Holocaust is old news and that Jews should stop making a fuss over it. Not only is the Shoah still relevant to genocide that is occurring today, but it is an event that will forever mark the history of humanity. We cannot let it fade out of our hearts and minds or risk this type of event occurring again.

Esther Blinick
Toronto

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Tunisia's Jews wary of political events

A growing and increasingly vocal Islamist movement

Armin Rosen
JTA

Tucked on a quiet side street blocks from the Mediterranean Sea, the last kosher restaurant in the Tunisian capital is a thriving centre of Jewish tradition in a country of 10 million with nearly an entire Arab and Muslim population.

Yet Jacob Lellouche, who has owned and operated Mamie Lily in Tunis since it opened 16 years ago, says his business is hardly a Jewish bubble.

Most of his customers are Muslim, and on a recent Thursday night, the restaurant's cosy dining room is dominated by a large party of Tunisians sipping *boukha* – a fig-based liquor that Tunisian Jews traditionally drink on the Sabbath – while chattering in Arabic and French. Lellouche says the guests are liberal activists who have come to the restaurant to draft a statement on freedom of speech in the aftermath of the revolution that toppled Zine Abdine Ben Ali's regime in January 2011.

"The civil society in Tunisia sustained the Jewish community of this country," says Lellouche, explaining that relations between Tunisia's educated and politically engaged citizens and the country's 1,500 Jews have always been mutually beneficial. "As long as there are Jews in the world, there will be Jews in Tunisia," he says.

But more than a year after Tunisia became the first Arab country to overthrow its dictator through a popular, non-violent uprising, two religion-inspired political movements are challenging Tunisia's cosmopolitan political and social attitudes, and are threatening to reverse the country's long-standing moderation toward Israel and the Jews.

Located just 80 miles off the coast of Sicily, Tunisia has been colonized by foreign powers from the Roman Empire to modern France. But unlike other countries with a long colonial history, Tunisia has historically been a place where Middle Eastern and European values and ideas have converged, reinforcing one another without causing conflict or social discord.

Educated Muslim Tunisians acknowledge that the Jews are a crucial part of this history.

"The Jews came to Tunis and developed commerce and trade here, and many came after they were expelled from Iberia," says Abdel-Hamid Larguech, a history professor at Manoura University. "These were factors in how Tunisia became more cosmopolitan."

Kedya Ben Saidane, who has researched the country's Berber community, claims Berbers living in Tunisia first began practising Judaism nearly 3,000 years ago.

Modern Tunisia has subsequently had a history of moderation on Israel-related issues. In 1965, Habib Bourguiba, the president from 1957 until 1987, caused a brief crisis in relations between Tunisia and several other Arab governments when he outlined a plan for recognizing Israel in exchange for the establishment of a Palestinian state.

Official diplomatic contact between Israel and Tunisia, established in 1996, lasted just four years, yet Tunisia does not take as hard line a position on the Jewish state as other Arab countries.

"Tunisian Israelis come here with no problem at all," says Rabbi Haim Bittan, the leader of the small Jewish community in Tunis, adding that travel to Israel is fairly routine for the country's Jews. Tunisia is also one of the few Arab countries accessible to Israeli passport holders, despite the lack of official recognition.

Yet since Ben Ali's ouster, there have been hints that Tunisia's moderation – and its moderate position toward Israel – could be eroding.

Rached Ghannouchi

In October, the Islamist Ennahda party won 43 per cent of the vote in Tunisia's first post-uprising parliamentary elections, putting an explicitly religious party in charge of a country with a long-standing secular and republican tradition.

Although Ennahda in late March officially dropped its demand for Islamic law in the country's new constitution, many Tunisians still fear that the party could take the country in an uncomfortably radical direction.

Party co-founder Rached Ghannouchi has publicly praised the mothers of suicide bombers and spoken about "the extinction of Israel."

"Ennahda's election favoured the emergence of a new fundamentalist section of the society, the extremists," Larguech says. "And the two enemies of the democratic revolution are populism and extremism."

Ennahda confirmed moderates' fears by proposing a constitutional ban on normalization of ties with Israel during a mock parliament held just after Ben Ali's ouster. A year later, there is almost no mainstream support for such a provision. Ennahda, which has proven responsive to the criticism from the country's large secular-liberal wing, also now opposes the normalization ban.

Walid Bennani, vice-president of Ennahda's parliamentary contingent, says his party believes that peaceful relations with the Jewish state would be possible as soon as Israel makes peace with the Palestinians.

"The constitution is not the place to legislate relations between countries," he says.

However, Ghannouchi said recently that there could be no normalization with Israel, according to the official TAP news agency. "Tunisians' problem is with Zionism, not with Judaism," he reportedly said.

Jacob Lellouche

Tunisia also has a growing and increasingly vocal Salafist movement. Tunisia's Salafists are Islamic fundamentalists inspired by Saudi Arabia's restrictive version of political Islam who felt oppressed by the secular, republican character of the Bourguiba and Ben Ali regimes. On March 23, Salafist protesters chanted antisemitic slogans in downtown Tunis, provoking a tense standoff with a group of artists gathered in front of Tunisia's national theatre.

Every major political party, including Ennahda, condemned the Salafists, whose chants included "death to the Jews." A week later, Salafists called for a ban on normalization with Israel in a protest in front of the National Assembly building in Tunis.

> *'The Salafists have now chanted death to the Jews during their marches three times'*

So far, Tunisia's moderate and secular political culture has kept the Salafists on the social and political fringes while frustrating Ennahda's ambitions for an overtly Islamic constitution. And as far as the Jews are concerned, Tunisian moderation has endured during the transitional period.

In Tunis itself, Jewish life is more developed than in most other Arab capitals. Although only 500 Jews remain in the city, it boasts a Jewish school, a yeshiva and a kosher food service – as well as the Grande Synagogue de Tunis, a 1930s art-deco masterpiece still topped with a colossal, gilded Star of David. The southern island of Djerba has more than 350 students in Jewish schools, according to Rabbi Bittan.

The post-revolutionary sense of openness has yielded one major gain for Tunisia's Jewish community. After Ben Ali stepped down, Lellouche launched Dar el-Dekra (Arabic for "House of Memory"), which he describes as the first Tunisian organization aimed at celebrating and promoting the country's Jewish heritage.

"Ben Ali used to instrumentalize the Jewish community," Lellouche says. "Ben Ali wanted to say to France and America that the Jews live till now in Tunisia because he wants them to live here."

With Ben Ali gone, there's a new opportunity to develop Jewish life in Tunisia without contributing to the public image of a widely despised autocrat, says Lellouche, who is also planning a Jewish museum.

Still, he remains wary.

"The Salafists have now chanted 'death to the Jews' during their marches three times," Lellouche says. "The first two times they were talking about Zionists. But I think the third time they were talking about the Jews themselves."

Israeli teens face things Diaspora peers don't

A couple of weeks ago, while attending to a problem with my cellphone, I had a chance encounter with a guy who made aliyah from Toronto around the same time as I did. I run into him about once a year.

Besides the hassle of dealing with a defective phone, my acquaintance seemed more preoccupied than he usually is when I see him. It turned out he'd had a pretty sombre morning at the IDF induction office here in Jerusalem accompanying his second son as he began three years of military service in the tank corps. His first son, a 20-year-old, already serves in a combat unit. It had been a heavy morning.

I travel in different circles here in Israel. Mostly, my family, friends and associates are sabras – Israeli-born. But others immigrated to Israel as young adults, many from English-speaking countries. The majority of these veteran "new" olim did not serve in the IDF or only did short stints of duty. As they approach the age when their kids are completing high school and contemplating what to do next, some of these parents are perplexed, unable to help their kids decide which units they should aim to get into or what to do when they experience difficulties once they're in the military. They simply don't know enough about the multifaceted ins and outs of the IDF.

Because I served in the IDF professionally for 24 years and learned a thing or two about Israel's military labyrinth during that time, I'm often approached by bewildered parents needing guidance and support about their kids' tour of duty.

Yair Lootsteen

in Jerusalem

Some are anxious and need to know it's OK to be that way. Their children are in combat units and won't tell them anything about their service because they aren't allowed to. They know their kids are doing dangerous things. They're losing sleep over it, and like many other Israeli parents, they no longer travel abroad together. One parent is always in Israel – to deal with any eventuality that might arise.

Most of my friends' kids want to make their military service a meaningful experience. The boys who can (yes – they're still boys) covet elite combat unit positions. The girls also want to give of themselves, some, too, in combat roles, others in sensitive intelligence corps units, or as human resource specialists or helping less privileged soldiers with socioeconomic woes, to name but a few of the options open to them.

They give their parents tremendous pride. A friend recently called to tell me her daughter, who serves in a non-combat position in the Gaza division, will be recognized this coming Yom Ha'atzmaut as one of the entire divisions' premier soldiers. Her mom, who can't tell the difference between a brigade and battalion, let alone a division, wanted to know how good that is. I told her that it's amazing.

Other parents don't know how to handle their kids' frustrations regarding the military. Those can be myriad. Many young people don't get chosen for units they'd hoped to get into. Others want out of units once they get into them. Some have medical problems and don't think the army's taking care of them properly. Others can't deal with being ordered to do things they don't want to do by kids not much older than they are. For the first time in their pampered lives, they can't ignore such orders. And yet others find the going too tough physically or emotionally. They want out – now!

And their uninitiated parents don't know how to help them, or who to turn to. They're just as exasperated and annoyed, and they worry.

These years of military service are a challenging, complex journey for kids and their parents – sometimes turbulent, often rewarding, but certainly not idyllic.

And in a nutshell, my friends, that's the difference between living in Israel and living in the Diaspora. Your streets are usually cleaner. Your cars and homes are larger. Your bureaucracy is a bit less onerous, and, generally speaking, your bank accounts are more padded. But we, too, live well and enjoy the good things this country has to offer, and I for one would not want to switch places.

But while Canadian teenagers are busy choosing between McGill and U of T or Queen's and Dalhousie, Israeli youths are choosing between Golani and Givati, pilot training, submarines or paratroopers.

May they all come home safely.

In every generation, we must tell the story

I have often tried to imagine how the Israelite slaves in Egypt responded to the Ten Plagues, the midnight flight and sudden Exodus into the unknown desert, the splitting of the Sea of Reeds with Pharaoh's army in hot pursuit, and the abrupt transition from bondage to freedom.

Slavery was all that they and numerous generations before them had known. Suddenly, appearing out of nowhere (actually, the Sinai Desert) and without any primary elections or other democratic processes, an Israelite named Moses, speaking like an Egyptian, claimed to have received divine instructions to become their leader and to negotiate on their behalf with Pharoah. But instead of improving their situation, this only made it worse, as their taskmasters added to their workload and the overall suffering.

When the plagues began to cripple Egypt, did the majority of Israelites, who were mysteriously protected from the worsening crisis, worry that their all-powerful overlords would eventually exact revenge? Did they organize demonstrations and sign petitions against Moses, Aaron and the other elders while apologizing to the Egyptian masters for any inconvenience? How many were able to grasp the scale of these events and their significance, and to go beyond the immediate traumas and fears for the future in an entirely different and unknown environment? Did the Independent Israelite Voices for Peace refuse to leave with the others, or did they depart briefly and then go back to the security of slavery?

In recent generations, more than 3,500 years later, the Jewish people are again in the middle of tremendous historic events. The Shoah, the return to the Land of Israel and re-establishment of national sovereignty after 2,000 years of exile, accompanied by the ongoing wars and threats of extinction, are all wrenching changes in our individual and collective existence. This suffering includes mass terror attacks, barrages of missiles from Gaza and Hamas, and the cold-blooded murder of Jewish children.

In our exodus, the Jewish people moved from exile and subjugation into freedom and self-determination, embodied in the State of Israel, with all of its faults and growing pains. For the majority of Jews around the world, Israel has become the centre of their religious, cultural and national identities – about half of the world's Jewish population now makes their home in Israel. Millions more identify closely with Israel, weigh in on the efforts to adjust diverse traditions to the demands of a modern democratic society, and contribute to or benefit from the rich Jewish cultural renaissance.

But for some Jews, the modern mix of afflictions and triumphs is too overwhelming to deal with, and they focus on more immediate and local concerns. Their relationship to Israel is limited, distant and sometimes alienated. For a small but influential group with access to the media and funding from hostile non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Israel and Jewish independence is a burden and an embarrassment. Their minimalist Jewish identity remains deeply embedded in the Diaspora.

Gerald Steinberg

in Jerusalem

Today's Jewish and Israeli counterparts to Moses' critics are unable to cope with the requirements of freedom and self-determination and look to a generally hostile "international community" to impose their interests and policies on the rest of us. These post- and anti-Zionists travel the world, denouncing Israel on university campuses, in United Nations frameworks, and in some churches, supporting the BDS movement as a means of keeping the Jewish nation in a state of political slavery.

But history does not move in reverse. "Independent Israelites" who stayed in Egypt quickly disappeared, as did those who turned around in the desert and returned to the house of bondage, embittered and angry. Similarly, in our times, Jewish history is moving in one direction. We have witnessed terrible suffering leaving the Diaspora and regaining freedom. And while Israel is not yet the perfect Jewish and democratic state that has been imagined, what we have managed to accomplish is still miraculous.

Letter from the Lower East Side

A bustling bastion of new immigrants streaming into New York City, the Lower East Side has been settled by a succession of ethnic groups since the 17th century.

The Dutch, followed by the British, were the first to live in this now-congested southeastern corner of the island of Manhattan. Next came the Germans – who inhabited the first tenements – Irish and Italians, who lent it more flavour.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, this neighbourhood gradually changed, becoming virtually synonymous with eastern European Jews, whose shops, synagogues, institutions and kosher or kosher-style delicatessens marked it as a predominantly Jewish enclave.

Sheldon Kirshner in New York City

On iconic streets such as Delancey and Hester, newly arrived Jews learned to be Americans as they shed old ways and habits. With the onset of prosperity, Jews moved on, their places taken by, among others, Chinese, Polish, Ukrainian, Puerto Rican and Dominican immigrants.

Of late, a process of gentrification has taken hold as crumbling but architecturally interesting buildings are renovated, stodgy shops are remodelled into trendy and pricey boutiques and brand-name cafés establish beachheads. Who knows what the Lower East Side will look and feel like in another generation?

Despite the changes, the Jewish component of the Lower East Side is still very much in evidence, as my daughter and I discovered during a long and leisurely stroll through its precincts recently.

On a wooden bench outside Yonah Shimmel's Knish Bakery on East Houston Street, we kept hunger at bay by sampling its potato and mushroom knishes, steaming, mushy and delicious.

We wandered into Russ & Daughters, a few doors away, a mecca of smoked fish. On Orchard Street, a hub for bargain shoppers, a heady aromatic brine emanated from Guss' Pickles.

On a more spiritual level, the Lower East Side is still replete with synagogues, such as the Bialystoker and Greek shuls on Willet and Broome streets.

At the corner of Broadway and Rutgers stands what was perhaps the most important landmark in the entire area, the 10-storey beige and yellow brick Forward Building, which faces Seward Park, the first municipal-built public playground in the United States.

Designed by George Boehm, and finished in 1912, this striking Beaux Arts structure was the headquarters of the *Jewish Daily Forward*, the Yiddish newspaper of record in the United States. As a child in Montreal, I remember my father and uncle reading the *Forverts* from cover to cover.

Founded in 1897 by socialists, the first edition was published on April 22 of that year. Widely regarded as the successor of New York City's first Yiddish-language socialist newspaper, *Di Arbetier Tsaytung*, the *Forverts* was driven by a social democratic editorial agenda.

One of its first editors, Abraham Cahan (1860-1951), was born in the Russian empire, in what is now Lithuania. The scion of Orthodox Jews whose grandfather was a rabbi and whose father was a Hebrew teacher, Cahan was steeped in Jewish tradition and seemed bound for the rabbinate.

Abraham Cahan

Drawn to secular culture, Cahan studied to be a teacher in Vilna. He graduated in 1881, when nationwide pogroms broke out, and found a teaching job in Vitebsk, where the painter Marc Chagall was born.

Being a socialist, Cahan was eager to leave repressive and antisemitic Russia. Arriving in New York City in 1882, he earned a living as an educator and writer, contributing articles on socialism and science to *Di Arbeiter Tsaytung*.

He also began writing fiction. His first novel, *Yekl: A Tale of the New York Ghetto*, was published in 1896 to critical acclaim, with the influential critic W.D. Howells comparing him to Stephen Crane (*The Red Badge of Courage*).

Cahan's second book, *The Imported Bride and Other Stories*, appeared two years later. It, too, was hailed by critics.

In the meantime, Cahan joined the staff of the *Forverts*, but left abruptly in a dispute over its political orientation.

Having learned English sufficiently well, he offered his services to a daily, the *Commercial Advertiser*, where he worked for four years, honing his skills as reporter and observer of the American scene.

He returned to the *Forverts* after receiving iron-clad assurances of full editorial control. Under Cahan's editorship, it became the single most important Yiddish newspaper in the United States, its circulation reaching 120,000 in 1912.

One of its most popular features, Bintel Brief, encouraged readers to send in questions on life's pressing problems. The column was designed to help Jewish immigrants adapt to life in America, one of the mandates of the *Forverts*.

In its heyday, during the 1920s and 1930s, its daily circulation skyrocketed to 275,000, a figure that has never been matched by any Jewish publication in the United States. But as Jewish immigration to the United States slowed to a trickle, due to nativist restrictions, its circulation suffered, dropping to about 170,000 by the eve of World War II.

The *Forverts* was blessed with a stable of gifted writers, including Isaac Bashevis Singer, whose short stories were enjoyed by many readers.

Cahan retired in 1946, having written his major novel, *The Rise of David Levinsky*, and his memoirs, *The Education of Abraham Cahan*. By then, the *Forverts* was something of a spent force.

Circulation declined to 56,000 by the early 1960s and to 5,000 at last report. A weekly English edition surfaced in 1990, but a Russian version did not survive.

The Forward Building
[Sheldon Kirshner photo]

The Forward Building, adorned with deeply inset windows, ornate pilasters, marble columns, a huge clock that lights up at night and golden letters in Yiddish that spell out *Forverts*, is truly a relic from another era.

Sold to Chinese investors years ago, the once mighty building, now in a mainly Asian neighbourhood, has been converted into a condominium whose units have sold for between $600,000 and more than $5 million. Like upscale condos in the Big Apple, it has a 24-hour doorman. But like prewar condos, it has no balconies or an underground parking garage.

As I walked toward the building, my daughter's dog, Rainbow, leading the way, I passed a profusion of Asian food markets, electronics stores and a Chinese funeral home, where a band in frilly white uniforms stood outside playing dirges to a departed member of the community.

Listening to the sorrowful music, I wondered how many people around here had ever heard of the *Forverts* or Abraham Cahan?

As Bob Dylan put it in his plaintive ballad, "The times they are a-changin."

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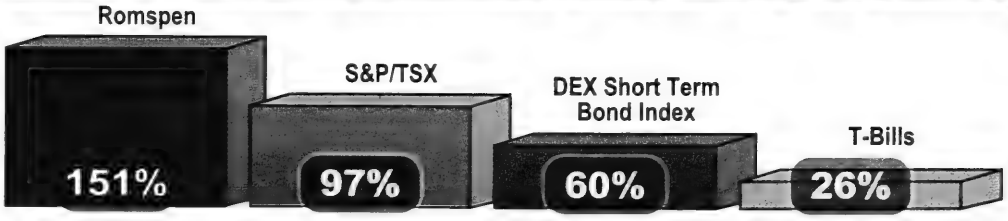

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Deepening our Judaism by engaging with Israel

Michael Diamond
Special to The CJN

Guest Voice

It is 2005. I am sitting in a large room in Eilat on a Friday night. I am interested in Eilat because it is the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's partner city in Israel. The room is filled with perhaps 40 people and we are participating in a prayer service. And while the room is somewhat plain and hardly compares to some of the grand sanctuaries in Toronto, it is striking that the service is being run by members of one family, including both the parents and their teenage children. I like the feel – everyone is involved, everyone cares.

But what strikes me most is the self-assuredness and competence of one of the teenage daughters who is leading much of the service. Rosy is a natural leader, and her intellect, confidence and self-awareness are impressive.

Later that night I reflected on our very comfortable corner of the Diaspora in Toronto, and wondered how many of the 200,000 Jews here understood the "real" Israel. And it hit me that this young person, so vibrant and bright, would do a lot of good spending time on a campus like my own Holy Blossom Temple, where a synagogue, a supplementary school and a day school live together.

How wonderful it would be for young people such as this to spend time in Toronto bringing the real Israel, and the young Israel, into the hearts and minds of many Toronto Jews who have had limited exposure to Israel and whose relationship with Israel may be limited to what they read in the media!

Back in Toronto, I took the idea forward and received the enthusiastic support of both Holy Blossom and the federation to pilot the program. The idea of bringing young, pre-Israel Defence Forces Israelis to the Diaspora was not new, but we were going to do it differently, in a concentrated way that would bring the real Israel into the hearts and minds of thousands of Toronto Jews by introducing them into synagogues, day schools and Jewish camps.

The young Israeli emissaries at Leo Baeck, from left, Mai Levi, Or Shalem, Michal Cohen and Ariel Levy.

With that, in 2007, UJA Federation's Young Emissary Program (or YEP) was born. It was to become the foundational piece of the federation's Israel engagement initiative!

That pilot year at Holy Blossom was a success, made possible by the excellence of our first two young emissaries, one of them that same Rosy, and the support of Holy Blossom, Leo Baeck and Camp George.

Fast forward to 2012.

The YEP has now grown to 14 Grade 12 graduates who spend their pre-IDF "gap" year in Toronto, working with more than 20 partner institutions – synagogues, day schools, youth groups and Jewish summer camps. Space does not permit me to write about the positive impact these young Israeli stars have had on these communities. Countless numbers of young Toronto Jews, as well as many adults, have developed much stronger relationships with Israel through the personal contact they have had with the young emissaries.

The excellent relationships that have developed between the federation and these 20-plus Jewish institutions have provided us with an opportunity to build a community-wide Israel engagement initiative that will change the nature of the Toronto Jewish community's relationship with Israel for the longer term.

And with the formation of the Israel engagement committee in 2011, we set out to encourage our institutional partners to consider going beyond the Young Emissary experience, and move toward being fully Israel engaged, one institution at a time.

For an individual, being Israel engaged means that you have developed a relationship with Israel that is healthy, can withstand the stresses of the day-to-day interactions with a secular world that questions Israel intensely and often unfairly. It means that you can understand and accept Israel's imperfections and realize that, like all states, the State of Israel is imperfect and that those imperfections are OK because through it all, Israel remains an open, democratic and pluralistic state. It means that you have a relationship with Israel that is healthy because it's based on the real Israel of today. It means that you both "hug" Israel and "wrestle" with it.

When you hug, you love, and you are justifiably proud. When you wrestle, you consider the imperfections, learn about them and perhaps even try to do something about them.

Continued on page 13

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Goal is to involve Jewish institutions in GTA

Continued from page 12

As is the case with a close personal relationship, if you are Israel engaged, your relationship with Israel is healthy because it is based on truth and reality. Most importantly, Israel engagement is a powerful tool that reinforces one's relationship with Israel in ways that deepen one's Jewish identity.

For an institution, being Israel engaged means the need to build healthy relationships between the institution's stakeholders and Israel is front and centre. It means empowering stakeholders to be unafraid to ask the difficult questions in the cozy confines of a classroom or a meeting room. It means understanding that the difficult questions must be asked and discussed in order that we Jews can achieve the knowledge required to develop the relationships with our homeland that will surely deepen our sense of Jewishness. It includes integrated Israel education, open dialogue about Israel and with Israelis, and related professional development.

Today there are several Jewish institutions that have seen the wisdom in moving toward becoming Israel engaged: Leo Baeck and Robbins Hebrew Academy started their processes in 2010, and we began to work with Holy Blossom as well in 2011.

Additional day schools and synagogues are committed to start working with us in 2012. Our ultimate (and perhaps naive) goal is to have every Jewish institution in the GTA ultimately become Israel engaged.

Being Israel engaged does not mean taking a particular political position related to Israel. Rather, it means that the important questions are being asked and discussed. We do not attempt to prescribe what is to be said or thought. We cannot do this, even if we wanted to – there are too many right answers, too many points of view, and our young people are not going to accept prescriptive thinking.

Some have suggested that there's a risk in taking such an open approach. But we believe there is a much greater risk in avoiding the tough questions. If we do not ask the tough questions ourselves, others will ask those questions for us and the answers may be problematic and often based on misinformation, distortions, or outright lies.

Out of this concern for building healthy relationships with Israel, and by doing so deepening our Jewish identities, and out of the fear of losing our young people to the vagaries of an aggressive and misinformed secular world, we have no choice but to encourage our Jewish institutions to make Israel engagement a priority.

And we must banish from our underlying personal assumptions the idea that Israel must be perfect. No state can be perfect, let alone a state that has absorbed the highest number of immigrants per capita and has endured the most significant number of existential threats of any state in recent history. We should expect imperfections, understand them and attempt to help correct them.

Too many of our high school graduates, including those who have had otherwise excellent day school educations, arrive on campus only to find that they do not have the knowledge or the understanding to withstand the onslaught of negative publicity about their homeland. These challenges necessarily impact on their Jewish psyches. Some of those students take the initiative and become effective advocates in response. As many, it seems, go in the other direction and become pawns or even leaders of our enemies.

But most simply walk in the other direction and take no notice, content to party on and/or focus on their studies rather than jumping to the defence of our Jewish homeland. And while we can criticize this large group for their lack of involvement, we must also recognize that we have perpetuated this situation by our actions. Because of our failure to focus on building healthy relationships with the real Israel, we have sent an implicit message to our young people that understanding the real Israel does not matter enough to make it a focus of their education.

> ***Important questions about Israel being asked***

The Israel engagement committee of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, with the support of the Jewish Agency for Israel and the consul general of Israel in Toronto, and in partnership with the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, the Centre for Jewish Education and the Centre for Jewish Camping, is focused on changing the Israel engagement paradigm in the GTA.

Please wish us well – for the sake of the Jewish People, for the sake of Israel and for the sake of all of our young people who deserve to have a deep, positive and healthy relationship with their homeland that will surely enhance their sense of Jewishness and deepen their Jewish identity.

Michael Diamond is a Toronto-based business consultant and investor. He is chair of the Israel engagement committee of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

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Baycrest dance competition raises $1.5M

Cynthia Gasner
Special to The CJN

It was a grand night for dancing and for raising money at Dancing With Our Stars in support of Baycrest's Innovations in Aging and Brain Health.

Four spirited philanthropists and their professional dancing partners from Toronto Dance took the stage March 29 to compete for Baycrest's dance trophy at the Allstream Centre at Exhibition Place in Toronto.

Warren Kimel is seen dancing with his professional dance partner Tanya Iaremchuk. Kimel won Baycrest's Dancing With Our Stars trophy.

Warren Kimel, chair of Baycrest Foundation, won the trophy based on the money he raised, the judges' scores, and the votes of the 660 guests that attended.

The other participants were Canadian Football League commissioner Mark Cohon, Rogers Media president Keith Pelley and philanthropist Sarah Perlis.

Baycrest raised more than $1.5 million from the event, bringing the cumulative total for the three seasons of its Dancing With Our Stars to more than $4.5 million.

"I am so excited to have experienced my first Baycrest Dancing With Our Stars gala since arriving at Baycrest last fall," said Susan Sutton, president of Baycrest Foundation and Baycrest's vice-president of global institutional advancement.

"I heard so much about this incredible Baycrest fundraiser, and it exceeded all my expectations. The success of this event is due to the hard work of our co-chairs, Honey Sherman and David Cynamon, our courageous dancers, our incredible staff, and of course our generous sponsors and supporters."

A series of short videos was presented to the enthusiastic guests that highlighted Baycrest's breakthroughs in care, research, education and innovation.

"I think our guests went home with a clearer picture of why Baycrest is a global leader in aging and brain health," Sutton said.

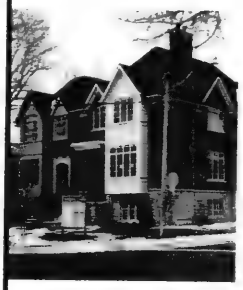
Kimel said the event was a fun experience. "Baycrest is such a great cause and I'm happy to do whatever I can to help. I am so grateful to all the people who supported me and help me raise over $700,000."

He said that he "started practising twice a week more than two months ago, then three days a week, then four, then five, until we were practising twice a day for the last two weeks."

Warren Kimel, centre is seen with his professional dance partner, Tanya Iaremchuk receiving his winning Dancing With Our Stars trophy, and former winners and co-chairs of this year's event, David Cynamon, left, and Honey Sherman, right.

The fundraiser featured celebrity host, actress and comedian Andrea Martin.

The special guest judges were CityTV's *Breakfast Television* co-host Dina Pugliese, actor and former National Ballet of Canada principal dancer Rex Harrington, and professional ballroom dancer, choreographer, actor and past judge on CTV's *So You Think You Can Dance*, Jean Marc Genereux.



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Yeshiva starts joint learning-career program

Frances Kraft
Staff Reporter

Yeshiva Darchei Torah, an Orthodox boys' high school, has embarked on a partnership with Hadracha, a privately funded non-profit organization that offers free career, employment and business counselling to the Jewish community.

The new initiative combines the school's morning "Beis Medrash" (learning) program for post-high school males with career counselling in the afternoon. The organization will prepare "career destination reports" in areas such as accounting, MBA studies, the computer industry, construction trades and law, with information to help students choose a career path.

Hadracha, which launched formally in November 2010, was started by a small group of young yeshiva graduates, two of whom had lost money after starting a business together, according to Yis Cohen, the organization's executive director.

They realized that if they had received more information ahead of time, they could have been more successful, he added.

Although training and aptitude testing are available in the greater community, Cohen, who used to manage JVS Toronto's Parnassaworks Canada, its Jewish community initiative, said that many people in the Jewish community don't avail themselves of those opportunities.

Graduates of Darchei Torah typically go to Israel for one to five years of learning after graduation, according to the school's executive director, Jeff Toledano. When they return, a number of them continue their Jewish learning on a part-time or full-time basis and pursue secular studies in the evening or online.

More than 85 per cent of Darchei Torah graduates apply to university, and of that group, more than 95 per cent are accepted, Toledano said.

Hadracha will "help the boys identify more clearly what their choices are."

The Hadracha/Beis Medrash program is open to graduates of other yeshivas too, Toledano said. He noted that the school's location, a five-minute walk from the Wilson subway station, is an asset.

The school originally approached Hadracha about setting up a partnership, Toledano said, noting that "when a young man goes to yeshiva for two or three years and comes back, sometimes what he wanted to do when he was 17 isn't what he wants to do now... This will help the boys zero in on their interests."

As well, Cohen noted, it's important for clients to know their strengths and weaknesses. "You might want to think about finding a business partner whose strengths complement your weaknesses, or making sure you hire one."

Cohen, Hadracha's only staff person, sees all incoming clients (to date almost 300 people) and has a growing list of individuals willing to work as mentors. He said Hadracha is "a useful mechanism for linking people."

When considering a career, Cohen said, personality is "probably the strongest element that should be considered."

In the Orthodox community, and particularly in the chassidic community, young people have "often internalized more strongly the Jewish component" of their education and have not focused as much on the secular component. Hadracha's services offer "a tool they can use to make future-oriented decisions about where to direct their energies."

"It's a tough economy," he added. "The cost of living Jewishly is enormous."

Further information is available from Yeshiva Darchei Torah, at 416-782-7974, ext. 227, or Hadracha at 416-839-2500.

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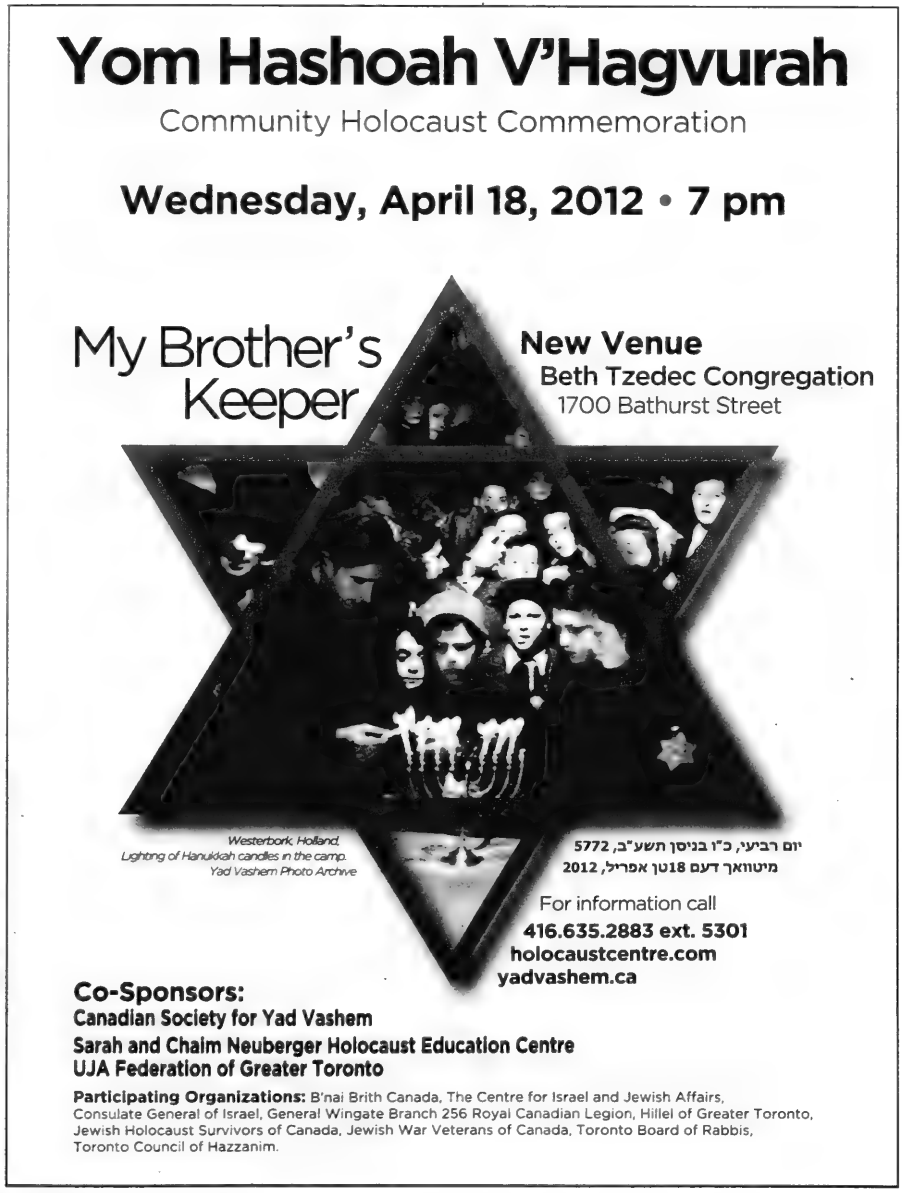
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The true lesson of *Dayeinu*

Rabbi Mordecai Zeitz

Our Jewish calendar is replete with beautiful and meaningful holidays, but Pesach has a special place in our hearts, minds and especially our homes. More than any other holiday, there are aspects of Passover that are common to all and those that are unique to our own families. We all have special seder traditions.

I'm always impressed by the degree of care so many have about Pesach observance. And despite the contemporary trend of going away for the holiday, for many of us, with our families dispersed throughout the year, there's no place like home for Pesach. Nothing beats that feeling as the house bursts to receive one and all. It's a special time that's worth the effort.

Pesach draws family and friends together for a common experience and shared traditions, and for this alone we should say "dayeinu" – it would have been enough – and "amen."

Indeed, there's probably no seder on Earth that doesn't sing out a rousing chorus or two of *Dayeinu*. The words of the rest of the Haggadah might slip by, but *Dayeinu* gets our attention.

Dayeinu means you can't have it all. It means you can be satisfied with less than you think is your due. *Dayeinu* means that life is a series of small steps, and we're constantly on the move. It means to stop and say thank you for what we have, which is always more important than what we think we don't have. The ability to say "dayeinu" creates yamim tovim, great days that last a lifetime.

Each phrase of *Dayeinu* describes something that would have been an accomplishment on its own. That is, all but one. "If you had just taken us to Sinai and not given us the Torah, dayeinu, it would have been enough."

Rabbinic Reflections

You're joking! Without the receiving of the Torah of what value is Sinai? Yet every year we sing it. But what are we really saying?

This verse encapsulates the essence of Jewish life through the ages. Consider that 3.5 million Jews came to Sinai as one people, and, totally united, they camped at Sinai. For that alone we say "dayeinu."

Equal to, if not even more important, than the various laws is the Torah of unity, of mutual respect and a sense of togetherness. If we could only achieve that, Torah would be even more meaningful.

Just think: around the world on seder night, irrespective of our traditions, we share common concepts of freedom, family, Jewish pride and tradition, and of the welfare of Israel and the Diaspora. This forges a sense of unity and mutual commitment. On Pesach, as at Sinai, every Jewish family is one. Dayeinu. It's enough to jumpstart the next glorious phase of Jewish destiny.

Imagine a seder of life with a feeling of dayeinu, of gratefulness and appreciation, of unity and mutual respect bridging our differences long after the Pesach dishes are stored away. Yes, we can continue the yom tov quality of *Dayeinu*, grateful and thankful for every day, so as to create a sense of good in the days, to come.

Rabbi Mordecai Zeitz is spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Tikvah in Montreal.

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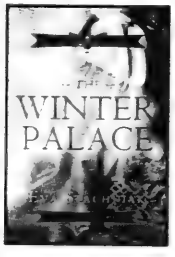

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Arguing with God

God's justice often appears mysterious and cruel. Why do the evil prosper? Why do the righteous suffer?

Starting with the Bible, and including the protest literature from medieval and modern times, Judaism has a rich and pervasive tradition of calling God to task over human suffering.

The name "Israel," applied to Jacob, the progenitor of the 12 tribes, literally means, one who "wrestled with God." The theological and ethical wrestling in which the angry and apparently betrayed Jew argues with God begins with such biblical figures as Abraham, Moses, Elijah, Jeremiah, Job and the Psalmist. It continues with rabbinic questioning in the Midrash and Talmud, in the literature of the Middle Ages, and with horror about the Holocaust in our own day.

Living in the shadow of the Holocaust dims our perception of Jewish suffering in the past. But previous generations have known immeasurable sorrow. Think of those who have suffered and died in the wars against the Romans, in the Crusades to redeem Jerusalem, in the Chmielnicki rebellion that ravaged communities in the Ukraine and Poland in the 17th century, in the Russian pogroms, etc.

Where is God? A talmudic master named Raba stated, "Master of the Universe! O God! We have heard with our ears, our fathers have told us what deeds you did perform in their days, in the days of old – but as for us, with our own eyes we have not seen it."

Bookmarks

Bernard Baskin

One of the most famous of the chassidic prayers of protest is Rabbi Levi Yitzhak's "*Din Torah mit Got*" (a lawsuit with God) in which he asserts, "And I, Levi Yitzhak, son of Sarah Berditchev, say, from my stand I will not waver, and from place I shall not move until there be an end to this exile."

Ellie Wiesel has declared that "the smoke of Auschwitz has obscured the view of Sinai." Wiesel in all of his work urges his readers to accept the dilemma and learn to live it as well. "Perhaps someday someone will explain how Auschwitz was possible. It still remains the most disturbing of problems."

Some years ago in an interview, the renowned author Isaac Bashevis Singer declared that when Moses broke the Tablets this was an act of rebellion. The Jew does not recognize that might is right even if it is divine might. There is in the Talmud the expression: "One does not give heed to a heavenly voice." When we feel that we are right and God is wrong, we are allowed to say so.

Singer continued that, in a way, the Torah, the Law, is of higher importance than the maker of the Law and of the world. The Jews revere God, but he does not cringe before Him, he considers himself a partner to God and the Law. "The Holy One, blessed be He, the Torah, and Israel are one." There is great depth in this conception of Jewishness. We don't surrender to God unconditionally. We must know the terms.

The anguish of the true believer is greater today than ever before. It is important for God to hear these honest prayers. Perhaps, it is even more important for human beings to enunciate them.

Beware of the general's son

My View

Laurence Hart

That he trades on his illustrious family's name is apparent even in the title of his soon to be released book, *The General's Son* (Just World Books, 2012). Miko Peled is an Israeli-American whose father, Matti, fought in Israel's War of Independence in 1948 and who was himself a brigadier-general during the 1967 Six Day War. His grandfather, Avraham Katsnelson, was an early Zionist leader and a signatory to Israel's Declaration of Independence.

His pedigree might arguably suggest that in a Miko Peled we would see an indefatigable defender of Jewish interests in a modern Jewish state, wrapped in the mantle of a committed and passionate Zionist. Sadly, such an assumption would be entirely illusory.

Instead, Peled is emerging as a new face for various anti-Zionist groups and their fellow travellers. Promoted, somewhat pretentiously, as "an Israeli peace activist," he toured Australia late last year, and recently he was in Ontario, speaking at McMaster University and the University of Western Ontario during Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) programs on these two campuses.

In some ways, modelling his diatribe along the lines of the so-called "new" (post-Zionist) historians, Peled is able to weave a tapestry of convoluted logic, revisionist history, inherent bias and wilful exaggeration into a simplistic agglomeration of deliberate misstatements and outlandish fantasies that are, at best, ludicrous and, at worst, utterly perfidious.

But what most notably separates him from the post-Zionist historians, or other historians for that matter, is that he is not a historian, nor does he appear to have academic qualifications of any other sort. Nonetheless, it's easy to see – based at least on his presentation at McMaster, where he spoke to a packed auditorium – how his brashness and charisma more than compensate for his glaring lack of credibility in discussing matters as serious and intellectually challenging as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

As we've come to realize, mostly through bitter experience, events like IAW, whether on our campuses or in our public squares, are designed to incite, rather than to educate and inform. And with this as the yardstick, we might expect to see much more of Miko Peled. In what he writes and says, he doesn't hesitate to accuse Israel of "apartheid" practices, he encourages a comprehensive boycott of the Jewish state, he rants that "ethnic cleansing is a process that takes place every single day in the West Bank," he blames Israel for having initiated the wars of 1948 and 1967, and he calls for the international community to "recognize that the IDF is a terrorist organization and its officers are war criminals." In his "lecture" at McMaster, he warned that those who associate themselves with Zionism will eventually be shamed into admitting they were wrong, and that they should "remember to go down on their knees and beg for forgiveness when the trials begin and the tribunals take their seat."

It's troubling that Peled's distortions have attracted attention and large audiences. It's he, not us, who should be ashamed. His fabrications, masquerading as facts, are abhorrent, and it's time that his vile, solipsistic tirades against the very fabric of Israel and its supporters should be seen for what they are and robustly condemned.

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These by-laws are subject to the approval of the Registrar, Cemeteries Act (Revised).

Dining out on kosher apps

Jewish & Digital

Mark Mietkiewicz

Last time we looked at apps that help you shop kosher and keep a kosher kitchen. Today we eat, with the help of a few more apps. All are free and iPhone/iPad compatible unless otherwise noted.

Dining Out

Several apps do a fine job helping you locate kosher restaurants and provide contact info, maps and more.

Kosher Near Me: Automatically detects your location and produces a list of nearby kosher establishments. If you're going on a trip, you can type in a zip code (unfortunately, not postal codes) to find kosher restaurants at your destination. **[http://bit.ly/koshapp9]**

Kosher GPS (iPhone and Android): Similar to Kosher Near Me but you can select local restaurants, synagogue services and mikvah information. Allows you to search by city name. **[http://bit.ly/koshapp10]**

Kosher Free: Includes info about kashrut supervision and brief reviews that you are invited to contribute. **[http://bit.ly/koshapp11]**

Parve (or not)

You're ready to eat. But should you? These apps tell you when you've waited the prescribed amount of time between meat and dairy.

Basar VeHalav: $.99: Start Basar VeHalav ("Meat and Milk") and the countdown clock will tell you when it's time to indulge. Since various communities have adopted different traditions about waiting times, you can modify each of the four timers to signal you after one, three or six hours or a customized waiting time. **[http://bit.ly/koshapp12]**

ParveOMeter: This app is free, boasts a cooler name and better background about the concept of mixing meat and dairy. Unfortunately, its timer is not customizable like Basar VeHalav's. **[http://bit.ly/koshapp13]**

Blessings (before)

One more thing. Before we dig in, know the proper brachah to recite. These apps help.

iBlessing, $.99: You are first presented with a photo of a dinner setting. Click on the wine, bun, fish, vegetables or desert, and you'll hear the correct brachah recited in Hebrew and English. But wait, there's more. The Instructions section presents an overview of the types of blessings over food, while Info explains the philosophical concepts behind them. **[http://bit.ly/koshapp14]**

iBless Food, $4.99: This app nicely complements iBlessing. Although most people know that you say *Hamotzi* over bread, blessings for other foods are not always so obvious. What do you say for calzone or chicken salad or pineapples or stuffed cabbage? This app has the answers. When you think you've got the hang of it, try out the Blessing Quiz. **[http://bit.ly/koshapp15]**

Blessings (after)

Now that you're done eating, it's time to say the blessings after meals.

iBirkat: A good, basic *Birkat Hamazon* app. It includes the complete blessing (in Hebrew only) along with *Boreh Nefashot*, which is recited after eating certain grain dishes. You can select the liturgy of your benching according to your background: Ashkenazi, Nusach Ari, Sephardi, Oriental and Yemenite. **[http://bit.ly/koshapp16]**

Bentching app, $2.99: If you want to splurge, you can purchase this app, which includes the complete text in Hebrew and transliterated Hebrew. What sets it apart is listening to a cantor recite the entire *Birkat Hamazon*. What I didn't like: I found it difficult to skip ahead in case you want to pray faster than the cantor. What I did like: Hearing the cantor sing part of the *Shir Hama'alot* using a tune from *Les Misérables*. **[http://bit.ly/koshapp17]**

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Consulate has booked star power

Continued from page 3

He said this year's ceremony will be altered slightly from previous versions, where mostly Israelis were in attendance. While it will retain its sombre mood, the consulate has booked some star power.

"It's a very Israeli event by nature, almost Spartan. It's low-key and very emotional. There won't be fireworks, and those who've attended before know what to expect. But this year, we added some more English content," Gissin said. "It will include poetry readings, messages from Israeli diplomats, and we will have three chazzanim from three different synagogues, Beth Tzedec, Holy Blossom and Beth David, singing. This is something that will bring people together."

Guests include jazz vocalist Sophie Milman, who will sing *Hatikvah*, and former Canadian cabinet minister Stockwell Day, who is scheduled to read the prayer for peace in the State of Israel.

"So we are attempting to make this more appealing to the Jewish community while not changing the nature of the ceremony. Hopefully, non-Israelis will be able to connect with it personally and emotionally," Gissin said.

He also said it's important to realize that Israel isn't trying to create the "same type of emotional commitment" to Yom Hazikaron that Israelis feel, as it's obvious that many in the Diaspora have never experienced army life and the challenges that come with it.

[CJN file photo]

But "everyone has lost a dear one in their life. That's the connection. The [Diaspora] community knows how to come together as one for Yom Hashoah. Or when there is a terror attack in Israel, they get involved and care about Israel.

"But Yom Hazikaron happens every year, and it's both personal and national. While you may not know individuals [who have died in Israel's wars], you should be able to connect with Israel nationally on this subject. The country has developed a culture around Yom Hazikaron, which exists to enable the public to mourn together. Even if you don't know someone who died, still you can feel a connection to the wholeness of Israelis who stand together in mourning because the people who died made the ultimate sacrifice so that Israel can continue to exist."

Gissin said he believes it's important for non-Israelis to attend the Yom Hazikaron ceremony because it provides a tool to connect with Israelis emotionally instead of only rationally.

"If you care about Israel, connect with what Israelis care about. And to all Israelis planning to attend, we say bring a non-Israeli friend."

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JIAS heads north to aid newcomers

Meir Shenhav
Special to The CJN

I'm early for my meeting with Joanna and Lea, so I'm sitting in the Jewish Immigrant Aid Service's (JIAS) north office waiting room.

A young couple is sitting in front of me. We struggle a bit not to stare at each other, yet there's something in the air. After awhile, we find ourselves chatting loudly in Hebrew. That is, Danny and I are. His wife seems quiet and worried.

"So," I ask Danny, "what brings you to JIAS?"

Danny smiles. "We want to feel connected to a local Jewish community here in Thornhill Woods. We'd like to get some information about Jewish education for our kids, plus other programs that will help them integrate."

"Meir?" Joanna Sasson-Morrison, the co-ordinator of community development services, enters the waiting room. "Please, come in."

With us in the room is Lea Soibelman, a JIAS social worker. I start the interview for *The CJN*.

What was the reason for opening the new branch in the north?

Sasson-Morrison: We opened our north office at Bathurst and Rutherford because many current clients who originally settled in Toronto have moved to York Region. Plus, many families arriving today choose York Region as their first home. Recently, we also have a large number of sponsored parents (new immigrants to Canada sponsored by their Canadian resident children), who go to live with their children in York Region. All of these newcomers prefer to receive immigration, settlement and integration services closer to home.

How many families are registered here?

Soibelman: We're serving close to 200 families, in addition to our LINC (Language Instruction for New Canadians) and ESL students who receive services at our York Region school at Dufferin Street and Steeles Avenue. We expect our numbers to grow, as many studies indicate that this area is projected to continue receiving high numbers of newcomers. Our services include individual and family counselling, as needed. For youth and children, we refer to appropriate services in York Region.

What kind of services does this office provide compared to those at the other JIAS office?

Soibelman: All of the same services are available in our York Region office (as in our other office). It's a matter of providing the services in the location most convenient for our clients.

Draw me a typical profile of the clients in this branch.

Soibelman: We serve many Israeli families with young children. Also, the majority of sponsored parents are now residing in York Region. This is a change from the past when the majority of sponsored parents lived in Toronto.

Are there any activities to help newcomers blend into the community?

Sasson-Morrison: We run a variety of programs to help newcomers integrate into the community, such as English language programs, Conversation Café, youth groups, parenting seminars, Homework Club. We also hold workshops on the Canadian school system, getting ready for employment, etc. We serve as liaison with a number of community agencies, and refer our clients when appropriate.

Do you encourage the local community to volunteer with the immigrant community?

Sasson-Morrison: We welcome volunteers to participate. Our Homework Club and Conversation Café programs rely on volunteers. There is also a wonderful opportunity with our Family-to-Family for a local family to be matched with a newcomer family to share experiences together. JumpStart mentors are matched with newcomers from a similar professional program to help them learn about the Canadian labour market.

Does JIAS share any special programs with other Jewish organizations?

Sasson-Morrison: Our B'yachad program seeks to connect newcomers with different Jewish day schools and supplementary schools. We work with families, teachers and the administrations of the schools to ensure the child's success in a particular school. We have a wonderful partnership with National Council of Jewish Women. Their volunteers distribute parcels for Passover to our newcomers (as well as to many other individuals in need) to help them celebrate the holiday.

Joanna Sasson-Morrison, left, and Lea Soibelman

Will you be launching any new programs soon?

Sasson-Morrison: "When the Schwartz/Reisman Centre opens on the Lebovic campus (on north Bathurst Street) this fall, our York Region services will move there. We'll be a part of a community service hub providing services alongside other Jewish community agencies. We look forward to this innovative and integrated approach to service delivery.

On my way out I meet Danny again. He looks satisfied.

"I've learned something about *kol Yisrael chaverim* (all Israel are friendly to one another). Our kids will have wonderful opportunities to partake in community programs," he says.

And for the first time, his wife smiles.

OPEN INVITATION

ICONS OF LOSS: THE ART of SAMUEL BAK

Exhibit closes April 30, 2012

SPECIAL EVENING SHOWING:

Tuesday April 17, 2012
5 – 10 pm

Tuesday April 24, 2012
5 – 10 pm

Admission is free

Joseph D. Carrier Art Gallery
Columbus Centre
901 Lawrence Avenue West
North York, ON M6A 1C3

Gallery Hours:
Monday-Friday, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm

General Inquiries:
Tel: 416-789-7011 ext.300
Fax: 416-789-3951

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Harnessing your third factor

I wanted to do an episode of "Hockey Bliss" on my show *Finding Your Bliss*. I started by aiming for an A-plus and was hoping to get Toronto Maple Leafs right-winger Phil Kessel on the program.

I think the words I was told were "dream on," but I kept going, because I thought of all the kids, and one in particular who I'm related to, who I know love hockey. I thought it would be so cool to get a great hockey player on the show who would inspire other kids to aim for the stars.

I also tried a number of other A-list players and alumni, but it just wasn't happening. If I did a show that focused on ballet, I know I could have whipped it together faster than a pirouette. But hockey is not really my sphere. And there's something else. I love hockey because of all the lessons it has to share.

Life Coach Corner

Judy Siblin-Librach

Hockey is about sportsmanship and being part of a team. It's about fair play and determination, hard work and focus, discipline and the desire to do well. Hockey is a great metaphor for life. Because I think if you really work at it and put in the practice, you will succeed. If you shoot for the stars, you will score. And what happens when you don't win? What are the lessons that are even more profound when it doesn't go your way? This is what I was pondering when it was midnight on the day before my script was due and the hockey show just wasn't coming together. I tried everything, including connecting with every contact I have in the hockey world and even in the "anything that could be possibly be related to the hockey world." Sometimes, it's just not meant to be. But I'm not giving up yet.

One great thing this led me to was connecting with sports psychologist Peter Jensen, author of *Ignite the Third Factor*, an incredible book that not only has hockey lessons but also has life lessons for all of us. The book talks about the fact that there is a third factor beyond nature, and nurture, and that it is all up to you. How do you harness your own third factor when things don't go your own way? The book looks at what is possible, not what isn't. There is really no growth in life without adversity. An accomplished athlete is able to ignite their third factor. And I would put forward as a coach, when you're stuck on a chapter, or struggling with weight loss, or haven't scored a goal in several games, that is when you have to harness your own third factor. Well, I gotta go now. I have to get in touch with former Leafs captain Matt Sundin. Think he'll take my call?

Judy Librach is an Adler-trained coach. She can be reached at her website, www.findingyourbliss.com or you can watch her show Finding Your Bliss, *Wednesday at 7 p.m. on Channel 10, Toronto.*

יום השואה

Yom Hashoah

Multi-Generational

Public Reading of

MEGILLAT HASHOAH:

THE SHOAH SCROLL

Community Commemorative Service

with

Community Leaders

Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am

55 Yeomans Road

Toronto, Ontario

Thursday, April 19, 2012 at 7:30 pm

Everyone is Welcome

JOB OPPORTUNITY

Youth Counselor & Advisor

Beth Sholom SYNAGOGUE

Are you an energetic and enthusiastic person who loves to work with kids of all ages?

Are you highly organized with excellent computer, verbal and written communication skills?

As Youth Counselor, you will be responsible for planning, developing and implementing youth programs for children in our various youth groups.

This position is part-time with flexible hours and best suited to a senior high school or university student.

Knowledge of Judaism and experience as a camp counselor are preferred.

Please submit your resume to barbara@bethsholom.net before Friday, April 20th, 2012.

שישאר בינינו

גידי קורן וחברים

הוא הלך בשדות

בשלהי מלחמת השחרור, בעוד שש מאות אלף ישראלים נאבקים על חייהם ועל מדינתם כנגד ארבעים מיליון ערבים, עלתה בתל אביב הצגה חדשה, "הוא הלך בשדות" מאת סופר צעיר ומבריק, משה שמיר. את ההצגה הזאת ראו במהלך השנים הקרובות שבעים אחוז(!) מתושבי ישראל הקטנה של אז והיא הפכה לפס הקול של מלחמת העצמאות. נדמה לי ששום מופע שהוא יוכל לעבור אי פעם את השיא הזה.

ההצגה שיקפה את המלחמה ההיא, את השילוב בין הצברים ילידי הארץ לבין יוצאי השואה שזה אך הגיעו, דרך סיפור אהבה נוגע ללב אם גם מאד צפוי.

חלפו מאז 65 שנים. את הספר "הוא הלך בשדות" אי אפשר להשיג, כי למרות שמשה שמיר זכה בפרס ישראל בשנת 1984- אין לספר מספיק ביקוש. ישראל ממשיכה להיות ארץ אוכלת ושוכחת סופריה.

מי שמקימה את "הוא הלך לשדות" לתחייה היא ביתו של משה שמיר, יעל פיינגולד, שמביימת בימים אלה את ההצגה של אביה בתיאטרון "המפגש" של טורונטו. מה אגיד לכם- רק זה כשלעצמו מרגש אותי מאוד. ואם לשפוט לפי הצגותיה הקודמות בטורונטו, מחכה לנו חגיגה אמיתית!

להצגה, שתעלה החל מה 20 במאי כדאי לכם להזמין גם את חבריכם שאינם שומעים עברית- כי היא תלווה בתרגום סימולטאני.

לכרטיסים: 416-804-9346.

הפרוייקט של עידן רייכל

זה שאמן ישראלי איכותי מסוגל להביא אלף חמש מאות אוהדים, ברובם ישראליים, לשלם מאה דולאר למופע- זהו הישג משמעותי ביותר. זהו קודם כל הישג לרייכל עצמו, ויחד איתו ל"מותק הפקות" יציר רוחה של רביד דהאן שמזה מספר שנים מביאה אלינו הופעות של אמנים איכותיים, מה שעוזר לקהל היותר סלקטיבי לתת בה אמון, גם אם אינם מכירים את האמן מקרוב.

בראיונות עיתונות אמרה דאהן שמטרתה היא להראות לעולם את הפנים היפות של ישראל, בצילם של נסיונות החרם והדעות הקיצוניות נגד ישראל. זה היה מצויין כמובן אם להופעות היו מגיעים שונאי ישראל ומקטרגיה, אבל מאחר שלהופעות באים ישראלים ויהודים שמוכנים לשלם מאה דולאר להופעה- מטרה נעלה זאת של הפצת ישראל היפה תישאר כנראה בלתי מושגת. אבל מי אנחנו שנלין- אחרי שנים רבות מידי סופסוף מגיעים לטורונטו אמני השורה האמנותית הראשונה בזכות "מותק".

בהופעה של עידן רייכל השמיע האמן רק מספר שירים שהקהל מכיר ומוקיר מתקליטיו הקודמים. רוב ההופעה כללה מוזיקה חדשה, ובעיקרה קצבית וקופצנית, כששלושת זמרי המצויינים מזמינים את הקהל לעמוד, לקפוץ, למחוא כפיים ולהשתולל.

יד על הלב- זו היתה בעיני החמצה גדולה.

בתור מי שרואה אמנים בינלאומיים רבים- הקונצרטים שלהם הם תמיד תמיד תמיד שילוב של לפחות חצי-שני שליש חומר ידוע, וטפטוף זהיר של חומר חדש. קהל מעולם איננו אוהב חומר חדש שאיננו מכיר, ותמיד מתרגש מביצוע מקורי של שירים שהוא מכיר.

אני מקווה שזה לא ישפיע על התלהבות הקהל בהופעותיו הבאות. אבל שישאר בינינו.

More GIDI KOREN at www.gidikoren.com

Comedian talks about surviving breast cancer

Carolyn Blackman
Staff Reporter

Marla Lukofsky, a standup comedian for 30 years, makes her audience laugh and cry.

Since 2008, she has turned her energy from standup to sharing her journey with breast cancer, which she was diagnosed with in 1998 at age 42.

She will be speaking at an event sponsored by Life2, a Richmond Hill educational group, April 18 at 8 p.m. at the Rouge Woods Community Centre, located at 119 Shirley Dr. in Richmond Hill.

Marla Lukofsky

Lukofsky talks about her experience with humour and pathos, she said, "taking the audience on a rollercoaster of emotions. Their brains start spinning. I give them a lot to think about."

Single, with "no children that I know about," she calls her humour self-mocking and witty. She has performed standup across Canada and the United States, and has represented Canada at international comedy festivals in Scotland and England.

She turned her current act into a one-woman show, she said, 10 years after surviving cancer, and after she had written a memoir. "My friend read it and said I should turn it into a speech, so I did.

"It's funny, it's sad, and it's informative. I talk about early diagnosis and screening, and how to talk to someone who has cancer."

She said that she receives letters from people commending her for her honesty. "One that stands out is from a 17-year-old boy whose aunt had been diagnosed with cancer. He hadn't been able to talk to her, but after hearing me, he gave her a call."

Lukofsky said a doctor in India read her story, which was published in a U.S. medical journal, and he asked for a videotape of her reading it.

"He is showing it at a conference. This is a very big deal. It will be broadcast across the world. They want to know my story. The doctors have said that the stories help doctors and patients."

She said that she feels like she's making a difference. "I help people feel less alone, and sometimes I even help save lives. My story transcends so many levels. It is really a story about facing a diversity."

For information or tickets, e-mail Life2@hotmail.ca, or call 416-333-3257.

INTERFAITH INTERACTON

Leo Baeck Day School held its annual Grade 7 interfaith seder last week, hosting kids from St. Joseph The Worker Catholic School and Assadiq Islamic School. Children sat together and heard about each other's holidays and customs. A mock seder was led by Leo Baeck students, while an explanation of the holiday of Easter was presented by the children of St. Joseph the Worker and various customs and the teachings of the prophets of Islam were explained by students from Assadiq Islamic School.

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Wish all their clients, relatives and friends a Happy Passover

JOB OPPORTUNITY
Program Facilitator

Beth Sholom SYNAGOGUE

Beth Sholom is a traditional Conservative Synagogue in mid-town Toronto.

Reporting to the Executive Director, he/she will be responsible for developing and implementing programs for congregants of all ages taking place both within and outside the synagogue. Through the implementation of successful programs and events, the individual will be a goodwill ambassador, uniting the membership and creating a strong sense of community.

Exceptional organization and time management skills with attention to detail are a must for the position. Proficient computer and social networking ability with strong communication and interpersonal skills and a positive attitude are indispensable elements for a successful candidate.

The successful candidate has a university degree or combination of education and relevant experience. A strong Judaic background and at least two years' experience in facilitating programs and events are required. He/she should have a proven ability to work well under pressure of high volume and respond quickly to changing priorities.

This is a full-time position which requires flexible work hours and weekends.

Please send your resume with a cover letter in confidence to barbara@bethsholom.net before April 20th, 2012.

Are you in these photos?

St. Stephen's Community House turns 50 this year!
Calling all past participants, staff, volunteers, board members, and friends to get in touch, share your stories, and come celebrate!
Receive updates on upcoming events, and get involved.
E-mail 50th@ststephenshouse.com

www.ststephenshouse.com

Ryerson project documents survivors' stories

Compiled by CJN staff

When Fairlee Ritchie, a Presbyterian minister, decided to enrol in Ryerson University's continuing education program, she never expected to forge a relationship with a 92-year-old Holocaust survivor.

But through the Sustaining Memories Project – a pilot program designed by the Azrieli Foundation and Ryerson in which graduate and mature students work collaboratively with Holocaust survivors to help produce their written memoirs – that's just what happened.

Ritchie teamed up with Leon Rotberg, an Auschwitz survivor, and together they wrote about Rotberg's journey out of Lodz, Poland to Germany, where he endured forced labour constructing the Autobahn until he was sent to Auschwitz in 1943.

After the war, desperate to leave Germany, Rotberg and his family sought a new life in a new country, only to be denied entry into a number of countries. Canada finally accepted him and his two brothers.

Today, Rotberg lives in the Kensington Place Retirement Residence, a Jewish retirement home.

"People have often told me that I was someone they could talk to," said the 59-year-old Ritchie.

"What I have always loved about the ministry was the pastoral work and research, so this project was a natural step. The first time we met, Leon asked me why I was doing this. I said I'm not Jewish, but I care. We [Christian people] have not treated you well over the centuries, but this is a story I want to hear, and I think others do, too."

Ritchie and Rotberg are among 18 pairs of students and Holocaust survivors who have contributed to the Sustaining Memories Project, which was initiated by the Azrieli Foundation, an organization that helps survivors write their memoirs.

Margaret Kittel Canale and her mother, Vera Kittel have also taken part in this initiative to document Kittel's escape from Nazi persecution. Canale said her mother spoke very little about her experiences during the war, but her family was determined to record her story before this piece of their history was lost.

"My mother found it sad to talk about her family, with only her and her sister surviving. Whenever she hears people talk about all their relatives, she realizes how much she has lost. It has affected her all her life," said Canale, who helped write her mother's memoir.

"I would have done this program even if I couldn't have been paired with my mother, but I was grateful that they let me ask my mother if I could help her write her story. My mother said she might have held back some things if she had been talking to a stranger. In some ways, it was easier for me to work with her because I knew the characters and could help fill in some of the gaps."

Kittel was eight years old when Hitler came to power and began persecuting Jews – attacking synagogues, seizing Jewish businesses and arresting people.

In a supreme act of selflessness, one that she could only truly understand when she became a parent herself, her parents sent her to England on the Kindertransport, a rescue mission that sent nearly 10,000 Jewish children from Nazi Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland to live in British foster homes, hostels and farms.

Kittel said the decision her parents made to send her away was so painful, her mother couldn't come with her father to the train station to say goodbye.

Most of the rescued children survived the war, but the majority of their parents did not. Kittel's parents were killed in Auschwitz.

It was more than 50 years later that Canale first learned about the Kindertransport that saved her mother's life.

Today, she has an even better understanding of her mother's past and an appreciation for her resiliency.

"My mother said, 'We always looked forward, never back. We needed to find hope for the future.' It was hope that kept them moving forward, even when they came to Canada as immigrants and tried to get ahead."

On April 17 at 12:30 p.m. at Kensington Place Retirement Residence, the program's 18 survivors and their writing partners will celebrate the culmination of their work at a private luncheon with their families.

Each pair will be presented with a copy of the memoir they produced, the results of a project that is sure to have changed the lives of both the writing partners and the survivor authors forever.

Associated Hebrew Schools of Toronto
A Great SCHOOL

It is with great sadness that Associated Hebrew Schools of Toronto mourns the loss of our dear friend

Samuel Shainhouse ז"ל

Sam's lifelong relationship with Associated began as a student at the Brunswick Talmud Torah. After serving overseas in World War II, he returned to Canada, married his late wife Bea ז"ל and built both a family and a successful business. He resumed his association with the school as a parent enrolling each of his five children as students.

His election as President of Associated in 1971 culminated many years of devoted service as a volunteer and committee member. Sam deftly presided over an incredible decade of expansion and growth. His leadership, both literally and figuratively, laid the foundation for Associated's continued growth. Sam was also a champion in efforts to make Jewish day school financially accessible to the children of the community. After his presidency he continued to devote tremendous energy to Associated as a life member of the Board of Directors, Honorary Chair of the Board of Governors and Chair of the Scholarship and Endowment Committee.

In 2002, Sam was awarded Associated's Lifetime Achievement Award and was recognized for his vision, enthusiasm, dedication, modesty and great accomplishments.

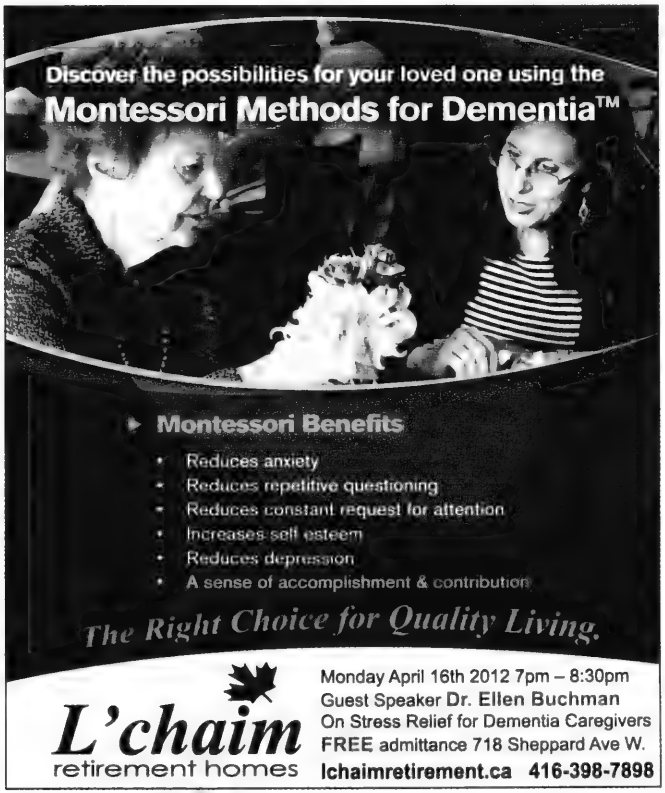
Sam was a true believer in Jewish education. Along with his wife, Bea, he saw his five children graduate from Associated and later many of his grandchildren also attended or graduated from the school. The family followed in Sam's footsteps with a number of his children serving as committee or board members at Associated. Through their active commitment to Jewish education, the extended Shainhouse family is a living legacy to Sam's dedication to the Jewish future.

We extend our condolences to his children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. May they bask in the blessings of Sam's memory and be spared from further sorrow.

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

Sheldon Carr
Chairman of the Board

Sally Zigler
President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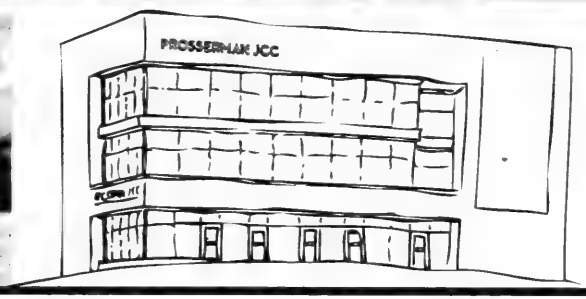

NEW SPRING/SUMMMER PROGRAMS

CHILDREN & FAMILY

Bubby, Zaidy & Grandkids
Challah Making!
Sunday May 6, 1-3pm

Mystic Drumz
Thursdays May 3 - 24
10 - 10:45am

TEEN PROGRAMS

Interactive Computer Animation
Tuesdays April 17 - June 5
5:30 - 6:30pm

Computer Java Programming
for Beginners
Saturdays April 21 - June 9
10 - 11:30am

XBox and PC Video Game Programming
Saturdays April 21 - June 9
10 - 11:30am

ADULTS, ZOOMERS & BEYOND

Social Media Computer Class
Tuesdays April 17 - May 22
2:15 - 3:30pm

Community Bingo
Tuesday April 17, 1 - 3pm
Thursday May 3, 7 - 9pm

Jewish Words:
Weapons of Mass Destruction
uesday May 29, 1:30-3pm

OPERA WITH IAIN SCOTT

Insights Into Mozart's Operas
Wednesdays 7-9pm
May 23 - The Early Operas and Idomeneo
May 30 - The Abduction from the Seraglio & The Marriage of Figaro
June 6 - Cosi fan Tutte and Don Giovanni
June 13 - La Clemenza di Tito and The Magic Flute

Folk Dance
Wednesdays March 28 - May 23 and
Wednesdays May 30 - July 18
10 - 11:30am

JEWISH LEARNING

TORAH OF OUR MOTHERS

What Happens the Day After the Bat Mitzvah?

TOMgirls is a program that addresses the journey of becoming a Jewish woman in the 21st century. It addresses current issues with the support of Jewish texts, famous chefs, professional designers, photographers and international activists.

6 week program - min. 12 participants
Dates and times to be announced.

LECTURES

The Jewish Grandparent:
The Parent Once Removed
Tuesday May 10, 7pm

The Interfaith Family:
Holly and Horseradish
Tuesday May 17, 7pm

BIRTHDAY PARTIES

All Prosserman JCC parties include:
Kosher nut-free birthday cake, drinks and snacks
Assistant staff for the duration of the party
Rooms for food and entertainment
Invitations, cutlery, napkins, table cloths & decor
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Classic Party Package
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Yoga Party
Dance Party

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Magic Party
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KARATE

Okina Wan Kobudo - Ages 7 and up
Self-Defense for Women
Karate - Ages 5 and up
Israeli Krav-Hagana - For Kids & Adults
Special Needs Karate
This program was specifically created by Master Enrique Welcher in Israel for people with disabilities. This program is for individuals who require one-on-one training with our Master. In addition to enhancing the child's physical and technical development, the Master places great emphasis on communication skills, positive behavior implementation and integration training for children and young adults.

For more information or to register, contact **416.638.1881 x.4235** or **prossermanjcc.com**

Prosserman JCC
UJA Federation

United Way Toronto

Sherman Campus / 4588 Bathurst Street
Toronto, ON / M2R 1W6

Passover celebrations

Program directors Mattie Plotkin, left, and Kiki Halperin are pictured with members of Chabad Youth Club's "Kids for Kindness." The youngsters spent a recent Sunday morning at Chabad Lubavitch of Markham writing letters of thanks and greetings to Israeli soldiers and wishing them Chag Samayach before Passover. Former Israeli soldier Reuven Yablonsky visited to share stories with the children.

Students at Robbins Hebrew Academy's Beth Tzedec campus – from left Nathaniel Katz, Ben Levitt and Matthew Lax – ran a garage sale for their Grade 6 Tikkun Olam project, which aimed to raise money for a needy family for Pesach.

Jacob Smith, a junior kindergarten student at Associated Hebrew Schools Kamin Education Centre in Thornhill, eats matzah during a recent model seder.

THE CANADIAN INSTITUTE FOR JEWISH RESEARCH

ISRAEL'S SECURITY: FAILED 'ARAB SPRING', IRANIAN BOMB, U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

CIJR
ICRJ

Sunday, April 22, 2012
12 Noon-3:30 p.m.
Congregation Shaarei Shomayim
470 Glencairn Avenue, Toronto

Conference Chairman
Professor Frederick Krantz

Participants:
Prof. Aurel Braun (U. Toronto)
Prof. Norrin Rosman (Concordia U.)
Prof. Harold Waller (McGill U.)
Prof. Sally Zerker (York U.)

Registration
Luncheon Address
Prof. Frederick Krantz
1st Panel with Q &A
Coffee Break
2nd Panel with Q &A
Concluding Postscript

TO REGISTER
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online: www.israelnet.org

ADMISSION
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Beth Tikvah Synagogue

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THURSDAY APRIL 19TH

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Pesach...it's here!

As part of Joe Dwek Ohr Haemet Sephardic School's annual model seder, students participated in the customs and traditions associated with a Sephardi Passover seder. Pictured, from left, are Aviel Zipori, Amram Assayag and Yehuda Bitton with maror from the seder plate.

Daniel Switzman of Temple Sinai Nursery School decorates his own seder plate designed from wood and bottle caps. Along with the seder plate, he also created a kiddush cup, matzah cover and Haggadah to use at his seders.

Members of the chesed committee at Bnei Akiva School's Yeshivat Or Chaim organized a chulent charity competition to raise funds for Od Yosef Chai's campaign to provide Pesach necessities for needy people in Israel. Six student teams prepared their own unique chulent recipes. Tasters paid a fee to sample the different chulents and a panel of judges ranked each one on flavour, appearance and other factors. Pictured are members of the winning team with their prized chulent, "Spice is Back" — from left, Baruch Margolis, Gideon Blinick, Ben Buckler, Ariel Shields and Shlomo Rand.

Mazel Tov
מזל טוב

Happy sixth birthday March 21 to Dylan Ivy, daughter of Lauren & Adam. Love always, Bubbie Edie & Zaidie Jackie.

Congratulations Joshua, on becoming a bar mitzvah. We are so proud of you. Love from Bubbie Myrna and Zaidie Tom.

Happy first birthday Madelynn! Your party was amazing! Lots of love from your mommy & daddy, Natalie & Jamey Doyle, and all your family and friends.

Matthew Swift-Brennan & Margaux Mounier-Foldiak, together with their respective families, are thrilled to announce their engagement. A fall wedding is planned.

Mazel to on the engagement of Reuben Lloyd & Sarah Yekutieli.

Mazel tov on the engagement of Menachem Sabo & Orit Levinshtein.

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What's New

By LILA SARICK

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Deadline reminder: April 16 is the deadline for the issue of April 26. April 23 is the deadline for the issue of May 3 . Please note all deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; fax 416-391-0829 or e-mail whatsnewcjn@gmail.com.

Saturday, April 14

TEMPLE KOL AMI HAS TALENT

Temple Kol Ami's annual coffee house is at 7 p.m. Tickets $25 in advance, $30 at the door. Call 905-709-2620.

OMER STUDY PROGRAM

Temple Sinai is studying **Norman Cohen**'s book, *Hineni in Our Lives: Learning How To Respond to Others*, Saturdays starting today, 8:45 a.m. 416-487-3281.

Sunday, April 15

YIDDISHKEIT IN JAPAN

Vivian Felson discusses "Yiddishkeit in Japan," at Shaar Shalom Synagogue's Singles Program (ages 45+), 7:30 p.m. Call **David** 416-224-9494.

JEWISH WAR VETERANS

Jewish War Veterans of Canada, Toronto post, holds its general meeting at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St. Breakfast 9 a.m., meeting 10 a.m. Guest speaker is MP **Mark Adler**.

OUR YIDDISH HERITAGE

Cantor **Katie Oringel** with composer **Ben Steinberg** and **Harvey Atkin** weaves a multimedia experience of art, music and narrative on the life of **Marc Chagall.** Presented with Friends of Yiddish at Temple Sinai, 4 p.m. 416-487-3281.

THIRD SEDER

United Jewish People's Order sponsors a third seder with musicians **David Wall, Marilyn Lerner** and the Toronto Jewish Folk Choir, 4:30 p.m. Villa Colombo. Reserve in advance, 416-789-5502 or info@winchevskycentre.org.

NEVER AGAIN?

Yehudit Shier Weisberg discusses "Never Again?: The Legal Forum for the Land of Israel," 9:15 a.m. at Beth David Synagogue. 416-633-5500.

Monday, April 16

ROSE REISMAN COOKS

Cookbook author **Rose Reisman** demonstrates how to make fast, nutritious meals, 7:30 p.m., Temple Emanu-El. Tickets $25 in advance, $30 at the door. Call 416-449-3883.

SPRING LECTURE SERIES

Adam Chapnick discusses "Canadian Foreign Policy," 2 p.m., Temple Emanu-El. To register, 416-449-3880.

Tuesday, April 17

JEWISH RCMP OFFICER

Fran Saltzman discusses "My Experience as the First Jewish Female RCMP Officer," Temple Har Zion. Bring your lunch at noon, program starts at 12:30 p.m.

TOLERANCE AMID TENSION

Hadassa and **Benji Margolese** – parents of 8-year-old **Na'ama** who was harassed in Beit Shemesh – discuss "Tolerance Amid Tension: How Can We Do Better?" Beth David Synagogue, 7:30 p.m.

Continued on page 27

HOLY BLOSSOM TEMPLE
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REFRESHMENTS

Continued from page 26

HEROISM DURING THE SHOAH

Bernie Farber discusses "The Shoah and the Courage To Be a Hero," Beth Tikvah Synagogue, 12:15 p.m. By reservation only, 416-221-3433, ext. 352, or helen@bethtikvahtoronto.org.

Wednesday, April 18

POMEGRANATE GUILD

Evann Frisque lectures about "Artistic Mixed Media Compositions," to the Pomegranate Guild of Judaic Textiles, Shaarei Shomayim , 8 p.m. $5.

MELTON CLASSES

Yehudit Shier Weisberg teaches a nine-week class on Prayer: A Gift for Our Lives, starting today at Beth Emeth Synagogue, 10 a.m. Call 416-789-7400.

MEN'S HEALTH

Judy Murray discusses "Living a Healthy Life: The Journey into Self-Management," as part of Beth David Brotherhood's series on Jewish men's health and wellness, 55 Yeomans Dr.,8 p.m.

JEWS FOR JUDAISM

Rabbi Michael Skobac discusses "Catching the Spirit of Jewish Spirituality," Shaarei Tefillah Congregation, 8:30 p.m., toronto@jewsforjudaism.ca or 416-789-0020.

Thursday, April 19

YOM HASHOAH

Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism holds a ceremony honouring Jewish Holocaust refugees in the Soviet Union, 7 p.m. at 18 Wynford Dr.

TanenbaumCHAT Kimel presents a Yom Hashoah program at Shaar Shalom, 7:30 p.m. Call 905-787-8772.

Beth Tikvah Synagogue holds a commemoration service and will show the film *La Rafle* (suitable for students over 16), 7:30 p.m.

JEWISH DECORATIVE ARTS

ROM curator **Corey Keeble** discusses "Jewish Decorative Arts," Congregation Darchei Noam. Doors open at 7:30 p.m., lecture at 8 p.m. Suggested donation, $5 for members, $10 for non-members.

SPRING SHOPPING

Summit Heights community holds a spring shopping extravaganza, 4-9 p.m. Temple Sinai.

Other News

STRAIGHT TALK ON AGING

Dr. Brian Goldman discusses why seniors face ageism in health care, April 22, 10 a.m., Temple Emanu-El. RSVP by April 16. 416-449-3880.

THEATRE TRIPS

Beth Emeth Synagogue theatre group is seeing *The Matchmaker* on May 23. Deadline for reservations is April 16. 416-633-3838.

HELPING OTHER PARENTS

HOPE (Helping Other Parents Everywhere), a support group for parents of acting-out youth, meets Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m., at Edithvale Community Centre, 131 Finch Ave. W. Call **Bernice**, 905-737-3403.

SCHWARTZ REISMAN CENTRE

The centre is open for daily tours. Register now for pre-school and daycare. Call 905-303-1821.

JF&CS GROUPS

All programs require pre-registration and are open to all members of the community. To register, call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or www.jfandcs.com. All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst. St., unless otherwise noted.

Widows/Widowers 65+: A 6-session group for people over 65 who have recently lost a spouse. Starts April 18, 1 p.m.

Mind, Body Connection for Women: An 8-session group for women who want to learn mindfulness and meditation. Starts April 25, 3 p.m. at 35 Madison Ave.

One Family, Two Homes: A 6-session series for families experiencing separation and divorce. Children and parents participate in separate groups. Starts April 25, 6:30 p.m.

The Challenge of Anger for Women: A 6-session group to learn how to express anger in an assertive, non-aggressive way. Starts April 26, 7:30 p.m.

Beyond the Chupah, Becoming a Couple: A 6-session marriage preparation group for couples, offered with the Rabbinical Assembly of Ontario. Starts April 26, 7:30 p.m., Beth Emeth Synagogue.

BEREAVED PARENTS

Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups. Call **Beth Feffer** at JF & CS, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or bfeffer@jfandcs.com.

FOR SENIORS

Seniors Social Club presents singer **Sari Featherstone**, April 15, 7 p.m., Earl Bales Community Centre. RSVP **Sandy**, 416-736-8073 or 416-458-1440.

Association of Jewish Seniors. Tammy, 416-635-2900, ext. 458. April 19, program to commemorate the Shoah, Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue. Refreshments 9:30 a.m., program at 10 a.m.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park. (60+). **Valerie**, 416-395-7881. Casino Rama, April 18. Dance with live music, April 29. Tuesdays, gentle exercise, 10 a.m.; Wednesdays, duplicate bridge, 12:30 p.m.; Thursdays, line dancing, 10 a.m.; social bridge, 12:30 p.m. Non-members welcome.

Circle of Care is sponsoring Let's Talk, an education group on topics such as home safety, mental and physical well-being and legal and financial planning. The 6-session group begins April 17. Call 416-635-2860.

PEP Group monthly meeting April 19, Earl Bales Community Centre ,with entertainment, socializing and refreshments. New members accepted this month only. Call **Terri**, 416-785-0335.

Seniors Cultural Club meets Tuesdays, 10 a.m., Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell. 416-630-9444.

New Horizons is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club that offers kosher food, card games, casino trips. 416-256-1892.

Adath Israel Congregation. Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub. Refreshments $2. Call **Pearl**, 416-635-6317, or **Sheila**, 416-665-3333.

Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue welcomes new players for mah-jong and Rummikub Monday and Wednesday afternoons. 416-633-3838.

Bernard Betel Centre 416-225-2112. April 16, Documentary *Children of War*, Russian with English subtitles, 7 p.m. April 17, **Gerald Ziedenberg** discusses "The Struggle to Establish the Jewish State," 10 a.m. April 19, **Jeff Brown** discusses "What to Do in a Medical Emergency," 1:30 p.m. May 9, outing to *West Side Story*.

Active Seniors, Miles Nadal JCC, 416-924-6211, ext.155. Psychiatrist **Lesley Wiesenfeld** talks about "Positive Aging and Adaptation," April 19, 1:30 p.m.

PROSSERMAN JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com.

Tickets for spring/summer theatre trips are on sale now.

The spring/summer program guide is available now, ext. 4235.

MILES NADAL JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org.

Mimouna will be celebrated with henna, cooking and belly dancing workshops, Middle Eastern music and food, April 15, 7 p.m. Tickets $15 in advance, $20 at the door, ext. 0.

Film critic **Adam Nayman** analyzes **Stanley Kubrick**'s films, starting April 16 at 7 p.m. Ext. 0.

Classes in Hebrew literacy and conversation start the week of April 16. Ext. 154.

Felix Opatowski, author of *Gatehouse to Hell*, shares his experiences in Auschwitz, April 22, 11 a.m.

Tickets on sale for Stars on Spadina Gala with **Theresa Tova, Moshe Hammer, Hilario Duran** and more, April 23, 7:30 p.m.

Reading Jewish, a class with **Rabbi Elyse Goldstein,** starts April 30, 8 p.m.

How Beautiful We All Were, a photo exhibit of 16 Canadian poets, is at the gallery until April 30.

LET US ENTERTAIN YOU: A group of talented young members from Beth Avraham Yoseph Synagogue of Toronto recently entertained the residents of Baycrest Terrace. The afternoon featured various musicians, break dancing, magic and a hula hoop performance. From left, back row, are Ari, Adam, Aryeh and Simon, and from left, front row, are Maya, Ben, Yoni, Chana and Sarah.

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OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Sylvia McKay	Mar 19/12	1750 Bayview Avenue
Ron Tugg	Mar 21/12	38 Avoca Avenue
Dr. Irving Appleby	Mar 23/12	331 Green Lane
Ann Price	Mar 23/12	311-900 Steeles Ave., W.
Arthur Rosenblum	Mar 24/12	484 Steeles Avenue W.
Pearl Chud	Mar 25/12	55 Ameer Avenue
Sydney Fink	Mar 26/12	480 Oriole Pkwy.
Leonard Prussky	Mar 25/12	484 Steeles Ave. West
Sheila Katz	Mar 24/12	53 Whittaker Crescent
Saul Shugar	Mar 26/12	260 Heath Street West
Dr. Clive Wulwik	Mar 25/12	14873 Chinguacousy Rd.
Nathan Waicenberg	Mar 27/12	24 Bison Drive
Hilda Kray	Mar 27/12	1101 Steeles Ave. W.
Norman Yeager	Mar 25/12	65 Fairway Heights Dr.
Anne Grosman	Mar 27/12	100 Antibes Drive
Mynne Soupcoff	Mar 28/12	3600 Yonge Street
Samuel Shainhouse	Mar 30/12	49 Timberlane Drive
Hana Moncarz	Mar 30/12	333 Clark Ave. W
Mildred Selznick	Mar 30/12	19 Lower Village Gate
Chetti Knoll	Mar 29/12	20 Tarbert Road

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Somers, Fay	March 23/12	3560 Bathurst St
Gerber, Shirley	March 23/12	3560 Bathurst St
Milhofer, Anna	March 24/12	65 Skymark Dr
Szosenfogel, Szoel	March 24/12	546 Steeles Ave W
Fridman, Fira	March 25/12	Private
Lee, Braydon Jeremy	March 25/12	15 Dartmore Crt
Balaban, Rose	March 26/12	866 Sheppard Ave
Rubinov, Mina	March 27/12	Private
Garber, Grigori	March 27/12	Private
Moroff, Ann	March 27/12	Private
Aronson, Andrew	March 27/12	Private
Argov, Daniel	March 29/12	Private
Strauss, Albert	March 29/12	Private
Dutch, Marion	March 29/12	
Jafine, Mera	March 30/12	
Roseman, Ida	April 1/12	55 Ameer Av.
Greenspan, Ruth	March 31/12	88 Combe Av.
Gordon, Abigail Grace	March 23/12	
Tsatskin, Iosif	April 1/12	Private
Diker, Jacob	April 1/12	333 Clark Av. W.

HEBREW BASIC BURIAL

Lynne Gordon	Mar 23/12	400 Walmer Road
Harry Canton	Mar 26/12	167 Betty Ann Drive
Sheila Greenberg	Mar 27/12	8 Bank Street, South

SZOEL (SAUL) SZOSEN FOGEL ז"ל

Passed away peacefully on his 95th birthday, March 24th, 2012 at the North York General Hospital. Beloved husband of the late Etke Szosenfogel. Loving father of the late Cantor Ed Fogel (Lynne) and and Benny (Carl). Devoted Zayde to Jonathan (Whitney) and Shira (Marty); and a cherished great-grandfather to Eliana and Kovi. A caring uncle and a loyal friend.

The funeral was held on Monday, March 26th, 2012 with internment at Pardes Shalom Cemetery. Shiva was held at Amica in Thornhill.

Also remembered, are his siblings that, all but one, died in the Holocaust - Moishe, Bayla, Shim, Hyela, Nuchem, Uttes. His sister Binya lived out her life in France.

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Shainhouse advocated for day school funding

Frances Kraft
Staff Reporter

Samuel Shainhouse will be remembered as a leader in the Toronto Jewish community, a driving force in garnering community support for Jewish education, and a past president of several Jewish organizations – at times simultaneously. He died March 30 at Scarborough General Hospital following a 15-year struggle with Alzheimer's Disease. He was 91.

Born in Kovno, Lithuania, in 1921, Shainhouse was the youngest of four siblings. His family immigrated to Toronto in 1931, arriving in relative luxury on an ocean liner, his son, Zev, said in a eulogy.

The ship was the S.S. St. Louis, later known for its 1939 voyage with almost 1,000 ill-fated German Jewish refugee passengers. Shainhouse was known primarily for his involvement in Herut-Likud Canada – he was president of its predecessor, the Zionist Revisionist Organization – and was a member of the Betar youth group as a child in Lithuania. He called former Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin his friend, Zev said.

Harry Wolle, a past president of Herut-Likud who knew Shainhouse for about 50 years, said that he had "two great passions," education for Jewish children, and his love of Israel and the Jewish people.

Samuel Shainhouse

"As a leader, he was strong-willed, he was charitable, and he didn't suffer fools gladly. He was very determined."

A successful businessman, Shainhouse began his working life after leaving Jarvis Collegiate at age 16 to help out his family during the Depression, when he delivered paper goods for his father's dry goods store.

In the late 1940s, after serving in the Royal Air Force in England and Burma, he and his brothers started their own business, National Knitting Mills. At the time, the Canadian government was offering released soldiers a piece of land or $750 cash, Zev said. His father opted for the cash, and used it to invest in the business.

Shainhouse was one of the first presidents of the Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto after it separated from Associated Hebrew Schools, and he served as president of the Jewish National Fund (JNF) Toronto for 19 years, starting in 1967. Kurt Weinberg, former executive director of JNF Toronto and its Ontario region, said that with Shainhouse's passing, "another stalwart of the past is gone."

Weinberg remembers him as a go-getter, a practical man, an innovator and "a Zionist above everything."

"Under his leadership we managed to completely start the transformation of JNF. In those days we raised very little money… JNF now is a powerful instrument."

Zev remembers his father for his ability to "bring people from different parts of the community together," he told *The CJN*.

He also credited him for his role in bringing day school funding into the Jewish community charitable organization (now UJA Federation of Greater Toronto) in the 1960s.

"Day school was a hard sell [at the time]," Zev said. "And I think everybody in today's community would agree that Jewish education is the most secure route we have to a Jewish future."

Rabbi Mark Smiley, director of education of Associated Hebrew Schools, called Shainhouse "a visionary." Along with other community leaders, Shainhouse advocated for federation support for day school tuition.

Shainhouse was predeceased by his siblings Rose Silverstein, Oscar and Louis Shainhouse, and by his wife Beatrice. He leaves his children Zev, Chaim, David, Batsheva and Jonathan; 15 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

Defeated Tory candidate leaves gov't advisory job

Compiled by CJN Staff

MONTREAL — After weeks of controversy, defeated Mount Royal Tory candidate Saulie Zajdel suddenly left his job as a regional adviser for the Conservative government last week.

Saulie Zajdel

Mount Royal Liberal MP Irwin Cotler had accused Zajdel of acting as his "shadow MP" and working to undermine him while on the public payroll.

Zajdel was appointed in September as a regional adviser for community outreach and relations. He worked under Industry Minister Christian Paradis, the minister responsible for the Montreal region, and Canadian Heritage Minister James Moore.

He described the job at the time as connecting principally with the anglophone and ethnic communities and municipalities to see if they can benefit from various federal programs.

Zajdel was present in November when Paradis announced an unprecedented grant of more than $763,000 to kashrut certification agencies in Canada to enhance food safety for a program administered by Montreal's Vaad Ha'ir.

"I was tired of being this distraction" and quit for the good of the Conservative party, Zajdel told a Montreal radio station April 4. He also said he felt insulted by being called a shadow MP.

Zajdel, who served on Montreal city council and its executive committee for 25 years, vigorously contested the Mount Royal seat and came within 2,200 votes of beating Cotler in what has long been a safe Liberal riding.

Israel became a central issue in Zajdel's campaign among Jewish voters, and Cotler objected to being targeted as part of the Conservatives' portrayal of the Liberals as less sympathetic to the Jewish state than the Tories.

After the May election, Zajdel said he would be running again in the riding. He said last week that he would still like to be the Conservative candidate in Mount Royal, if the party wants him.

Last month, Moore defended Zajdel's hiring, saying his duties were "not political at all. There's no political involvement. It's entirely a ministerial staff function."

In addition to serving as a liaison to cultural communities, Zajdel's municipal experience made him well suited to helping organize Ottawa's participation in Montreal's 375th anniversary celebrations in 2017, Moore said.

Que. MNA to run for 6th term

Janice Arnold
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — At 71, Lawrence Bergman is going to seek a sixth term as the member of the national assembly for D'Arcy McGee. Bergman, who was first elected in 1994, was unopposed in his bid to once again run for the Quebec Liberal Party in the next provincial election.

To read full story, go to cjnews.com

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The Schwartz/Reisman Centre
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Holocaust monument could receive $4M

Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf
Staff Reporter

Work on Canada's National Holocaust Monument can now proceed apace with the news last week that Ottawa will provide up to $4 million in funding to build the memorial.

Four of the five voluntary members of the monument's development council were also named last week. The council is charged with fundraising and maintenance for the monument, as well as helping to choose the site where it will be built.

Tim Uppal

Its members are Rabbi Daniel Friedman of Edmonton's Beth Israel Synagogue; Ralf Lean, a Toronto lawyer with Cassels Brock and Blackwell LLP; Alvin Segal, chairman and CEO of Peerless Clothing in Montreal, and Fran Sonshine, national chair of the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem.

A fifth council member from British Columbia will be announced soon, Sonshine said.

Rabbi Friedman, the council's chair, told *The CJN* it's "high time" a tribute of this nature is constructed in Canada.

"This is an important step Canada has taken to recognize survivors in the Jewish community and for all Canadians," he said. "We're the only Allied nation without a Holocaust monument in the capital region. The government recognizes this is something important to all Canadians."

The rabbi also praised Edmonton-Sherwood Park MP Tim Uppal, whose private member's bill to create the monument passed last year.

Uppal, a Sikh, has very close ties to the Jewish community. His wife, Kiran, even went on a March of the Living trip when she was a teenager, Rabbi Friedman said.

"My fellow council members and I are looking forward to moving this project along as quickly as possible," he said.

Asked if the $4 million from the government might on its own be enough to finance the monument without additional fundraising activities, Rabbi Friedman said similar memorials around the world all cost that much, if not more.

He added that the government's contribution was "extremely generous, but nonetheless appropriate."

"This monument will be world-class and something that is an indelible mark on the Canadian nation for generations to come," he said.

Rabbi Friedman said it was fortunate that the federal funding, pledged by Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird, was available.

"It warmed our hearts that minister Baird has found it in the budget to provide these funds," he said.

When Uppal announced the formation of the council last week, there was no mention of funding for the monument and his private member's bill was vague on that detail.

But Baird's press secretary, Joseph Lavoie, told *The CJN* that the government "will match funds raised, up to a maximum of $4 million dollars, by the campaign."

Sonshine said the National Capital Commission (NCC) has selected a few possible sites for the monument, and she and other council members have toured the sites and will decide on the one they think is best.

The monument's design will be determined through a competition "launched on behalf of the minister of foreign affairs and the development council under the auspices of the NCC," she said.

In an April 2 statement, Uppal said Canada has long fought against antisemitism and racism.

"We must never forget what happens when humanity and fundamental human rights are discarded, as this is the only way to ensure it will never happen again."

Parades banned in Outremont

JTA

MONTREAL — City officials in Outremont have banned all street parades and processions in response to escalating tensions with the chassidic community.

The episode is the newest dispute between the expanding chassidic community and its neighbours in the Montreal borough. Outremont Mayor Marie Cinq-Mars and a majority of council members voted on April 2 to ban parades and processions, in the wake of a noisy confrontation last month at Purim between borough Counc. Céline Forget, who is known for her dogged surveillance of the chassidic community, and members of that community.

The clash, which was taped and posted on YouTube, degenerated into shouting, name-calling and police intervention.

In response, Outremont decided that it wouldn't allow a chassidic sect to hold a street procession later this month to mark the visit of a rabbi from New York.

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Feminist MK talks hasbarah with Halifax Jews

Joel Jacobson
Atlantic Correspondent

HALIFAX — In eight hours in Halifax, MK Einat Wilf made quite an impression.

A dynamic speaker, oozing with confidence and intelligence and freely offering well-considered opinions, Wilf met with close to 50 Jewish community members and separately with local politicians and the media, each time stressing the importance of women in political life and decision-making, and touching on foreign policy and education.

MK Einat Wilf
[Joel Jacobson photo]

Wilf's first stop on a whirlwind Canadian trip was Halifax, followed by engagements in Montreal, Quebec City and Ottawa. She arrived April 2 and returned to Israel April 5 in time for Pesach with her family. She was invited by the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs and was hosted in Halifax by the Atlantic Jewish Council.

Elected to the Knesset 18 months ago, Wilf noted that there are 24 women in Israel's parliament – representing 20 per cent of the Knesset's 120 members – which exceeds the proportions in similar bodies in the United States, Britain, and France, and is close to Canada's 25 per cent ratio.

"It's no longer unique in Israel to have women in stronger positions, although the business sector still lags behind in female leadership… but it's improving," she said.

Wilf said she's a feminist, but added she didn't realize she had those leanings until attending university and then working in the United States after her mostly Israeli upbringing.

"My home was egalitarian [both her parents were teachers], and I was allowed to let my ambitions take me as far as I wanted. I served four years in the army, in intelligence, where brains were more important than brawn and had more equality [as a woman] than in many other units."

But when she studied at Harvard University and then worked in New York, "I sensed the cusp of women moving forward very quickly. When I came back to Israel in 1998, I didn't feel the same. I considered us more 20th century rather than moving into the 21st century."

Now, 14 years later, she said Israel has caught up and is doing well. "It's a good time to be a woman in Israel," she said. "I think we're in the 21st century in seeing women's role in leadership grow, but still in the 20th as far as equal pay, ability to balance home and career, and sexual harassment. Yet strides are being made.

"Of course, we're still in the 10th century when you look at the way women are treated in the Arab minority and the ultra-Orthodox minority, both of whom see themselves threatened by the majority culture. That's certainly a challenge for feminists."

Women's issues, education and foreign policy have been main interests for Wilf, who said that as a teenager, she dreamed of being Israel's ambassador to the United Nations.

"I haven't given up that dream yet," she smiled. "But to do what I wanted to do, I had to get into politics."

She joined the Labour party and moved up the party list, and by February 2009, she was 14th. Labour won 13 seats in elections that year, so "I was the lady-in-waiting. I watched the swearing in from home but, when a member resigned soon afterward, I was moved into a seat."

Now, as a member of the recently formed Independent Party headed by Defence Minister Ehud Barak, Wilf is one of five party members in the Knesset, of whom two are female. She fights for women's rights and better educational opportunities. In May, she will become chair of the Knesset's education committee.

"I think I've had some influence in education, which is now the second largest budget item, after defence. Yet I think we have a long way to go in building a good education system."

Her efforts in foreign policy focus on building present and future alliances, as she did on her Canadian trip, and helping build a positive image of Israel in the world.

"I'm not the official spokesperson for the government, but in Israel, I'm among the top three who are not men who engage in foreign affairs for the government," she said. "I'm able to articulate the classical Zionist position, which, sadly, needs that articulation. I believe in partition. Jews and Arabs both have claims to the land, but while Jews have acknowledged it, the Arabs have never been willing to accept that Jews have claims [as well]. The fundamentals are attacked, distorted and lied about.

"This is a war fought with words," she continued. "In op-ed pieces, and by academics and in supermarkets, not with guns and tanks. We need to fight this war and win it – and I think we can. We can't just be nice and think the truth will come out. We have to fight back and meet the lies head-on."

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Israeli access to Azeri airfields makes no sense

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

The amount of media speculation over the past few months about whether Israel will attack Iran's nuclear installations has been overwhelming.

With reports and commentary quoting this or that "expert" or "anonymous source," speculation by definition can make no pretense to knowledge. Unsuspecting consumers of the media might be forgiven for assuming otherwise, and believing that they're privy to some factual nugget that offers genuine behind-the-scenes insight.

Such was the case late last month when *Foreign Policy* magazine published Mark Perry's article, "Israel's Secret Staging Ground." Perry alleges that four (unnamed) "senior diplomats and military intelligence officers say that the United States has concluded that Israel has recently been granted access to airbases on Iran's northern border" in Azerbaijan. The reason could only be to allow Israel convenient proximity to carry out bombing operations on Iran – something, Perry argues, the Obama administration desperately wants to prevent. And what better way to accomplish this than by leaking such explosive material to Perry, whose allegations were picked up by a limited number of western media outlets.

Within a few days, however, veteran Arab affairs reporter Ehud Ya'ari was all over Perry, writing in a post on the Times of Israel website that the allegation "simply does not make any sense." Ya'ari also criticized the Israeli media for having reported seriously on a rumour that had no merit, and he accused the editors of *Foreign Policy* of demonstrating "negligent naiveté" for having published it in the first place.

Ya'ari's argument is two-fold. First, he notes that Perry is a prominent "anti-Israel warrior" with a history of planting "cloak-and-dagger patchwork stories aimed at undermining a state he intensely detests."

Second, even though Israel and Azerbaijan have close relations, a minimal understanding of Azerbaijan's internal politics and relationship with Iran quickly reveals that it would be unimaginable for the Azeri government to expose its airfields to Iranian retaliation following a potential Israeli strike.

In this respect, Ya'ari asked: "How can Azerbaijan possibly afford to co-operate in an attack on Iran when it depends on Iran entirely for maintaining control over that significant part of this country, the Nakhichevan region, an exclave and autonomous republic of Azerbaijan that is totally separated from the main Azeri territory by its arch-enemy, Armenia?"

Even on such a basic issue of how Israel could hope to get its planes to Azerbaijan in the first place, Ya'ari pointed out, sardonically, that a glance at an atlas reveals another major flaw in Perry's argument. Ya'ari charges: "Are the Israelis going to get a permit from Mr. Erdogan to fly over Turkey on their way to hit Iran?... Or, alternatively, does Perry want us to believe that the Israelis will choose to bypass Turkey on their secret mission via the longer route over Greece and Bulgaria, thus becoming fully exposed to Russian radar in the Black Sea? Take a look at the map, Mr. Perry — there is no other way for the Israelis to get to Azerbaijan!"

Ehud Ya'ari

To his credit, while mentioning the surface plausibility about the tactical advantages that Israel would gain from access to Azerbaijan's airfields, the *Globe and Mail*'s Paul Koring (on April 3) also raised skeptical questions about Perry's piece. He wondered whether the Obama administration, despite a predictable official denial, may have leaked statements, conveyed by Perry, as part of a disinformation campaign to constrain Israel. Koring also cited Ya'ari's incisive critique from the Times of Israel.

Which brings us back to Ya'ari's core point. Serious debate about how to deal with Iran's nuclear program, he claims, "requires down-to-earth discussion based on facts and then a grain of common sense." Where both ingredients are missing, we end up only with speculative nonsense passing for substance. Indeed, when it comes to the issue of Iran, observers would be wise to heed Ya'ari's sage advice.

Paul Michaels is director of research and media relations for the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs.

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Appreciation of his heritage rooted in upbringing

Continued from page 1

Rabbi Yosef is certainly a fitting spectator of this room's activity. Not only does Azoulay maintain a close relationship with him, but, in Azoulay's words, "We share the same goals, same mentality, same agenda." Azoulay identifies Rabbi Yosef as his most influential motivator in his decision to record the legacy of Sephardi heritage.

Azoulay discovered the need for English biographies of Sephardi rabbis during a year of post-high school study in Israel. An extensive search through bookstores, libraries, archives and even online sources yielded a single publication: a book about Baba Sali, the illustrious 20th-century Moroccan spiritual leader. Back home in North America, his continued search also yielded nothing.

Sweeping his hands across his bookshelves, Azoulay emphasizes the enormous imbalance between the number of English-language biographies of Ashkenazi rabbis and those of Sephardi rabbis. It was clear to him that a parallel Sephardi library was needed.

But it was a cavalier comment to Azoulay by a student at a kollel where he was studying that the number of Torah-great Sephardi rabbis throughout history could be counted on one hand that impelled him to start writing.

He was 19 years old.

Azoulay's first book, *A Legacy of Leaders*, was published in 2008, and a second volume, *A Legacy of Leaders II*, the following year. Nearly 5,000 copies of the first have been printed thus far, not including translations in French, Spanish and, expected later this year, Persian.

Designed to appeal to all readers, the books contain brief biographical chapters and vignettes of better-known Sephardi rabbis, intentionally including those that Ashkenazim might recognize, too. However, Azoulay's third book, *Ben Ish Hai*, is a 400-plus-page tome devoted to a single rabbi, Rabbi Yosef Haim.

The books have garnered incredible feedback. People have contacted Azoulay not just to laud his work and appeal for more publications, but many have reached out to him as an ambassador of Sephardi heritage.

Azoulay has also found that his audience extended well beyond the Sephardi community, which was actually his objective.

"That's the goal: to educate everyone," he says. "These rabbis belong to us all."

Azoulay's appreciation of his Sephardi heritage is rooted in his upbringing. Although he was born in Toronto, his parents are both Moroccan. Originally non-observant, the family became Orthodox during his childhood, but always rigorously upheld their Sephardi traditions.

Azoulay's Sephardi identity was intensified by the anecdotes about great rabbis and historical events imparted in shul, at community gatherings and around the Shabbat table. He credits his parents' influence and reinforcement of Sephardi heritage, as well as the personal guidance of Rabbi Amram Assayag, Toronto's prominent Sephardi leader, for his decision to undertake this venture.

Azoulay continues his family's traditions in his own home, which he shares with his wife, Rena, and two young daughters. But he worries about the influences of both secular society and the predominantly Ashkenazi Jewish community on his own children, specifically, and on Sephardi youth in general.

He wants Sephardim to embrace their beautiful heritage and be proud of it, but he believes that to do so, they must know something about it.

Azoulay wants to inspire and educate, and there's no doubt that while he's already achieving this through his publications and as a teacher of Jewish philosophy to high school students, his ambition and passion are propelling him further.

He plans to pursue a PhD in Sephardi or general Jewish history at Yeshiva University's Bernard Revel Graduate School after simultaneously completing his BA in history through Excelsior College in Albany, N.Y., and his MA at YU's Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education (which accepted Azoulay on the merit of his published work, despite his not having yet completed his BA).

He has somehow managed to find time to create SephardicLegacy.com, a website focused on Sephardi Torah literature, and to volunteer with numerous Sephardi organizations. Ultimately, Azoulay sees himself professionally involved in the Sephardi community and is already entertaining related job offers.

But that's only part of his immediate to-do list, which includes building a high-school Jewish history curriculum, producing documentaries, creating an expansive online hub for Sephardi Jews, helping to develop an international Sephardi organization and even dabbling in Israeli politics, because Azoulay, a self-professed history buff, sees that as the only way to change the future.

Among other political causes, Azoulay hopes for a socio-economic transformation for Sephardim in Israel, where he says they're often considered second-class citizens.

And he's already at work on his next book, about the Chida, Rabbi Haim Yosef David Azoulay (an indirect relative), which is due out in April 2013.

Azoulay's zeal is clearly what fuels him: he enthusiastically recounts his recent experience discovering the archived documents regarding the Chida's 1960 Jerusalem reburial. Until Azoulay stumbled across the collection, no one had looked at it since 1961. "Can you imagine," he enthuses, "that nobody opened it in 50 years?"

In all, Azoulay plans to write about 15 books, one of which will be about Rabbi Ovadia Yosef. This will likely be his tour de force, not just because of the greatness of Rabbi Yosef, but because of Azoulay's own relationship with him. Recently, the rabbi even offered Azoulay the rights to translate into English all 53 of his volumes on Halachah. Azoulay declined, because it would remove him from his own work.

In his goal to educate and motivate others, he says that researching and writing about these rabbinic personalities have inspired him, too, reinforcing his own connection to God, Sephardi leaders and the community. And through his work, he has greatly expanded his network within the Sephardi world, assisting him in his ongoing research and placing him at the vanguard of Sephardi society and leadership today.

Correction

In our Passover Literary Supplement, the author's name for the poem *Survival* (page B45) was incorrect. The poem was written by Norma Barkin. We apologize for the error.

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Minister orders extradition in Paris shul bombing

JTA

OTTAWA—An Ottawa professor has been ordered extradited to France, where he faces charges related to the 1980 bombing of a synagogue in Paris that killed four people.

Justice Minister Rob Nicholson issued the extradition order last week against Hassan Diab, who formerly taught sociology at two Ottawa universities.

The RCMP arrested Diab in November 2008 in response to a request by France. An Ontario court ruled to extradite him last year.

His lawyer, Donald Bayne, called the decision to extradite his client a denial of basic legal and human rights. He said they would take the case to the Federal Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court of Canada, if necessary.

Justice Minister Rob Nicholson

The terrorist bombing in central Paris killed four passersby, and many others inside and outside the synagogue were injured.

The Lebanese-born Diab, a Canadian citizen, has denied any role in the attack, claiming he is the victim of mistaken identity.

"We expected this decision but not this way," Diab told the *Ottawa Citizen*. "We expected the minister to address our points, which he did not. He just ignored them and rendered his decision based on his political beliefs more than anything else."

Diab's lawyer says a key plank in the appeal will be a written admission from Paris that authorities have not yet finished investigating the synagogue bombing. He said a Canadian citizen can only be extradited if he or she is wanted for trial, not "for the purpose of continuing an investigation to determine whether or not there will ever be a trial."

Shimon Fogel, CEO of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), said "Canada's co-operation [with France] is appropriate and reasonable given the evidence sent by France, which met the criteria for extradition between here and France.

"Treaties like this are between governments. It's not a partisan that has put forward the request for extradition. It's a sovereign state."

"We're supportive of the judicial process that's underway. The government clearly had enough evidence to move forward with the extradition process," he added.

Diab's lawyer saw it differently. "This is a disappointing decision that politically I'm sure the minister found difficult to make in favour of Dr. Diab," Bayne told the *Citizen*. "It would have taken a great deal of political courage for him to do the right thing."

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U.S. deploys second carrier ahead of Iran talks

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JERUSALEM — The U.S. Navy has deployed a second aircraft carrier to the Persian Gulf amid rising tensions with Iran over its nuclear program, Cmdr. Amy Derrick-Frost of the Bahrain-based 5th Fleet said Monday.

Derrick-Frost said that the deployment of the nuclear-powered USS Enterprise along the Abraham Lincoln carrier strike group marks only the fourth time in the past decade that the navy has had two aircraft carriers operating at the same time in the region.

Derrick-Frost says the two carriers will support the American military operations in Afghanistan and anti-piracy efforts off Somalia's coast and in the Gulf of Aden.

The battleships will also patrol the Gulf's strategic oil routes that Iran has threatened to shut down in retaliation for economic sanctions.

In late January, the carrier USS Abraham Lincoln completed a "regular and routine," accompanied by strike group of warships. That's the first U.S. aircraft carrier to enter the Gulf since late December and was on a routine rotation to replace the outgoing USS John C. Stennis.

The deployment announced on Monday came less than a week before six world powers were set to open negotiations in Istanbul with the Islamic Republic over its contentious nuclear program.

Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi said Iran would not agree to world powers imposing pre-conditions ahead of the resumption of talks, Iranian media reported on Monday.

"Setting conditions before the meeting means drawing conclusions, which is completely meaningless and none of the parties will accept conditions set before the talks," the Iranian parliamentary news agency quoted him as saying.

But Iran's nuclear chief, Fereidoun Abbasi, has hinted that the Islamic Republic may offer a compromise.

At the core of the dispute is the issue of uranium enrichment. The West fears Tehran is seeking an atomic weapon, which the country denies. Uranium has to be enriched to more than 90 per cent to be used for a nuclear weapon.

Abbasi told state TV late Sunday that Tehran could stop its production of 20 per cent enriched uranium needed for a research reactor and continue enriching uranium to lower levels for power generation.

This could take place once Iran has stock piled enough of the 20 per cent enriched uranium, Abbasi said.

Meanwhile, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defence Minister Ehud Barak seem at odds over the severity of the demands that the six western powers – the United States, Britain, France, Russia, China and Germany – should present to Iran in negotiations over its nuclear program.

Netanyahu supports a demand to completely halt all uranium enrichment and remove all enriched material from Iran, while Barak is in favour of allowing the Iranians to continue enriching uranium to a low level and for several hundred kilograms of enriched uranium to remain in Iran.

In two separate statements made on Sunday, Netanyahu and Barak presented what they described as "Israel's position" on dialogue between Iran and the six superpowers. However, the statements contained several contradictions on core issues.

In contradiction to Netanyahu's statement, a statement released by Barak called for demanding that the Iranians remove all enriched uranium from the state, "aside from a quantity of several hundred kilograms, which would not allow for the continued enrichment for weapons or a nuclear facility."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

Barak presented two additional demands, beyond those presented by Netanyahu, including International Atomic Energy Agency supervision over all Iranian nuclear activity and full disclosure of the history and the activity in important areas that belong to its military nuclear project. Barak also noted that, in exchange, the Iranians could receive fuel rods for the nuclear facility in Tehran.

Netanyahu said in a meeting on Sunday with Italian Prime Minister Mario Monti that the superpowers must demand a complete end to all uranium enrichment by Iran.

Netanyahu also voiced skepticism over the upcoming talks with Iran. In the meeting with Monti in his Caesarea home, Netanyahu said that Israel will follow the talks closely "since Iran is using them to delay and deceive."

Israel, which has threatened last-resort attacks on its arch foe's nuclear facilities if diplomacy fails, demanded last month that any negotiated resolution should end all uranium enrichment, high and low level, and remove all fuel already stockpiled by Iran.

But western diplomats have said the six superpowers would first tackle its uranium refinement to a fissile concentration of 20 per cent rather than its more abundant 3.5 per cent pure fuel.

The 20 per cent enriched uranium would be far easier to enrich to bomb-grade 90 per cent purity, though Iran denies having such designs, saying it is only seeking electrical energy and medical isotopes.

"We told our American friends, as well as the Europeans, that we would have expected the threshold for successful negotiations to be clear, namely that the P5+1 will demand clearly that – no more enrichment to 20 per cent," Barak said in an interview with CNN on Sunday.

Iran says it has a sovereign right to peaceful nuclear technology and has repeatedly rejected UN resolutions calling for a suspension of all uranium enrichment. But it has at times appeared more flexible regarding 20 per cent enrichment, which it began in early 2010, and some experts say that initially getting Iran to stop this higher-grade work could open a way to ease the deadlock.

Western diplomats have stressed that an initial focus on 20 percent enrichment should not be seen as "legitimizing" lower-level work as the UN Security Council has demanded a full suspension.

Iran has enough 3.5 and 20 per cent-enriched uranium for around four bombs if refined further, western experts say.

According to a report in the *New York Times* on Saturday, the world powers, which have ramped up sanctions against Iran, also plan to press it to close and dismantle a recently completed enrichment bunker in a mountain near Qom – another demand levelled by the Israelis.

Journalist Mike Wallace dies

JTA

NEW YORK — Veteran journalist Mike Wallace, who appeared on the CBS news program *60 Minutes* from its first airing, has died.

Wallace died Saturday at the age of 93, CBS *Face the Nation* host Bob Schieffer announced Sunday morning on the program. He died at a care facility in New Haven, Conn., where he had been living in recent years.

Wallace, who was accused by the watchdog group CAMERA of having an Israel problem, retired from *60 Minutes* in 2006 after 38 seasons on the news program, but continued to contribute to the program and other CBS news shows.

Mike Wallace

During the course of his career, Wallace interviewed Palestinian Authority president Yasser Arafat and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. During a 1989 interview with Arafat, Wallace allowed him to spout his anti-Israel views without questioning them. When he asked Arafat if he had renounced "military operations" inside Israel, Arafat responded, "Any people who are facing occupation or oppression have the right to use all methods." Wallace did not probe this with a followup question, CAMERA pointed out in a 2006 report called "Mike Wallace's Middle East Problem."

He interviewed Abba Eban, Israel's ambassador to the United States, in 1958.

He was awarded 21 Emmy awards, five DuPont-Columbia journalism awards and five Peabody awards during his career.

Born Myron Leon Wallace in Brookline, Mass., to Russian Jewish parents Frank and Zina Wallace, who had shortened their family name from Wallechinsky, he graduated from the University of Michigan, where he worked for the *Michigan Daily* student newspaper and was a member of the Zeta Beta Tau fraternity. Wallace hosted several game shows in the 1950s.

His son, Chris Wallace, is the host of *Fox News Sunday* for the Fox News network.

Ethiopian rabbi leads Israeli shul with Ashkenazi congregation

Paul Lungen
Staff Reporter

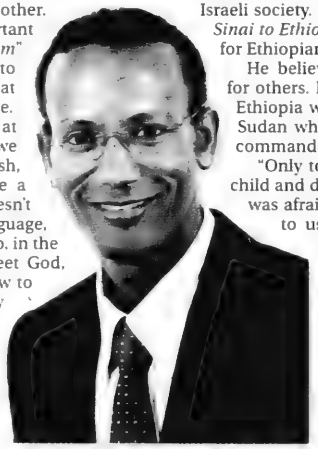
Rabbi Sharon Shalom can drop a Yiddish expression with the best of them. "A sach gesundt" (lots of health) he says as he ends a conversation.

As spiritual leader of a congregation consisting largely of Holocaust survivors and their families, it's no surprise he's able to speak "a bissel Yiddish" (a little Yiddish). He's even heard the term "shvartze" a few times, when people discuss his role as rabbi of Kdoshei Yisrael Synagogue in Kiryat Gat.

As an immigrant to Israel from Ethiopia, he understands the skepticism that greeted his role as rabbi of an Ashkenazi congregation. "People ask," he said with a phrasing that might be part Ethiopian, part Yiddish.

His answer, however, is entirely rabbinic. Nearly 2,000 years ago, during the Jewish revolt against Rome, the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed. At the time, he explained, "all the people were the same colour, [spoke] the same language, [enjoyed] the same culture. But the people hated each other. Each thought they were more important than the other." It was "*sinat chinam*" (baseless hatred), he said, referring to the rabbinic explanation for the defeat and exile that befell the Jewish people.

When he reflects on his position at Kdoshei Yisrael, " I tell them, when we came to be a people, like in Yiddish, menshlichkeit [is important]; to be a human being, a person, adam. It doesn't matter if you speak a different language, have a different culture or colour…so, in the synagogue, before you come to meet God, one of the conditions is to know how to meet persons. It doesn't matter if they are secular, Ashkenazi, Sephardi, Moroccan. If you give them respect, they can meet and speak to God."


Rabbi Sharon Shalom

Rabbi Shalom will be in Toronto this week as guest speaker at Congregation Darchei Noam. He will discuss "An Ethiopian Contribution to Jewish Life in Israel and Abroad" on April 15 at 7:30 p.m.

Rabbi Shalom, 39, hails from **Zaoda Tapsai**, a small village in northern Ethiopia that was entirely Jewish, he said in a telephone interview from Israel.

He studied Torah at an early age as well as other holy books recognized by Ethiopian Jews but considered Apocrypha by rabbinic Judaism.

The Jewish Bible consists of 24 books; the Ethiopians revered 68, he said.

The Talmud, the collection of rabbinic discussions on Jewish law and customs, was not part of Ethiopian Jewish literature. "All the traditions they take straight from the Bible," he said.

When Ethiopian Jewry moved to Israel in two great aliyot, they were faced with more than culture shock. The religious traditions they had practised, from schchitah to taharah (ritual purity) were practiced differently in Israel.

"This is a big conflict and we find today a big confusion with this problem in Eretz Yisrael (the land of Israel)," he said. "Some want to stay exactly like in Ethiopia. Others say, 'we are here and we must accept the commandments as in Israel, the Talmud, the *Shulchan Aruch* (a code of Jewish law), everything.'"

Complicating the issue is that "a high percentage of the second generation has no connection with the Talmud or Ethiopian tradition. They're actually secular.

"This is a big crisis," Rabbi Shalom stated. "There are a lot reasons for that phenomenon. When Ethiopian Jews came here and the rabbis told them they may not be Jewish and need to convert, this request made them very, very angry."

Ethiopian spiritual leaders were also upset by laws that prevented them from doing what they had done in Africa, such as officiating at weddings or performing schchitah.

"Ethiopian Jews are still looking for their way," Rabbi Shalom said. "They're struggling with their identity. They feel sometimes more black, more Jewish, more Ethiopian, more Israeli…. It's still being resolved."

Some Ethiopian Jews have travelled back to Ethiopia in search of their roots. "Most of them came back and [say] Ethiopia is not for me. They became more Zionist and more proud of their identity."

Rabbi Shalom is trying to bridge the divide that makes it difficult for many Ethiopians to integrate into Israeli society. He recently published a book, *From Sinai to Ethiopia*, which is "like a *Shulchan Aruch* for Ethiopians," he said.

He believes his own story can be a model for others. In the early 1980s, as a child fleeing Ethiopia without his parents, he was in south Sudan when he saw his first Israeli – a naval commando.

"Only today can I understand. I was a little child and didn't understand then. I remember I was afraid and in big shock when they came to us, and they embraced us and they kissed me. I felt more comfortable and more relaxed."

Rabbi Shalom was part of Operation Moses in which 8,000 Ethiopian Jews were secretly airlifted to Israel.

A second airlift, Operation Solomon, brought a further 14,000 Ethiopians to Israel in 1991.

Even on the telephone, Rabbi Shalom's excitement at being in Israel is palpable. He is clearly impressed with the accomplishments of Israel in only 64 years of existence.

"The Jewish people come from all the world. It's amazing. When I walk the street in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Kiryat Gat, it's unbelievable how the state, with all its struggles, built beautiful houses, and succeeds. It's an amazing country and makes me proud to be part of the Jewish people."

He recognizes, however, that Israeli society is not free of racism. Ninety per cent of Ethiopians share that belief, he said.

"I believe that Israel is like the world. What's a danger in the world is to be alive. It's very dangerous. If you believe that and ask God why do You make life so hard, you can scream all day and not find answers.

"[When] you wake up [you should] say, the world has nothing personal against you, this is the world and I have to find a way to struggle with what is going on in the world.

"I must be strong. If I look for an answer for success, I won't find it in Israeli society. The answer is very deep inside me. So, I say Shalom, you must take responsibility and be proud and be strong. I'm sure with this way, Ethiopians can be integrated into the world."

Arabs boycott Adidas

An Arab boycott has been launched against sports apparel manufacturer Adidas over its sponsorship of last month's Jerusalem marathon. The boycott was announced last week in Jedda, Saudi Arabia, after a meeting of the Arab youth and sports council of ministers, AFP reported. "All companies that have sponsored the marathon of Jerusalem, including Adidas, will be boycotted," Saudi Prince Nawaf bin Faisal, chairman of the council, said. The route of this year's marathon took runners through parts of eastern Jerusalem. Faisal also announced that next year, marathons would take place in several Arab countries under the banner "Jerusalem is Ours."

Rocket strikes Eilat

A long-range Grad rocket fired from the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt exploded near a residential area of Eilat last week. No injuries were reported. The rocket landed in a construction site, according to reports. Three explosions were heard in the city, but the other two rockets have not been located, the reports indicate. The attack came a day before the start of Passover, when hundreds of tourists from Israel and abroad flock to the Red Sea resort town. Egypt's security chief denied that the attack had originated in Sinai, according to the French news agency AFP. In August 2011, eight Israelis were killed in a terrorist attack on a bus and cars travelling near Eilat. Israel claimed the Palestinian attackers entered Israel through the border with Sinai. The previous year, several long-range rockets were fired at Eilat from the Sinai. Israel is currently constructing a 16-foot-tall border fence from Eilat to Gaza, to keep out terrorists and migrants.

Helping the needy

Israeli Social Affairs Minister Moshe Kahlon said his ministry will provide needy Israelis with a magnetic card to purchase food at local stores instead of handing out food packages. The ministry will distribute the cards to 32,000 needy families with funding assistance from the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews. Kahlon's announcement came a day after he criticized non-profit organizations for humiliating the needy by publicly handing out food packages. "I oppose photographing the needy when they come to collect a basket of food. The Social Affairs Ministry is promoting magnetic cards as a means of distributing food aid," Kahlon said.

Hebron house evacuated

A group of Jews were evicted from a home near the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron without incident. Israeli security forces last Wednesday evacuated the Jewish families from the home they had entered a week ago. The evacuation took only a few moments and was carried out on the orders of Defence Minister Ehud Barak. "I will continue to act in order to maintain the rule of law and democracy while guaranteeing the authority of the state over its citizens," Barak said in a statement following the evacuation.

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Thornhill restaurant to feature a taste of Aleppo

Paul Lungen
Staff Reporter

When Yogibar Frozen Dessert officially opens its doors for the first time on April 29, there will be a touch of the old world on the menu.

Customers may not notice it among the exotic new world flavours for frozen yogurt, such as cotton candy, but the recipe for the basic plain yogurt comes to Thornhill all the way from Aleppo, Syria. That's the hometown of the Esses family, who operate Yogibar along with five other kosher restaurants and cafes.

"This goes back to the original yogurt recipe," he said.

Back in the day, Shlomo Esses recounted, his grandfather, also named Shlomo, produced dairy products in Aleppo and shipped much of it to the Jewish community in Beirut.

Chances are the Jews in Beirut didn't enjoy 15 different flavours of frozen yogurt. They likely also didn't have the selection of kosher eateries to choose from, as they do in Toronto. Five of them (soon to be six) belong to one family, who have been in the kosher food business since 1984. It's a tradition that dates back to the 1940s and 1950s, when Shlomo Esses, the grandfather, provided milk, cheeses and other dairy products, said Shlomo, the grandson.

In 1948, the family moved to Beirut and continued the business. In 1977, after a stay in Israel, Shlomo's father, Albert, made the move to Toronto. His first business was Dairy Treats, a restaurant on Bathurst that's still going strong. Since then, they have added Café Sheli, Oasis Café, Miami Grill and Bistro Grande. Yogibar makes six.

Like the other kosher restaurants in Toronto, this is a family business that requires lots of hands-on attention, Shlomo said. "It's either me or my father" putting in the long hours, Shlomo said.

All the restaurants' baked goods are produced in-house. Baking starts at 10 p.m.

and goes to 7 a.m. The catering side of the business kicks off at 6 a.m.

"My father is there real early," Shlomo said.

Altogether, it's a 24-hour operation that would tax the stamina of any businessman.

"It's a hard business to begin with," even before taking into account all the steps that need to be taken to ensure the restaurants retain their kosher certification, Esses said.

And like any restaurant business, there are challenges. So far, unlike many other kosher restaurants that have come and gone, the Esses family's eateries remain going concerns.

With the economic slowdown of the last few years, people are changing their eating habits, Esses said. They're still eating out, but spending less.

People are more health conscious than in previous eras, so the menu has to reflect that by offering more salads and low fat options, he said.

At the Oasis Café downtown, located in the Exchange Tower, customers favour salads accompanied by low-fat dressings on the side. They even offer low-fat breads, he said.

Still, another trend is sure to please kosher restaurateurs. Esses said he's noticed "more people are eating kosher. The community has grown a lot, and a lot of people are going back to their roots."

Sort of like the Esses family from Aleppo.

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Netanyahu assesses Israel's economic situation

Moti Bassok and Sami Peretz
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — The State of Israel is doing "not badly" compared with other countries, and "if you deduct the Arabs and ultra-Orthodox from inequality indexes, we're in great shape," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a special interview for the Passover holiday

Equal opportunity is key, in the prime minister's view. "Populism is dangerous. It contravenes the complex truth of managing a free economy," Netanyahu said. "The right combination is between a free economy and social policy that addresses the needs of society and creates equal opportunity. The State of Israel can be proud of what we're doing."

But he qualified his remarks, saying that if the haredi and Arab communities are set aside from the calculation of inequality, "we're in great shape."

The latest annual report on Israel from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) praised the state of the Israeli economy. But it also claimed that inequality has become much greater in Israel during the last 20 years, making Israel one of the three IMF members with the worst inequality problem. If Israel doesn't take steps to integrate the Arab and haredi communities into the workforce, the IMF warned, economic growth will suffer.

In December 2011, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development also chimed in, saying Israel was among the four member countries with the widest gap between rich and poor. Israel is in good company – the other three were the United States, Mexico and the United Kingdom.

According to the prime minister, the gap originates with the haredi and Arab communities, where birth rates are high and participation in the workforce is low. In other words, families tend to be bigger and breadwinners scarcer, making poverty a problem.

These two communities are part of a problem that led the middle class to take to the streets last summer, protesting the high cost of living, because the middle class feels it's financing them, Netanyahu said.

He heard the public protests, Netanyahu said, and isolated three main accusations – the high costs of housing, of caring for young children, and of goods and services.

"About housing, I took action well before the protest began…" he said. "The second thing was to increase the building of new homes, from 30,000 to 45,000 a year. Third… was the reform of the Israel Lands Administration and the fourth thing, which is ongoing, is solving the planning problem."

He rejected the claim that a large proportion of new building projects are earmarked for haredi families and don't solve the housing problem - for non-Orthodox Israelis. "The extra 15,000 building start isn't for the haredim. It's for everybody," the prime minister said.

On complaints that food prices haven't retreated and that a basket of staple foods for Passover costs more this year than in 2011, Netanyahu said, "What's raising these prices are monopolies and cartels."

He added that the government has played a role in prices: "The most important monopoly and cartel is the government. It's the one raising the price, including through import taxes, in order to finance the bureaucracy and the system of government officials. There are all sorts of barriers that allow interested parties to charge high prices."

It's being handled, he vowed.

The protest movement may complain that the government hasn't done anything, but the fact is, it isn't true, the prime minister said.

A respectful critique of fundamentalism

Joseph Serge
Arts Editor

Like Deborah Feldman, author of the current bestseller *Unorthodox*, French author Anouk Markovits also left a Satmar chassidic community as a young woman.

To be published next month, *I Am Forbidden* (Hogarth), her first English novel, examines the sheltered Satmar community she left behind. But rather than writing a memoir detailing her own experiences or a novel about a woman struggling to leave the community, she instead wrote a novel about a woman devoted to her life in the Satmar community of Williamsburg in Brooklyn.

I Am Forbidden is a respectful examination of the community from within. It spans generations, beginning in World War II Transylvania and ending in present time New York and Paris.

It begins with Zalman Stern, a yeshiva student in Szatmar, Transylvania, the birthplace of Satmar Chassidism. Zalman is an *ilui*, a wonder of Torah knowledge, and is said to have the most beautiful voice east of Vienna. During World War II, which he survives in Romania, he adopts Mila, an orphaned daughter of his yeshiva friend. She becomes very close with Zalman's eldest daughter, Atara, who is around the same age.

After the war, Zalman also "rescues" Josef Lichtenstein, an orphaned young boy who survived the Holocaust by hiding with his gentile housekeeper. When he approaches bar mitzvah age, Josef is sent to the Satmar community in Williamsburg.

Zalman also leaves his home, now under the oppressive yoke of communism, and settles with his growing family as a cantor in Paris. He is a pious, deeply religious follower of the Satmar rebbe who escaped Hungary on the infamous Kasztner train (Israel Kasztner made a deal with the Nazis to spirit some Jews to safety at the expense of others) and settled in Williamsburg.

Zalman is unbending in his devotion to Torah and is saddened that even in the Marais, the Jewish quarter of Paris, he can't find Jews who worship like him. He warns his children to be wary of "Jewish enlightenment" and "modernism" and rails against Zionism. When the girls are caught riding a bicycle in the Luxembourg Gardens on Shabbat, he gives Atara a severe beating while Mila watches in fear.

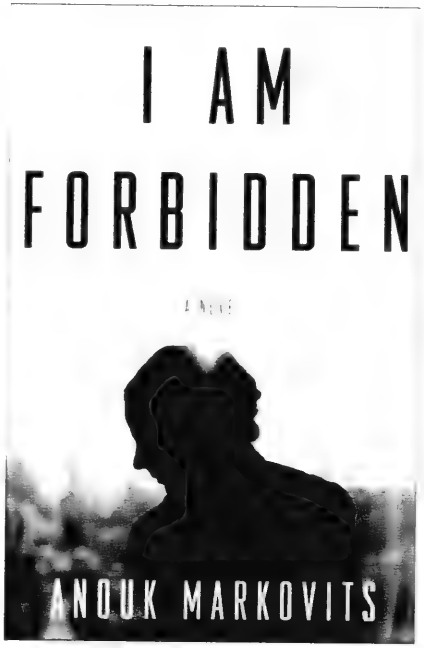
This is the first time that Atara, who is probably based on the author's own life, considers rebelling.

Although they attend a Jewish school, Mila and Atara, in their long skirts and thick stockings, are ostracized by teachers and students, especially when they do not participate in celebrations marking Israel's independence.

While Atara grows more independent and strong-willed, sneaking out to libraries to read "forbidden" books, Mila remains pious and devout. The two are sent to a seminary for girls in England where Mila is thrilled to be among the first generation of chassidic women studying Torah.

But Atara becomes disillusioned. She refuses to accept the school's teaching that pogroms, and even the Holocaust, were the result of a lack of faith and that a person who fails to connect Jewish tragedies to sin causes further suffering.

Could she marry a chassidic man, one her father chooses, embrace an Orthodox life and raise children who were forbidden to read secular books?



She asks her father if she could leave the seminary and study medicine at a secular university. Her father flatly refuses, and so Atara runs away and Zalman curses her and banishes her from his sight.

Mila also doesn't return to the seminary as she is of marrying age, and her father accepts a wedding proposal from Josef, now a yeshiva student under the guidance of the Rebbe.

The two settle in Williamsburg and have a seemingly loving relationship. There's no doubt that unlike her sister, Mila is devoted to her faith, her husband and the Rebbe. She loves the chassidic enclave she lives in, where Jews are not afraid to be Jews.

She wants only to do her duty by giving her husband offspring and enviously watches the other women pushing prams and dragging a train of children behind. Mila dutifully keeps track of her permitted and not-permitted days, but month after month, year after year, she remains childless. (Markovits describes some of the more extreme practices in the chassidic household particularly when it comes to sex and bodily fluids.)

It is customary that after 10 years with no children, the husband can divorce his wife. Mila begs her husband to do a fertility test, thinking he might be the problem, but Josef refuses on the grounds that spilling his seed in vain is forbidden.

The novel races to the present when a secret Mila kept all this time threatens to banish them from the community.

Given that the narrative spans around 80 years, Markovits does a good job of keeping the story tight and concise (the book is just under 300 pages). It makes for a fast and engaging read.

And while there's no doubt that the author is criticizing not just Chassidism but all rigid fundamentalism, she does it in a respectful and non-aggressive way. The heroine of the novel is, after all, Mila, who remains devout and faithful despite all that's thrown her way.

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Email your information to "contest@thecjn.ca" Re: **"Yonkers" Contest**, or mail to: The Canadian Jewish News, 1500 Don Mills Road, Suite 205, North York, Ont. M3B 3K4 or fax to: 416-391-0949.

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'KOSHER' LABEL IN ADVERTISING

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency Guide to Food Labelling and Advertising reads as follows:

"In the labelling, packaging and advertising of a food, the Food and Drug Regulations prohibits the use of the word kosher or any letter of the Hebrew alphabet, or any other word, expression, depiction, sign, symbol, mark, device or other representation that indicates or that is likely to create an impression that the food is kosher, if the food does not meet the requirements of the Kashruth applicable to it.

The terms "kosher style" and "kind of kosher" are not allowed, unless they meet the requirements of the Kashruth. "Jewish-style food" or "Jewish cuisine" are not objected to, although the foods may not necessarily meet the requirements of the Kashruth.

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The CJN makes no representation as to the kashruth of food products in advertisements.

EYE ON ARTS

By BILL GLADSTONE

AGO EXHIBIT PAYS TRIBUTE TO DONOR AYALA ZACKS

Chagall, **Degas**, **Matisse**, **Modigliani** and **Picasso** are among the celebrated artists represented in *A Tribute to Ayala Zacks (1912-2011)*, an exhibition currently on view at the Art Gallery of Ontario that honours both **Ayala Zacks** and the late **Samuel Zacks** for their longtime philanthropy towards the AGO.

The 17 pieces in the show focus on the female body and feature key works by women artists among the more than 300 works that Ayala donated to the AGO after Samuel's death in 1970. The exhibition also explores the bond between Toronto and Jerusalem, the two cities on which Zacks showered her devotion and generosity.

A third track of the show explores Zacks' heroic exploits during World War II and her role in the founding and building of Israel.

Born in Jerusalem, Ayala lost a husband in the war and met the Canadian-born Samuel in Switzerland. They were married in 1947. Prominent Canadian art collectors whose gifts form the basis of the AGO's modern European art collection, the couple also made major donations to Queen's University, the Hazor Archaeological Museum and the Royal Ontario Museum. The AGO exhibition remains on view until February 2013.

* * *

Names in the News: Riga-born cellist **Mischa Maisky** was gaining a reputation as one of the Soviet Union's prize musicians in the late 1960s when his sister left for Israel and his career took a turn for the worse. While still a student at the Moscow Conservatory, he was harassed by the state security police. In 1970, he was arrested for buying a tape recorder on the black market and sentenced to 18 months in a labour camp.

After his release he moved to Israel and in 1973 gave a performance at Carnegie Hall in New York. He also performed in Toronto in 1978. Only in the glasnost era of the mid-1990s did he return to Russia. He has made more than 30 recordings with the **Vienna Philharmonic** and **Berlin Philharmonic**, **London Symphony**, **Israel Philharmonic** and others.

Maisky returns to Toronto to perform with the **Moscow Soloists Chamber Orchestra**, led by conductor, and viola soloist **Yuri Bashmet**. Roy Thomson Hall, Thursday, May 3, 8 p.m. $55 to $115. 416-872-4255, www.roythomson.com

* * *

Literary Events

• Ben McNally Books hosts a book launch for *Time Snatchers*, a "middle-grade" (juvenile) science fiction novel by Toronto writer-illustrator **Richard Ungar**. The story concerns a group of orphans who become time-travelling thieves for a conniving "uncle." Ben McNally Books, 366 Bay St. (south of Richmond). Thursday, April 26, 6 to 8 p.m. Refreshments provided. Author's talk at 6:30.

• Itanu Toronto presents bestselling author **Rachel Simon**, speaking on her book *The Story of Beautiful Girl*, which features a love story involving characters with disabilities who overcome significant obstacles. Wine and cheese reception follows. Tamari Family Hall, Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst St. May 10, 7 p.m. RSVP to Anna, 416-635-2883, ext. 5263, by April 27.

• **Abraham Karpinovitch**, **Avirama Golan**, **Morley Torgov**, **Mira Magen**, **Mario Levi**, **Jasminka Domas**, **Menachem Kaiser** and **Roberta Newman** are among the authors featured in the seventh edition of Jewishfiction.net, released online earlier this month. The site bills itself as the only web address to be "devoted exclusively to the publishing of Jewish fiction." **Nora Gold**, the Canadian author and academic, is the founding editor.

* * *

Musical Notes

• TDJ Special Projects presents **The Thing Is**, an eight-piece ensemble led by composer-vocalist **Tova Kardonne** that fuses jazz, Balkan, funk and Afro-Cuban music, with allusions to Sephardi and Ashkenazi musical traditions. The Thing Is CD release takes place at 918 Bathurst Centre for the Arts, Sunday, April 22, 8 p.m. $20 at the door. www.torontojazz.com

• The Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre presents the Stars on Spadina Gala, an arts fundraiser hosted by **Marilyn Lightstone** and featuring **Theresa Tova**, **Moshe Hammer**, **Hilario Duran**, **Laura Tucker**, **Daniela Nardi**, **Ron Davis** and more. Monday, April 23, 7:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 0, ww.mnjcc.org

• Conductor-violinist **Itzhak Perlman** performs **Beethoven**'s Violin Concerto with the **Toronto Symphony Orchestra** on April 25 and 26. Perlman also performs alongside his former student and collaborator, TSO music director **Peter Oundjian**, as soloists in **J.S. Bach**'s Concerto for Two Violins on April 28. Following their performance, Perlman and Oundjian will engage in a conversation from the stage. Roy Thomson Hall, April 25, 26 and 28, 8 p.m. $49 to $179. 416-593-4828, tso.ca

* * *

At the Galleries: *Icons of Loss: The Art of Samuel Bak* showcases the art of Vilna-born Holocaust survivor **Samuel Bak**, who based many paintings in the show on a 1943 photograph showing a little boy at gunpoint during the liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto in 1943, and many others on *Melancholia I*, a 1514 engraving by **Albrecht Durer**.

Gerda Friedberg, founder of the Toronto (Neuberger) Holocaust Education Centre, who spearheaded this first major exhibition of Bak's work in Canada, initially met him in 1945 in Landsberg am Lech, a displaced persons camp. Presented in part by the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto. At the Joseph D. Carrier Gallery, Columbus Centre, 901 Lawrence Ave. W., until April 30. Admission free. 416-789-7011, ext. 300.

Turning 50 gave Calgary comedian 'lots of material'

Danny Freedman *[Cara Edell photo]*

Cara Edell
Special to The CJN

Danny Freedman began performing standup comedy one day before his 46th birthday and he's never looked back.

Now 50, the comedian has told jokes at clubs across the country and most recently co-produced an act called *Two Jews... Two Muslims and A Redneck... A Comedy Show.*

On March 31, he debuted his show at the Comedy Bar in downtown Toronto with his partner, Mike Collins, a comic from Sydenham, Ont.

"Mike and I discussed the idea of having comedians with different cultures or even different nationalities. The show isn't so much about Jews and Muslims, but rather those are the faiths of the comics who will be performing in the show," he said.

Collins, the redneck, was the host for the evening and Freedman was the opening act. Ali Hassan and Faisal Butt, both Muslims, were the next to perform, and Simon Rakoff, who's Jewish and has been a professional comedian for more than 25 years, was the show's headliner.

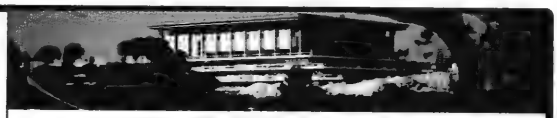
Freedman said he got his start in comedy in Calgary, where he was living at the time. "I literally just woke up one morning and decided that I wanted to try performing comedy. I had never before considered performing of any kind, so I can only presume that I had a dream that night about performing."

He went online and requested a spot on an amateur night at a local comedy club and in June found himself performing in front of 130 people. He has since performed about 30 times at Absolute Comedy in Ottawa, which he said is considered to be "one of the finest, if not the finest, comedy club in all of North America."

He performs regularly at Absolute Comedy in Toronto and has also taken the stage at Yuk Yuks in Toronto, Ottawa, Edmonton and Calgary, and at the House of Comedy in Niagara Falls, Ont. Last month, Freedman went to Florida to visit his mother and was added to the lineup at the Fort Lauderdale Comedy Club.

Continued on page 43

ISRAEL



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Happy Days' Mrs. C. to appear in *Lost in Yonkers*

Kathryn Kates
Special to The CJN

Marion Ross, best known as the lovable Mrs. Cunningham, or Mrs. C., on the 1974-'84 TV sitcom *Happy Days*, isn't playing even likable when she comes to Toronto.

She'll be tackling the role of the intimidating Grandma Kurnitz in the Neil Simon play *Lost in Yonkers*, presented by the Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company.

The play focuses on two young brothers, Arty and Jay, who are left in the care of their grandmother, in Yonkers, N.Y., during the summer of 1942. This is Ross' first time in this role, although she played a Jewish grandmother in the TV series *Brooklyn Bridge*.

Ross says she understands Grandma Kurnitz completely and has great sympathy for her. She says Simon is funny, but her character is hateful and she doesn't intend to soften her at all.

Marion Ross

"There's very little growth in this old woman. She doesn't change. All she knows and teaches her children is to survive at any cost. I have seen that in many older women who have had to carry the load of raising their children alone. They are tired and they are mad.

"She's obviously come to America after World War I, because this is a World War II story. She runs an ice cream store and works six days a week. She has lost her husband and two of her children. When she was a child in Germany, they beat her with sticks and she learned to be tough," Ross says.

"Her one daughter, Bella, didn't learn to speak until she was five years old. She was born with scarlet fever and is not quite right. She has one son who is a criminal on the street, and she has a needy son, whose wife has died and has to take this job on the road salvaging metals, so he asks his mother to take his two boys."

Ross says the grandmother objects to taking care of the boys, citing that she's an old woman who has already raised six children and who feels life has treated her poorly, and has no room in her home, but her daughter, Bella, invites the boys to move in.

Ross will share the stage with Linda Kash as Bella, Sheila McCarthy as Gert, Ari Cohen as Louie, Alesdandro Costantini as Jay, and Jesse Shimko as his brother, Arty. The theatre's co-artistic director, David Eisner, makes his Harold Green Theatre debut in the role of Eddie, and the play is directed by Jim Warren.

Ross has five Emmy Award nominations to her name, including two for Mrs. C.

The Minnesota-born actress, whose husband, Paul, died last July, feels she needs to keep her life filled up and is looking forward to her time in Toronto, having worked here in the past on television series. While here, she plans to meet with members of her late Canadian mother's side of the family, who live in Ontario.

Now living in San Fernando Valley, Calif., in a country-style home she calls Happy Days Farm, she is the mother of two grown children and has three grandchildren. Although not Jewish herself, her daughter, Ellen Kreamer, who wrote for *Friends* and *The New Adventures of Old Christine* and just created the show *I Hate My Teenage Daughter*, is married to a Jew. Her son, Jim Meskimen, is an actor and an impressionist.

Lost in Yonkers is at the Jane Mallett Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, from May 12 to June 10. For tickets to the play and Conversations on the Green, to hear host Ralph Benmergui interview Ross on May 14 at 8 p.m., call 416-366-7723 or visit online at www.stlc.com.

Broadway revival of *West Side Story* to play T.O.

Kathryn Kates
Special to The CJN

Fresh out of college, Alexandra Frohlinger landed the role of "Anybody's" in the first national tour of the Broadway revival of *West Side Story*, a role she played while in college.

"I did *West Side Story* in college at the Boston Conservatory, and I got to play Anybody's in my sophomore year," she says. "It was wonderful to come back to the role after having completed my training – with new insights, knowing now what I didn't know then."

Dancap Productions is bringing *West Side Story* to the Toronto Centre for the Arts next month.

"What is really special about this production is that it is the first production in the history of the show that Anybody's sings the *Somewhere* ballad in the ballet in Act 2, " she says.

Frohlinger, an actor, dancer and singer, might be known to Canadian audiences as a top 10 finalist in the first season of the CBC Television show *Triple Sensation* in 2007.

She describes her character, Anybody's, as a tomboy. "She is really the only character in the play that is totally unloved and has nowhere to belong," Frohlinger says.

"Anybody's is an outcast, she just doesn't fit in. She's called Anybody's because she is willing to accept any love from anyone," says the Winnipeg native, who's been on tour with the show since October 2010. Toronto is one of the last North American stops before the show travels to Japan and then finishes in August.

West Side Story is a modern musical adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*, which debuted on Broadway in 1957. Written by Arthur Laurents, with songs by Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim, the original musical was set in New York's Lower East Side, with tensions flaring between Jews and Catholics during the Passover and Easter holidays.

The authors felt uninspired and shelved the project. Years later, Laurents changed the conflict from religion to race and mounted the show, making it a hit with a message that still resonates today.

Frohlinger says there is something in the story that speaks to the human condition, about love trying to conquer evil. "In the most simple terms, it is really about... love [surviving] in a world of animosity, hatred and racism.

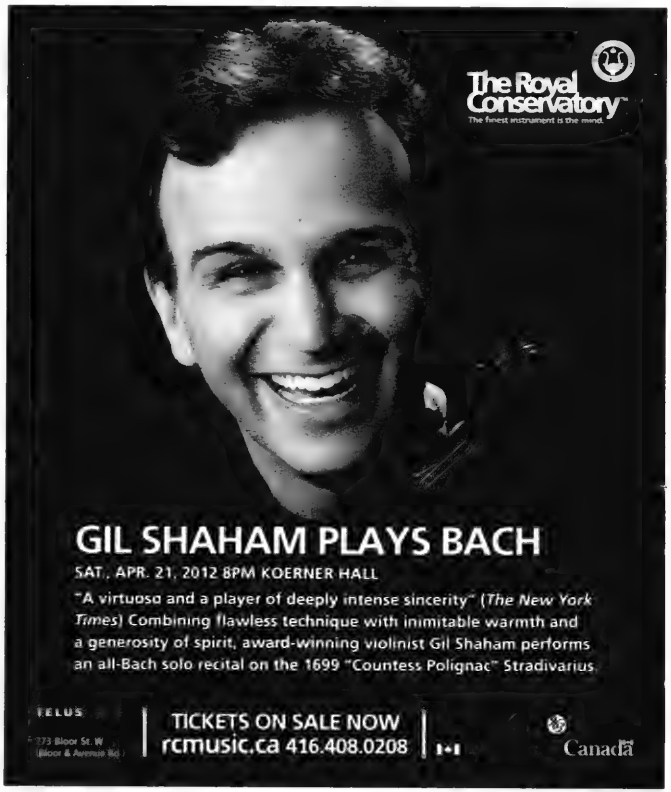
"*West Side Story* is my favourite musical, and aside from the important message of the play, it is just a wonderful show... the story, the music and the dancing."

From the age of seven, Frohlinger knew she wanted to sing, dance and act professionally. Her first foray into performing musicals was at Winnipeg's Rady Jewish Community Centre's production of *Oliver*.

Frohlinger says her goal is to perform one day on Broadway but adds that she is living her dream right now, having worked with *West Side Story*'s playwright, Laurents, before he died last year. Frohlinger has enjoyed seeing North America while on tour and taking in what each city's restaurants, boutiques and thrift stores have to offer.

Frohlinger's credits include *Les Feux Follets* at the Charlottetown Festival; *The Drowsy Chaperone* at the Manitoba Theatre Centre; in Dry Cold Productions' *The Secret Garden*, and productions with Winnipeg Jewish Theatre and Rainbow Stage. While living in Boston, she performed with the Boston Pops Orchestra as a soloist in the Baseball Night concert.

West Side Story runs at the Toronto Centre for the Arts from May 8 to June 3. Tickets can be purchased at www.DancapTickets.com, or by calling 416-644-3665 or 1-866-950-7469.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Comedy is an escape from life

Continued from page 40

"I enjoy being a comedian because making people laugh makes me happy," he said. "I also am an avid writer, and it gives me great pleasure to write a joke and then to try that joke in front of an audience. Sometimes the new joke will work the first time, but often it needs to be tweaked."

Freedman went to a comedy seminar where the instructor told the group that "comedy is medicine." As people age and face some of the harsh realities of growing old, listening to comedy is "a fantastic escape from reality," he said.

Most of the material that Freedman has written recently is about turning 50, including dating at 50, emotional and physical changes, and having parents that are also obviously aging.

"I was taught by a professional comedian that the best comedy comes from within – what is happening in my life and in my mind – and also from daily living and daily events. Turning 50 years of age was a real shock to me, and it has provided me with lots of great comedy material," he said.

At this point in his career, Freedman is still considered an amateur comedian. He's had some paid gigs, but the majority have been volunteer acts. "Comedy, like most career choices, is a very competitive endeavour. There's an incredible amount of very funny and talented comedians out there. I do hope one day that my writing and joke telling will lead to full-time work," he said.

Freedman currently sells life insurance to make a living. "It is a great career for a comedian as, since I am my own boss, it allows me the freedom and flexibility to travel to great out-of-town gigs."

Freedman said there are many struggles he's faced since he began performing. "One struggle certainly would be my age. Many of the other comics that I perform with and spend time with at shows are in their early 20s. I know that a lot of them like me and respect me for beginning my comedy career at a rather advanced age, but I also many times feel like a bit of an outcast because of my age. I have a comedian friend who is about 20 years younger than me, and she refers to me as her fake dad."

He said another major obstacle is that he's always been a numbers person. "I studied business in university. I always enjoyed a good mathematical problem, where if you worked it out correctly, there would always be an answer. Comedy is very subjective. I can perform in front of a crowd, and some of the crowd will love my comedy and others won't like it at all."

Freedman said his love of writing and performing is what keeps him motivated to be a comedian. "If one day I do become a professional comic, that would be wonderful, but if I don't, I will always consider these years and all the laughs that I've had and the wonderful friends that I've made to be lasting memories."

His advice for new comics is to "practise, practise, practise. It is essential to get as much stage time as you possibly can. There are open mics available in Toronto seven nights a week for up-and-coming comics to work on their material and their delivery."

Over the past six months, Freedman said he's pushed himself to perform as often as he can. "I plan on performing even more in the upcoming future. I also plan to continue promoting shows as often as I can. Comedy has become such a passion for me. I can't ever see the day when I will stop performing."

Check out our blog @ heebonics.ca HEEBONICS

Once Brad Cotton started writing, he couldn't stop

Cara Edell
Special to The CJN

Brad Cotton, 34, said he is a writer "not by choice but by compulsion."

Cotton, whose debut novel, *A Work in Progress*, is available in stores and online, said that while writing is now part of his regular routine, he only recently turned his passion into a career.

"I got a very late start in writing because any raw talent I had – I won school poetry and speech-writing competitions without even trying – wasn't recognized or encouraged, but instead sort of shrugged off," he said.

"The Jewish baby boomer tradition of churning out doctors, lawyers and accountants was a yoke around my neck, and no one ever told me how to take it off, or even that I could."

Raised in a middle-class family in Toronto, Cotton's "moderately conservative parents didn't have the arts play a role in their upbringing and knew little or nothing of it to pass on to their kids," he said.

"My older brother was a math whiz, my older sister [was into] science, but I excelled at recess and principal office visits. I was the black sheep."

It wasn't until Cotton left Associated Hebrew School for the public school system in Grade 7 that he "was even exposed to the idea of art as something beyond childish arts and crafts."

He was handed a trumpet in his music class and later taught himself to play guitar.

"I tried to paint and came up well short of talent. It didn't even occur to me to consider writing as a viable art until I began to read more. I read and read and read."

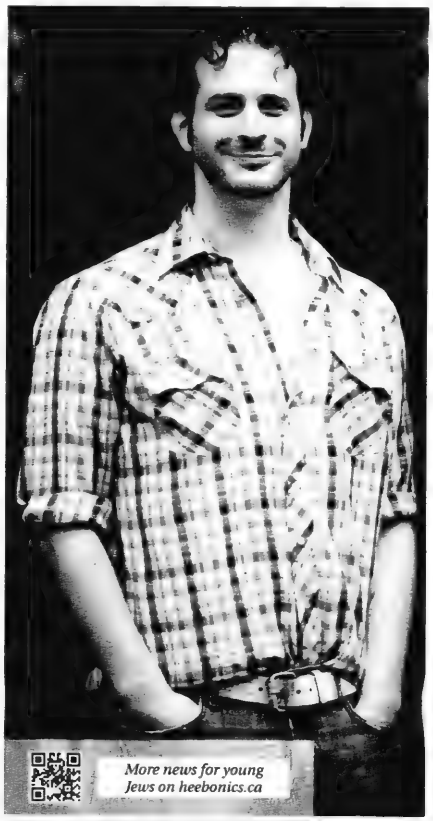
Cotton said he started writing in high school when he and his classmates were encouraged to keep a daily journal.

"Mostly short stories and misguided poetry resulted. I never thought to take it seriously and have since lost all that stuff. To me, it was just a hobby. In university, my parents were still unaware of how to encourage or support an artistic route, and I was still too green and unaware to pick up on it myself."

In his early 20s, Cotton started freelance writing for magazines, but he said he couldn't make a living at it.

"By chance, I ran into a friend, and subsequent conversations led me to sell my soul to the corporate machine and I became an advertising copywriter," he said.

His work schedule and responsibilities prevented him from writing for his own enjoyment until a few years ago, when he decided he "simply couldn't hold off any longer."



More news for young Jews on heebonics.ca

Brad Cotton

He sat down, started typing, and has since completed three novels and one screenplay. He is now in the early stages of his fourth book.

A Work in Progress tells the story of Danny Bayle, a writer whose life is in shambles. His girlfriend has left him, and his grandfather has just passed away. Unable to focus on writing, he ventures into the world in an attempt to jumpstart a new life. He meets some interesting characters, and his new friends begin to influence what could be the story of his life.

"I suppose I find writing therapeutic," Cotton said. "It's just something I can do with all the thoughts and ideas I collect in my head. Writers tend to be watchers or critics of life, for better or worse. That's what writing is, really, an expression of how one sees the world."

Cotton completed his first novel in his early 20s. "It was a little too amateurish to attempt publishing," he said.

He spent the next few years practising and polishing his writing and began *A Work in Progress* when he felt he could "greatly surpass" his original attempt.

"I can't say *A Work in Progress* was inspired by one single thing, but instead was made up of many smaller ideas that seemed to fit together well," he said. 'The main theme, however, is loss, which is something to which everyone can relate."

After "a wretched parade of single-page rejection letters one after the other," Cotton said he received a positive response from Now or Never Publishing.

"Trying to get a book published is certainly not easy, nor is it for the weak of constitution. As a writer, or artist, or musician, you have to be able to deal with criticism on an ongoing basis. If you're in the business of padding your ego, you should be looking for a different job."

Cotton said he's "delighted" that *A Work in Progress* has been published, although he doesn't consider himself successful yet.

"Success as an author comes if and when you can reach an audience. Small or large, a readership is really what makes a writer successful. If your writing isn't read and enjoyed, or at least considered provocative in some way, it's just words on a page, like a menu, only you can't order food off a bad novel."

As an author, Cotton is "chiefly motivated by improvement."

He said he's not overly competitive by nature and likes to think he's aware of his limitations.

"What keeps me going as a writer is that I know I have yet to reach my full potential."

Cotton's "humble" advice to any writer is to keep going.

"If you're a good writer, keep writing, if you're a bad writer, keep writing. Talk to other writers, editors, publishers, agents and even readers. Ask people to read what you've written and accept all criticism for what it's worth."

He has already completed a second novel called *The Boundless*. Cotton said the book explores whether it's possible to leave your entire life behind and start a new one.

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Website helps students get relevant WORK EXPERIENCE

Ben Wise

Vicky Tobianah
Special to The CJN

Ben Wise is a graduate of the University of Western Ontario's Ivey School of Business who, like many other grads, had a difficult time finding a job.

Like many of his friends, most of his work experience consisted of being a summer-camp counsellor, which, as he put it, "wasn't exactly turning heads in the business world. I struggled because I didn't have enough work experience," said Wise.

In Canada, youth unemployment reached a high of 30 per cent just a few months ago and is still higher than average at 17 per cent.

Many students pursue liberal arts degrees, which do not have a career path as a business or engineering degree, and statistics show that 82 per cent of students are enrolled in programs that only 10 per cent of employers hire from.

One of the greatest hurdles students encounter is a paradox – you can't get a job without experience and you can't get experience without a job. Wise hoped that there might be a way to solve this problem.

He did end up finding a job, but his job search left him with a passion to help recent graduates find meaningful employment. Ten years later, while working at a small consulting firm, Wise would see the valuable work student interns were doing.

"We would have interns working 12 months out of the year, and I was constantly amazed by the quality of work they would produce and how much you could trust them to get done. If students were capable and eager to do this work, and businesses are eager to get this help, I thought, why not bring it together?"

That's when the idea for SpringTern developed. SpringTern is a not-for-profit business, connecting students and businesses to complete short-term volunteer projects.

It is specifically designed for small businesses that may not be able to afford to hire a part-time employee or intern, but need to get a small project done. Students, in turn, gain work experience, expand their networks and get a reference on completion of the project.

"I think that when students are in school, they are focusing a lot on their classes, which is obviously not a bad thing, but especially in later years, you start thinking, 'I know I'll need a job after I graduate,' but you assume you'll deal with it then. Suddenly, you're a graduate, and you don't have the support structure of university, which makes it even harder to find a job," he said.

"A lot of universities have great programs, but the courses you take may not be directly applicable to a job, so a student has to show how to apply the soft skills they learned in university in the working world."

Wise, 29, grew up in the Jewish community of Thornhill, Ont. He attended Thornhill Secondary School and fondly recalls spending his summers with friends at Camp Walden in Muskoka.

He said these encounters helped him gain support for SpringTern.

"When I launched my company, a lot of the initial listings came from my personal network, especially the network I had made from those experiences, and it helped me find people to work with and bounce ideas off of," he said.

The Prosserman Jewish Community Centre was one of the first organizations to post a project on the SpringTern site.

During his undergraduate career, Wise spent a summer working at eBay. "It was a really cool role. It was a small team of about 25 people, so if you were an intern, everyone wanted to get you to help them. I met a lot of great people, many of whom I'm still in touch with," he said.

He then completed his MBA at Western's Ivey School of Business.

Now, he works as a Rich Media campaign manager at Google, while running SpringTern and his charity, Step by Step Africa, which fights HIV/AIDS in Africa by providing funding to partners in the region.

"After my undergraduate degree, I went to Ghana for nine months and I volunteered in an orphanage. I got exposed to issues surrounding HIV/AIDS, so when I came back, I set up the charity and I have been doing it for the last five or six years," he said.

He hopes that SpringTern helps ease students' difficulties searching for a job after graduation.

"It's a great way for business to meet young talent and for students to start professional networking," he said. "What I would love to see is someone who completes a project through SpringTern and then a few months later, starts working there full time."

For more information about SpringTern, visit www.springtern.com.

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Official regrets school's inclusion in sports group

ITA

DALLAS — The Beren Academy Orthodox Jewish day school should never have been accepted to the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools (TAPPS), the association's director told a Texas newspaper.

"We shouldn't have accepted them in the first place," TAPPS director Edd Burleson told the *Dallas Morning News* in a recent interview.

The Robert M. Beren Academy of Houston made international headlines in March after requesting that a semifinal championship basketball game be rescheduled to avoid a conflict with the Jewish Sabbath.

The game was rescheduled after a group of parents of students filed a lawsuit against the association. The team won the semifinal game, but went on to lose the final, also rescheduled to a later time on Saturday after the Sabbath was over.

Burleson told the newspaper that he believes that the association would have won the case if it had gone to court.

"If we had fought it, we would have won," Burleson told the newspaper. "But that would have taken weeks. We didn't have the time.

"What else would you want me to say?" Burleson said in the interview. "Want me to come up with some politically correct gobbledygook? I can't. I'm telling you that's how I feel."

TAPPS had said in a statement posted on its website following its decision not to change the semifinal that when the Beren Academy first met with the association's board in 2009 to discuss membership, it was told that tournament games are scheduled on Friday and Saturday, and that the school's athletic director said he "understood" and "did not see a problem."

The Texas Catholic Conference Education Department, representing 43 Texas Catholic high schools, told the *Houston Chronicle* that Burleson's comments came as a surprise and that the group is committed to reforms that will make TAPPS more welcoming to a diverse membership.

If Burleson's position remains the same, the department said, Catholic schools "will reconsider their future affiliation with TAPPS." It also said that in a meeting last week with TAPPS member schools, Burleson committed to working to resolve diversity issues.

TAPPS rejected a Muslim school from Houston for membership in 2010.

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Curler wins Manitoba championship

Compiled by CJN Staff

WINNIPEG — Kyle Doering continues to excel on the pebbled ice.

The reigning Manitoba junior men's champion won his second straight Manitoba Boys 16 and Under championship when he defeated Winnipeg's Matt Dunstone 5-4 in the final at the St. Vital Curling Club, the *Winnipeg Sun* reported.

In another event held earlier, Doering defeated Dunstone 5-1 in an early-bird Canola Junior Men's Berth Bonspiel in Souris, Man. to win one of the two places in next year's provincials.

"It's awesome not to have to worry about qualifying now," the *Sun* quoted Doering saying. "Being the defending champion, it would be awful not to make it."

Doering, 16, went 9-3 in his first trip to the M&M Meat Shops Canadian Juniors, held in Napanee last February. His rink finished in third place overall.

Road hockey tournament to raise funds for kids

Compiled by CJN Staff

The Prosserman JCC and Chai Lifeline will host the inaugural "Game On" road hockey tournament to help raise funds for children dealing with pediatric disabilities and illness. All funds raised will go to support the participation of these youngsters in summer camps and sports programs.

The road hockey tournament will take place on June 17 at the Prosserman JCC, 4588 Bathurst St. From 300-400 people are expected to play, with another 1,000 spectators, supporters and volunteers to attend what is being billed "an event for the ages." Organizers are hoping to raise $100,000 at the event.

Individual adult players can register at a cost of $180, team registration is $1,000 and individual youth registration is $100. Teams are asked to collect pledges as well, with the top fundraisers eligible for prizes, including a chance to play in the celebrity all-star game.

Teams will be divided into adult and youth divisions and play at least three games. Each team must have a minimum of five players and a maximum of eight.

Four players per team will be on the road at one time, including one goalie. Players must bring their own equipment.

Mend fences: Life's too short

Dear Ella,

At every major holiday or family event, I encounter the same problem, and this Passover was no exception. My two nieces don't speak to one another.

I have not taken sides in their feud, but have expressed my opinion about it. Although I agreed with Deborah, the younger of the two sisters, that the events that started this feud were handled improperly, I said I would not exclude Daliah, her sister, from family functions. But Daliah would not attend any gathering if Deborah was going to be there.

After 10 years, Daliah finally concluded that she had missed out on enough family functions and accepted my invitation for Passover this year. When Deborah found out, she called the night before the seder to tell me that she and her family would not be attending.

Ask Ella

By Ella Burakowski

I later heard from their brother, Richard, that Deborah felt that "I had made my choice," and I believe she is angry with me now.

I refuse to be put in the middle of this war and don't want a repeat of this stress every holiday. It takes years off my life. How should I handle this?

Frustrated Auntie

Dear Frustrated Auntie,

Sometimes people get so caught up in their grudges and pride that they can't see past it and how it affects their children, spouses and extended families. Life is too short to hang on to this kind of animosity for more than 10 years, but this should not be your problem. This feud belongs to Deborah and Daliah, and if they can't see, or don't care, what it's doing to the rest of the family, I think you need to stop caring, too. Next time there's a family gathering, you're not going to be the one to choose between them. You need to drop the ball squarely in their court and let the chips fall where they may.

For your next gathering, send both of these gals an e-mail, and make sure to use both their names in the "send to" line.

It should read something like this:

Dear Deborah and Daliah,

On [insert date] we are having an [insert event]. I have invited the whole family.

First let me say that I love you both. In the past, you have made it very uncomfortable, forcing me to choose between the two of you, and I can't do it any longer. It would be very meaningful to me if you could put aside your differences and enjoy this important day with us. I know it would mean the world to the rest of the family as well.

I hope you give this some thought before you answer out of anger. Please let me know by [insert date] how many in your family will be attending. Once you get past the first five minutes, I promise you will enjoy catching up with everyone. Please don't let pride stand in your way. Life is too short. I hope more than anything to see you both on this special occasion.

Love [insert name]

Then sit back and wait for the reply. This isn't your problem. You didn't create it, and you shouldn't be in the middle of it. Go ahead and plan your event. If they can't get past this, unfortunately you'll have to get used to moving on without them. It will be their loss if they choose not to attend.

Readers may submit their questions to Ella at The CJN, *e-mail: ellacjn@gmail.com. But Ella is not a professional counsellor. She brings to the questions posed by readers her unique brand of earthy wisdom. Her advice is not a replacement for medical, legal or any other advice. For serious problems, consult a professional.*

APPLE RASPBERRY MATZO BREI

2 tbsp. butter • 1 apple, peeled, diced • 1/2 c chopped pecans • 1/4 c brown sugar • 2 tbsp. lemon juice • 1/2 tsp. cinnamon • 8 matzo boards • 3 c boiling water • 6 eggs • 3 tbsp. sugar • 3 tbsp. butter • 1/2 c fresh raspberries

In heavy skillet, melt 2 tbsp. butter; add pecans stirring until fragrant. Remove from skillet and set aside. Saute apples in pan 4-5 min until soft. Add brown sugar; cook until apples are glazed. Remove from heat; add lemon juice, cinnamon, reserved pecans.

Break matzos into 2" pieces; place in large colander in sink. Slowly pour boiling water over using tongs to turn pieces once; drain. In lg bowl, beat eggs until foamy. Add 3 tbsp. sugar and mix well. Stir in matzo pieces until coated. Melt 3 tbsp. margarine in another large skillet over medium heat. Add matzo mixture, cook, stirring occasionally until golden brown 8-10 min. Stir in apple mixture; cook another couple of minutes until warm. Transfer to serving plate and sprinkle with raspberries.

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On cjnews.com

The CJN's French-language reporter in Montreal, Elias Levy, writes about:

A new, state-of- the-art science lab, which has been opened at École Maïmonide's Parkhaven campus as part of the school's recent renovations.

"A Chance to Shine" which is the theme of an Agence OMETZ fundraiser May 2 at Théâtre Maisonneuve in Place des Arts, for the world premier of *Le Petit Prince*, produced by Les Grands Ballets Canadiens.

Exclusive to cjnews.com

The CJN's Hebrew-language columnist, Yosef Tastassa, talks about the holidays: From slavery to freedom.

Web columnist Rabbi Michael Stavsky writes about the history and laws surrounding *Yizkor*, which is said on the last day of Pesach.

Shoah Week in Winnipeg is scheduled for April 15 to 19. This year's program will feature talks by two young academics.

The Segal Centre for Performing Arts in Montreal is going out on a creative limb next season with four of its six main-stage plays being original works drawing upon local talent.

Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has no intention of "wiping Israel off the map," a respected Israeli historian and academic said.

No grey health-care tsunami coming

Last year was not a great year for seniors in Canada. There seemed to be an increased propensity to blame Canada's economic problems disproportionately on the costs of health care, and seniors seemed to be the villains, depending on the commentator.

There were media reports about the "problem" and what steps could be taken to change the course of seniors allegedly consuming economic resources.

I answered one interviewer by suggesting that we give everyone free cigarettes and encourage smoking so that by the time people reach 65, they would all keel over and die. That would save the government huge amounts of money for pensions and health care. The interviewer paused until it clicked that my comment was ironic. The benefits of health care and its miraculous impact on the longevity and well-being of our Canadian citizenry, including its seniors, were not acknowledged in the media.

Senior Side of Life

Michael Gordon

Historian Michael Bliss suggested that we should make users of the health-care system pay more for services through the income-tax system, based on use. However, that would have a very modest effect, as any extra revenues would come from tax-based charges to income, which for most seniors levels off considerably as they grow older.

A TD Bank study done last year also blew the "tsunami" horn, and its predictions included the projection that by 2030, health care would make up 80 per cent of the total provincial budget, up from the current 46 per cent. This did not take into account medical progress that often alters costs. For example, during the 1950s polio epidemic, the number of hospitalized, polio-afflicted patients in iron lungs seemed to be growing exponentially. But within a few years, the disease was vanquished with a vaccine that virtually eliminated it and its associated costs.

Of the 10 ways to cut health-care spending in Ontario suggested by the TD study, some specifically affect seniors. These included scaling back the Ontario Drug Benefit for high-income seniors so that it focuses on seniors in need. The problem with this suggestion is that the number of high-income seniors is small, so the health-care budget savings would be minimal.

Another suggestion was to increase bulk purchases of drugs to get better prices, which is already being done. The suggestion to incorporate a health-care benefit tax into the income-tax structure may increase revenues, but it would not change health-care utilization, as most use is not discretionary.

Seniors do not use medical care nor take medications for fun. The suggestion to take bolder action to promote healthy lifestyles is important, but while healthy lifestyles decrease the risk of certain conditions, they do not confer immortality.

The good news for seniors and policy makers is that two recent studies suggest that the "grey tsunami" poised to overwhelm the health-care system may be exaggerated. These studies found that of all the factors affecting the costs of health care, the aging population ranked low on the list of cost-drivers.

It is hoped that when the data presented in these studies are considered, the focus will be redirected elsewhere, rather than looking at seniors as the convenient scapegoat on which to blame increasing health-care costs, which although a challenge are not insurmountable.

Dr. Michael Gordon is medical program director of palliative care at Baycrest and co-author with Bart Mindszenthy of Parenting Your Parents (Dundurn Press). His latest book, Moments that Matter: Cases in Ethical Eldercare, follows his previous book, Brooklyn Beginnings: A Geriatrician's Odyssey. All can be researched at his website: http://www.drmichaelgordon.com.

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This Week

National

TJFF to celebrate its 20th anniversary. *Page 3*

Gaza children's art exhibit draws criticism. *Page 29*

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Penn State centre named to Hall of Fame. *Page 38*

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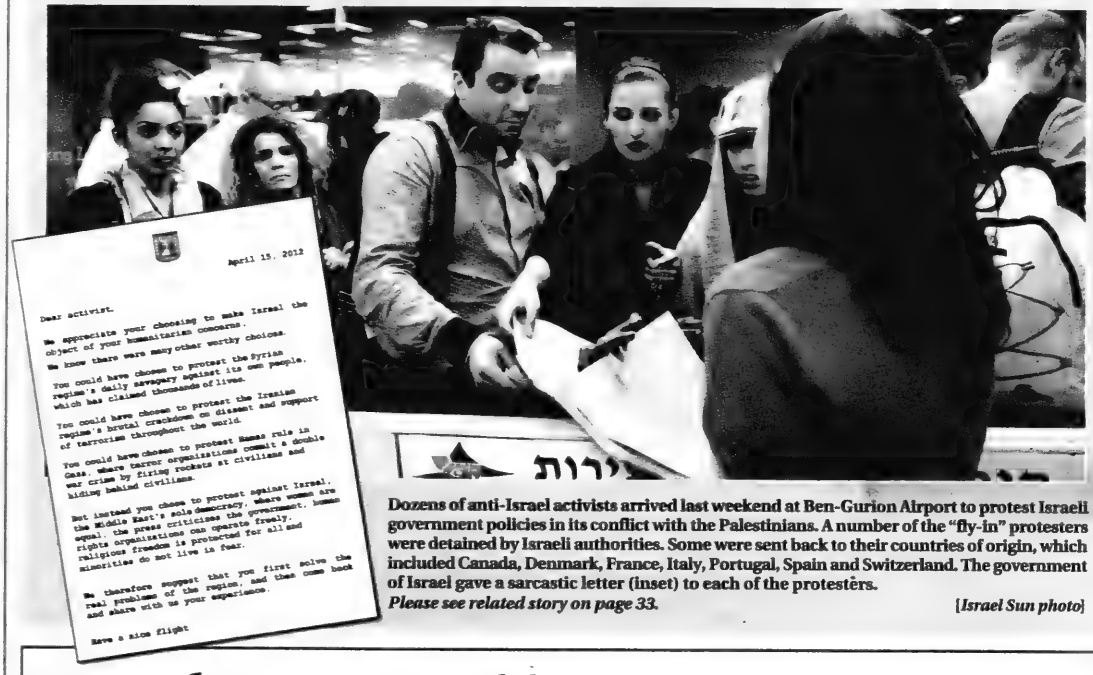
Anti-Israel activists land at Ben-Gurion



April 15, 2012

Dear activist,

We appreciate your choosing to make Israel the object of your humanitarian concerns.

We know there were many other worthy choices.

You could have chosen to protest the Syrian regime's daily savagery against its own people, which has claimed thousands of lives.

You could have chosen to protest the Iranian regime's brutal crackdown on dissent and support of terrorism throughout the world.

You could have chosen to protest Hamas rule in Gaza, where terror organizations commit a double war crime by firing rockets at civilians and hiding behind civilians.

But instead you chose to protest against Israel, the Middle East's sole democracy, where women are equal, the press criticizes the government, human rights organizations can operate freely, religious freedom is protected for all and minorities do not live in fear.

We therefore suggest that you first solve the real problems of the region, and then come back and share with us your experience.

Have a nice flight

Dozens of anti-Israel activists arrived last weekend at Ben-Gurion Airport to protest Israeli government policies in its conflict with the Palestinians. A number of the "fly-in" protesters were detained by Israeli authorities. Some were sent back to their countries of origin, which included Canada, Denmark, France, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland. The government of Israel gave a sarcastic letter (inset) to each of the protesters.
Please see related story on page 33.
[*Israel Sun photo*]

Jewish Agency tackles communal divisions

Paul Lungen
Staff Reporter

If you're a volunteer with aspirations to do something good for your community, focusing on the unity of the Jewish People will certainly test your skills.

You might want to start with something a little easier, like finding a cure for cancer or turning the United Nations into a force for good, before you tackle that thorny subject.

Jewish disunity seems to be about as old as the Jewish People itself. The Bible tells us the story of Joseph and his brothers who sold him into slavery. Then there was the split of the 10 northern tribes from those centred on Jerusalem, and 1,000 years later Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed – events rabbinic sages attributed to baseless hatred among Jews.

Today there are rifts between and within the various religious, political and other streams of Jewry.

The Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI), an organization meant to serve all the Jewish People, is addressing these divisive issues. It recently established the committee on the unity of the Jewish People, co-chaired by Shoel Silver, a Toronto-area businessman with a long history of involvement in the agency.

Continued on page 22

Shoel Silver

Shmini
Candlelighting: 7:49
Havdalah: 8:53
Greater Toronto Area

Yad Vashem releases vast cache of Soviet-era archives – see page 32

CANADA

UJA Head Retires

HAMILTON — The executive director of UJA Federation of Hamilton, Gerald Fisher, will be retiring at the end of July after 11 years in the position, the federation announced earlier this month. In his resignation letter, Fisher cited "his ongoing recovery from recent cardiac surgery" as a key reason for the decision, the federation said.

Arab MK Speaks

OTTAWA — Israeli Arab MK Ahmad Tibi was slated to speak in Ottawa April 17 as a guest of the Ottawa Palestine Solidarity Network, an anti-Israel group formed in 2006 by unions, students, and community and faith groups. Tibi, the deputy speaker of the Knesset, was first elected in 1999 and was one of four MKs elected on the United Arab List in 2006 and 2009. A Hebrew University-trained physician and former adviser to Palestinian Authority president Yasser Arafat, Tibi was scheduled to speak at an event marking Land Day, the day many Palestinians and their supporters mourn the birth of Israel in 1948.

WORLD

Man Attacked

KIEV — A Jewish man was attacked after he left a seder at a shul in Kiev. The man, 25, was found the night of April 8, nearly a full day after the attack, with serious head injuries believed to be from glass bottles. He is in critical condition in a Kiev hospital. He also had bruises on his upper body. After a day of searching, he was found in an area near the synagogue, where attacks by neo-Nazis have occurred in the past, Yaakov Zilberman, director of the Kiev Jewish community, told Ynet. Police are reportedly reluctant to investigate the attack as an anti-semitic hate crime and are looking into the possibility he tripped in the street. Zilberman said he believes the man was targeted because he was wearing a kippah when he left the shul.

Feld Carr Feted

NEW YORK — Torontonian Judy Feld Carr will receive the Simon Wiesenthal Center's (SWC) Medal of Valor April 19 for three decades of work to free Jews prohibited from leaving Syria. She'll receive the award at the SWC's annual tribute dinner, to be held in New York. Others being honoured include the Tuskegee Airmen, African-American pilots in World War II, for breaking racial barriers, as well as Thomas Secunda, founding partner of Bloomberg, who will get SWC's humanitarian award for his philanthropic work.

Commodore Computers Founder Dies

Jack Tramiel

SAN FRANCISCO — Jack Tramiel, the Polish-born Holocaust survivor who founded Commodore Business Machines in Toronto in 1955 and later sold millions of Commodore 64 computers, died April 8 of heart failure in Palo Alto, Calif. He was 83.

Tramiel's family was confined to the Lodz Ghetto and he was liberated by the U.S. Army from the Ahlem labour camp in Germany in April 1945. He immigrated to the United States in 1947 with his wife, a Bergen-Belsen survivor.

In 1952, he opened a typewriter shop in the Bronx, N.Y., but moved to Toronto in 1955, where he had family, when he learned Canadian law would allow him to exclusively import Italian typewriters.

He moved Commodore to California in 1968, and in 1977, it came out with the PET Computer, putting it in competition with Apple and Tandy. The PET was followed in 1980 by the VIC-20, the first computer under $300, and in 1982 by the massively successful Commodore 64 , which sold for half as much as its main Apple competitor. It also had colour graphics and was the first personal computer with an audio synthesizer chip.

Tramiel resigned from the company abruptly in 1984 and bought the video-game division of Atari Corp.. After Atari lost ground to newer gaming competitors, he sold his stake and retired in the mid-1990s.

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TJFF keeps growing after 20 years

Jewish film festival opens May 3

Bill Gladstone
Special to The CJN

The 20th annual Toronto Jewish Film Festival opens May 3 at the Cineplex Odeon Varsity with the English-Canadian première of *A Bottle in the Gaza Sea*, a France-Canada co-production.

The movie is about a teenage Israeli girl who receives an e-mail response from a young Palestinian, who calls himself "Gazaman," after he retrieves her message of peace from a bottle that had been thrown into the Mediterranean Sea.

A Bottle in the Gaza Sea is one of 96 films from some 15 countries to be screened at the festival, which runs until May 13 at the Bloor Hot Docs Cinema, the Al Green Theatre and several other venues around town.

In 1993, its first year of operation, the Toronto Jewish Film Festival (TJFF) showed 35 films over five days at the unrefurbished 900-seat Bloor Cinema (now the Bloor Hot Docs Cinema). At the time there were lineups around the block for the feature attraction, *Black to the Promised Land*, which had to be screened three times after writer Michele Landsberg gave it a rave review in the *Toronto Star*.

Continued on page 12

***A Bottle in the Gaza Sea* is a French and Canadian production shot in Israel.**

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Commemorations of peoplehood

From the editor's desk...

We are constantly reminded, and validly so, that the Exodus of the Israelites – our ancestors – from their slavery in Egypt has been one of the most universally affecting and influential themes in western civilization. The story is an explicit testimonial to the power of belief and to the power of hope. One would be hard pressed to think of another narrative that has as meaningfully inspired the hearts of men and women across so wide an ecumenical swath.

But even as Miriam leads the awestruck former slaves in singing a thankful song of universal significance after the miracle of the Red Sea, she is first and foremost leading her *own* people. Even after they experienced the frightful 10 plagues, nothing so irrevocably convinced the former slaves that their slave masters were finally vanquished than the unbelievable result at the Red Sea.

At the foot of the holy mountain of Sinai, the former rabble of slaves began the long, arduous, intergenerational process of understanding freedom and becoming free men and women.

Thus, though many outside the Jewish faith have applied the lessons of the Exodus for their own instructional purposes, we must never forget that it is the Exodus that launches the divinely scripted saga of the peoplehood of the Children of Israel. The covenant at Sinai, which we recall, discuss and celebrate during the Passover seder, marks the beginning of the Jews as a people.

Passover is but the first of a quadruplicate of links on the steel chain of Jewish history, hammer blows on the anvil of collective memory, that come in quick succession in the months of Nisan and Iyar.

Barely one week after Passover ends, we commemorate Yom Hashoah v'Hagvurah on the 27th day of Nisan. (See the editorial and the Perspectives essay.)

And then barely one week after that, on the fourth and fifth day of Iyar, respectively, we mark Yom Hazikaron – Remembrance Day for the fallen of the State of Israel – and celebrate Yom Ha'atzma'ut, Israel's independence Day. (The community-wide commemoration of Yom Hazikaron in Toronto will be held at Beth Tzedec Congregation on April 24.)

Unless one feels deep in one's essence a sense of belonging to the tiny, remarkable group we call the Jewish People, it is very difficult to feel the special connectivity between these four calendar events.

Alas, for so many of the younger generation, schooled less in the traditions, faith, history, literature and culture of our people, but rather more in a milieu lacking any endearment to Judaism and suffused with distorted portrayals of Israel, that feeling of special connectivity is as familiar to them as is the secret work at the CERN laboratory for particle physics in Europe. It may be vaguely familiar, but they are mostly untouched by its meaning. How sorrowfully sad that is.

Not to grasp, or to understand, or to catch on to, or to celebrate the historic – I would even add the metaphysical – enormity of the rise of the sovereign Jewish state at the near midpoint of the last century is to fail to see the wondrousness of the place of mankind in the flow of time.

After the recent death of journalist Mike Wallace, a film clip surfaced on the Internet of an interview he conducted in May 1958, 10 years after the rise of Israel, with the incomparable Israeli diplomat Abba Eban.

Wallace was his trademark "I'll-show-you-how-tough-I-am" self trying to steer Eban into answering questions about Jews, Judaism, Zionism and dual loyalty that Wallace considered to be hard-hitting and, obviously, clever. But Wallace was no match for the scholar and scholarly Eban.

"We believe that Israel's emergence is the greatest collective event in the history of the Jewish People, and that there is no pride and no dignity for a Jew such as those to be found in giving aid and sustenance to Israel in the great hour of her resurgence," Eban explained to Wallace asking, "whether a Jew would be less of a Jew if he were opposed to Zionism."

Earlier, Eban had succinctly and incisively described the hour of Israel's resurgence as occurring at "the climax of the Jewish People's agony."

Wallace hectored Eban again with the same question. Eban responded again with words and meaning that vastly outstripped Wallace's self-centred questioning, and probably, understanding.

"I would say that a man who opposed the State of Israel, and the great movement which brought it about, would be in revolt against the most constructive and creative events in the life of the Jewish People, and it's a fact that the great majority of our kinsmen everywhere, are exalted and uplifted by these events."

Can we say today with the same quiet confidence of that of ambassador Eban in 1958 that the great majority of our kinsmen everywhere are exalted and uplifted by the event of the Jewish People's sovereign return to history?

If we cannot, then it is our task to enable us to say that it is so once again.

– *MBD*

RACHEL WEEPING

By George Bernstein

I left my Babylon
to
liberate
our
dead.

But they who loved me
flew from
chimneys
thrust
into
carbon
sky

Their smoke of passage
slipped through
my ancient
fingers
frozen
with
prayer.

In their patient
rising
through
the
galaxies
do they not grow weary?

The dead must have a place
somewhere
to rest?

O, Bubbe Sura
I see you
in the raven clouds.

Zeide Asher
You are the vapor
that surrounds me.

I weep for
forty nights
and forty days
I weep

till the dove's lips
drink
deeply
from the fountain
of my eyes.

Kids take leadership roles in youth network

Riva Gold
Special to The CJN

Greater Toronto Area: meet the Jewish Youth Network (JYN.) Formerly the Chabad Youth Network (CYN), the five-year-old non-profit organization has changed its name to reflect its mandate and broader clientele as it attracts teens from across the Jewish community.

Rabbi Shmuli Nachlas and Chani Nachlas founded the Jewish Youth Network. *(Ben Katan photo)*

"Over the last few years, our spectrum has been widening. We've been engaging more youth and teens from all kinds of Jewish backgrounds and affiliations – some with none at all," said Rabbi Shmuli Nachlas, who co-founded the organization with his wife, Chani.

The JYN prides itself on drawing teens from all walks of life and parts of the Jewish community to social, educational and volunteer programming.

"The name 'Jewish Youth Network' more represents our clientele, and the student base we're serving. We want to be inclusive of everyone, whether you're Orthodox, Reform or unaffiliated," he said.

Throughout the year, the grassroots organization runs Torah 4 Teens, youth lounges, retreats, Hebrew school and leadership programs. After Passover, they are taking a group on a Shabbaton to Washington, D.C., to tour the city and visit the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The JYN also runs teen aid and community service programs through a program called Teens for the Community.

"We're continuing to expand our educational and social events, and recently we've had hundreds come to volunteer and co-ordinate volunteer initiatives," Rabbi Nachlas said.

He hopes his organization will help keep young people attached to Israel, each other, and Judaism.

The group recently held a matzah drive to help needy families at Passover and organized a basketball fundraiser.

Rabbi Nachlas believes the organization has been successful because the teens involved have been able to take ownership of the programs.

"In this day and age, in the era of social media, the world has changed a lot," he said. "The JYN is very much run from the bottom up, with kids taking serious leadership roles. All of it is done and led by youth, and that's key to staying relevant."

Rabbi Nachlas says the programs themselves vary from year to year to better align with the interests of current participants. "Our goal is to inspire the Jewish youth. How that's done will change, and kids will steer us to keep us engaging," he said.

Currently, the JYN also runs its own video channel, which can be found through their website at jewishyouth.ca.

"We allow for the expression of individuals, because it makes kids feel like it's something of their own. That's why they're excited to get their friends on board," Rabbi Nachlas said.

The JYN runs its activities out of two drop-in centres, one at Bathurst Street and Highway 407 and the other at Bathurst Street and Eglinton Avenue.

For more information, visit Facebook.com/jewishyouth or phone 905-889-7582.

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Bat mitzvah girl raising money for soup kitchens

Vicky Tobianah
Special to The CJN

When it comes to bat mitzvahs, most 12-year-old girls are busy deciding on a theme, a dress and a DJ. When Sydney Cohn started thinking about her bat mitzvah, she wanted to make it a meaningful experience.

Sydney Cohn designs bracelets to help others in the community.

She decided to design bracelets to be sold to her family and friends, with all proceeds donated to charity.

"I wanted to make charity part of my bat mitzvah because when I become a woman, I want to help the community," Sydney said.

Infusing meaning into Jewish rituals runs in her family. When her brother celebrated his bar mitzvah, he collected socks for Ve'ahavta, a Canadian humanitarian and relief organization.

A Grade 7 student at Robbins Hebrew Academy day school in Toronto, Sydney said the school's emphasis on tikkun olam (repairing the world) and her family's community-oriented values motivated her to start this project.

"A few weeks ago, the Beth Sholom bar and bat mitzvah program took the kids to Out of the Cold, to help serve dinner to homeless people," said Miriam Blumstock, Sydney's mother. "We have delivered Passover boxes, done book and toy drives and sponsored community dinners at shelters. We're always trying to make the kids aware of how fortunate they are and how important it is to help others."

Combining her interest in fashion and art, Sydney decided to design the bracelets herself, with the word "souperhero" written on the bracelets.

"When you're helping the community, you're a superhero, but I spell it 'souperhero' because the money is going to Soup Sisters, and to Leket Israel, the national food bank in Israel," Sydney said.

Soup Sisters is a non-profit organization that provides homemade soup to 20 residential shelters across Canada. The proceeds for Leket Israel will help fund their Sandwiches for Kids program, which prepares more than 7,000 sandwiches daily for needy children in 102 schools in Israel.

Sydney has sold 130 bracelets since she began this project in early March.

"I'm really proud of her. It's her idea, her design, her initiative and she's really taken the lead. I hope she sells them all and raises awareness. I think it will be a big feeling of accomplishment for her," Blumstock said.

For more information, visit www.facebook.com/areyouasouperhero.

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Shul hosts Out of the Cold art show

Frances Kraft
Staff Reporter

Beth Sholom Synagogue, the location for a weekly Out of the Cold program the shul hosts with Beth Tzedec Congregation, will also be the venue for an upcoming art show and sale featuring works by participants in the program.

Out of the Cold is a volunteer-run program based in churches and synagogues that provides food and shelter to the homeless.

Marni Wolf, a 25-year-old who works for a non-profit organization that puts together photo exhibits for charities, said that about 15 participants take part in the art program. She runs it with her friend Melanie Cheskes, a 27-year-old painter and social work student.

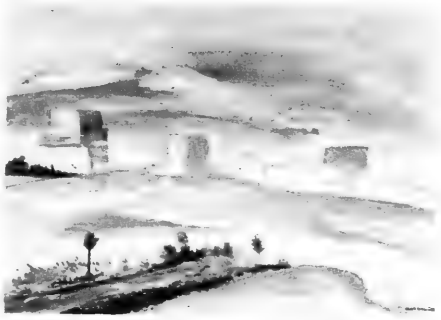
Most weeks, about 150 Out of the Cold guests, as they are referred to, show up at Beth Sholom for a hot meal, access to donated clothing, a bed and a boxed lunch for the next day, Wolf said.

The art exhibit will begin this weekend with an opening reception on Sunday (April 22) from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. It will run from April 22 to 26.

Admission is "pay what you can," and proceeds will go to the artists as well as to the Out of the Cold program. Organizers suggest a donation of $5.

Wolf said that the paintings are all "affordable." Last year, the art show's second year, paintings sold for $35 each. Prices had not yet been finalized when Wolf spoke to *The CJN*.

She noted that one of the artists, Winston, is no longer homeless, but still comes to paint and is planning to donate any proceeds he would receive from the sale of his art to the program.



One of the pieces painted by an Out of the Cold art program participant.

In a letter he wrote that Wolf shared, Winston described the circumstances that led to his being homeless, including a lengthy recovery from a work injury and an inability to continue paying his rent. He wrote that there is "always light at the end of the tunnel… [and] a lot of good people willing and ready to help."

In the art program, participants paint, chat and laugh together, Wolf said. "It's a really warm, comforting space for people to be creative, and they might not [otherwise] have access to those kinds of materials."

Subjects include "beautiful landscapes" and "beaches and far-away exotic places that they dream of," Wolf said.

As well, she added, "a lot paint abstract [art.] They take bright colours and put them on canvas."

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Guest Voice

Discovering unsung heroes in China

Bernie Farber
Special to The CJN

I never expected to meet a Holocaust rescuer while travelling in China last summer. Yet on a sweltering summer day in Shanghai, I was introduced to just such an unsung hero.

I learned many life's lessons from my own father, himself a Holocaust survivor. These lessons informed my life. In the 1970s and '80s as a social worker for the Children's Aid Society in Ottawa, I spent a number of years trying to protect at-risk children from the imminent dangers in their lives. Despite all my efforts, it always hurt to know that there were people around these incredibly vulnerable children who saw what was happening, but chose to do nothing.

Eventually, I moved on to a new phase in my career, becoming an advocate for Canada's Jewish community. I've spent nearly 30 years doing this work, and for most of it, I have been heartened by the will of so many Canadians to fight hate in all its forms. I've had the opportunity to work with many Holocaust survivors who inspire me through their willingness to keep fighting for a better world despite the horrors they endured.

And yet, there have also been times when I have been disappointed by the lack of action against human-rights abuses or acts of hate. It made me wonder what makes one person do nothing in the face of horror, while another will take whatever heroic, dangerous steps necessary to stop it.

I still don't have the answer. Instead, I celebrate those who do take action to make this world a better place.

I found someone new and eminently worthy to fete on my trip to China. My wife and I were there as part of a visit with our daughter . It was our good fortune that the World Expo was taking place while we were there. So we stood in long lines, sweating in 40C heat, trying to get into the country pavilions. We began in the astounding China pavilion, and slowly made our way to the small but truly Canadian Canada pavilion. But it was at the Israeli pavilion that I had my epiphany.

As I walked through the space, I noticed a small display honouring a Chinese diplomat from the late 1930s. I was intrigued by the notion that Israel would give such a place of honour to a Chinese citizen.

It turned out to be a man who should be famous the world over for his heroism. Feng Shan Ho was one of the first diplomats to save Jews by issuing them visas to escape the Nazis and the Holocaust. Appointed the Chinese consul general in Vienna months after Germany's annexation of Austria, he was repelled by the Austrians' fanatic welcome of Hitler and the country's treatment of its Jews.

When Japan occupied China in 1937, the Chinese Nationalist government retreated to Chongqing, leaving Shanghai harbour with no passport control or any authority to check documents such as visas.

That's when Ho put his ingenious plan in place. It was the perfect ploy – he provided Jews who were not allowed to leave Austria without proof of emigration a visa to Shanghai, where no one would check their papers. From there, they could find safe haven elsewhere in the world.

Despite intense pressure from his superiors to stop, he spent two years signing thousands of visas for Jews. He averaged 500 to 900 visas a month.

I was stunned. How could I have never heard of Feng Shan Ho? Israel had recognized him with the title of Righteous Among the Nations, yet Ho remained unknown even to most of those whose lives he saved with visas. That felt so wrong.

This led to months of further research. It included discussions with people such as Feng Shan Ho's daughter, Manli, whom I met in Toronto a number of months back, and Eric Goldlaub a recipient of a Ho visa that saved his life and that of his family. They all helped put texture on Ho's courage.

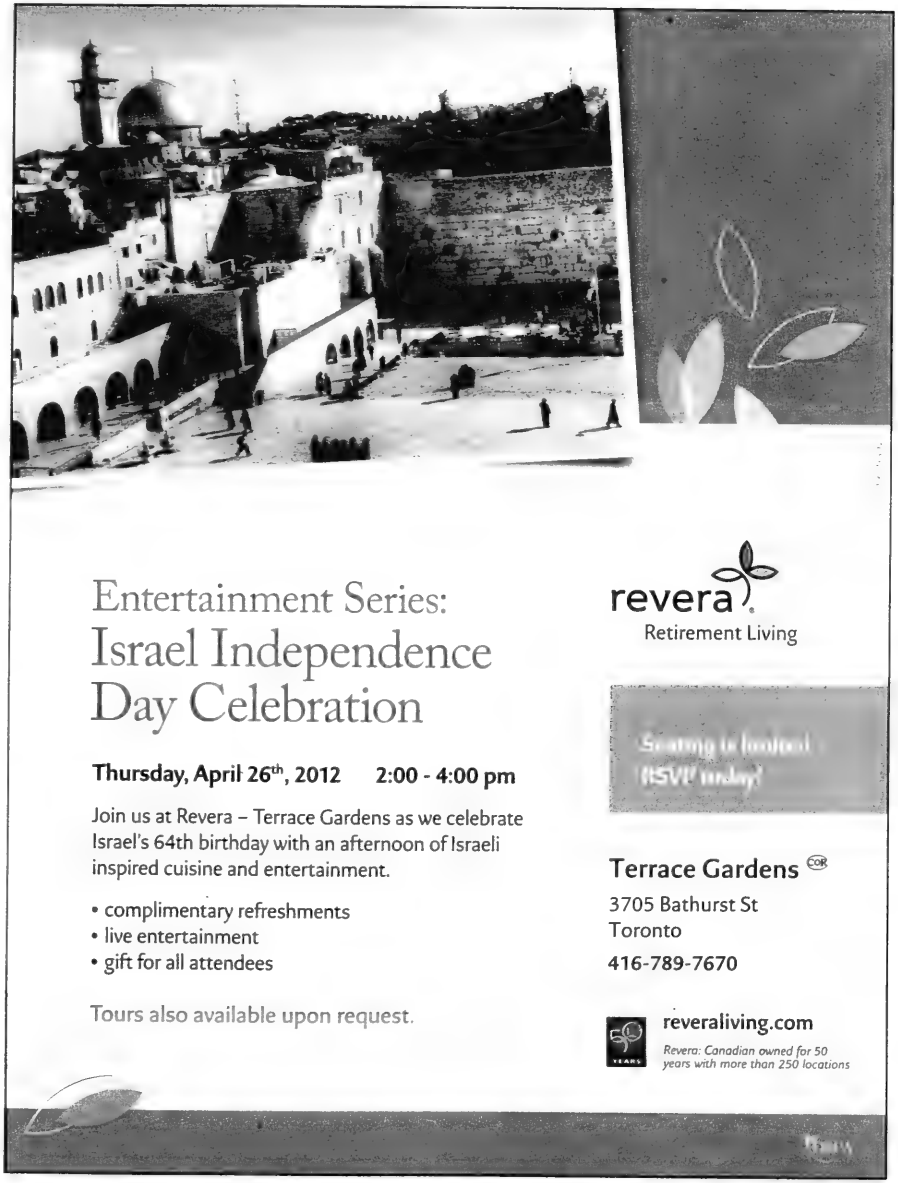
It also led me to understand that there were a number of other such diplomats who saved Jewish lives, very often against their countries expressed orders to refrain from doing so. Portuguese Consul Aristides de Sousa Mendes offered travel permits to desperate Jews as consul in Bordeaux France, as did Senpo Sugihara in his role as consul in Kovno, Lithuania. My cousins Israel and Sam Fishbain received visas from Sugihara allowing them to travel to Shanghai, where they survived the war.

Hiram Bingham IV was the American vice-consul in Vichy-held Marseilles and, like Sousa Mendes in Bordeaux, he handed out more than 2,500 travel visas, among them to artists Marc Chagall and Max Ernst, as well as to the family of writer Thomas Mann.

This past November, I was honoured to be part of the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's Holocaust Education Week, where I gave a lecture on the Shoah's unsung heroes such as Ho and others. I was slated to present it again on April 17 as part of Beth Tikvah Synagogue's adult education program.

In the Jewish tradition, it is said, "When you have no choice, mobilize the spirit of courage." Feng Shan Ho, Sugihara, de Sousa Mendes, Bingham and other Righteous Among the Nations understood that living in a time of evil, they had no choice but to act. By honouring such heroism, I hope it will also inspire other Canadians to take their own steps, big or small, to make the world a better place.

Bernie Farber is the former CEO of Canadian Jewish Congress.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Enshrining memory for all time

On the Perspectives page opposite, Michele Alperin asks how will the Jewish people recall and memorialize the Shoah without any surviving eyewitnesses? It is more an anguish than a question, tears awaiting to be shed one forlorn day in a melancholy horizon not so far away.

The crimes have already been proved and recorded. We do not need the witnesses to prove the crimes. Rather, they are, like sentinels with outstretched swords, guardians of the record. And when the last guardian is gathered to his or her people, it will fall to us, their children, and then to our children in their turn, and for all generations for all eternity, to guard the "external" record of what happened during Nazi times.

To be sure, without the sentinels at hand, the malevolent of heart will assault the record. They already do. Their most vociferous champion resides in Tehran. In truth, however, the haters of Jews denied the record even as the misshapen, mistreated, emaciated corpses in the Nazis' death camps were being tossed like so much dead wood into large burial pits for immediate, "hygienic" disposal. They always will. But as Prof. Michael Marrus told *The CJN* in the Perspectives essay, the record has been scrupulously recorded and stored in universities, museums and libraries by credible, honorable historians to allow no doubts concerning the intent of the murderers or the means of the murders.

The "internal" record however, is a matter for the Jewish people to enshrine in our collective memory for all time, as we have done with Jewish history for more than 4,000 years. We add to the recitations that are recorded in our holy books, captured in our folklore, ritualized in our prayers, solemnized at our memorials and told countless times by mothers and fathers to daughters and sons.

Judging by the submissions *The CJN* received in response to the call for original prose and poetry for our annual Passover literary supplement, the process of securing the "internal" record has indeed been internalized.

More than half of the poetry and prose we published in the April 5 literary supplement, written by old and young alike, dealt with Holocaust-related themes. More than half of all the submissions we received dealt with Holocaust-related themes.

We will teach. We will pay honour. We will remember.

In the very words of the song sung by the partisans who fought the Nazis and their helpers, we will "never say that we have travelled the last road." We will always and forever guard the record,

Mir zenen doh. Anachnu poh. Nous sommes ici. We are here.

We commemorate Yom Hashoah v'Hagvurah this year on April 19.

25 years ago in *The CJN*

Curfews, mass arrests and closures of Arab campuses helped restore order in the West Bank over Passover, but tensions stayed high after Jewish settlers destroyed property in Arab villages and burned fields in retaliation for the firebombing of a car that killed an Israeli woman and severely burned her husband and three children.

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Yom Hazikaron, 5772

We honour the members of the Israel Defence Forces who at too early an age gave their lives in defence of the State of Israel. We also honour victims of terror, including the members of the Fogel family of Itamar and the victims in Toulouse, France. We should also remember the 11 Canadian Machal volunteers who gave their lives in the 1948 War of Independence. Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion said that the "greatest contribution the Jewish Diaspora ever made to Israel was in providing the Machal volunteers." The following list of volunteers was compiled by the late Machal pilot and historian Eddy Kaplansky.

• George (Buzz) Beurling, of Verdun, Que., Canada's top World War II fighter pilot, was killed near Rome on May 20, 1948, in the crash of an airplane being readied for its ferry flight to Israel. He was buried in the Haifa Military Cemetery, non-Jewish section.

• Harvey Cohen and Ed Lugech, first cousins from Toronto, served in the Palmach Yiftach Brigade and participated in the battles of Nebi Yusha and Malkiyeh. They were missing and believed waylaid by Arab irregulars near Sarafand in June 1948.

• Reuben Schiff, of Toronto, served on the Aliyah Bet ship Paducah and was killed July 11, 1948, near Abu j'Ab while looking for his shipmate and Palmach comrade Lou Ball.

• Sidney Rubinoff, of Toronto, served with Palmach in battles of Nebi Yusha, Malkiyeh, Operation Danny, and the capture of Lydda and Ramleh. Wounded at Latrun on July 17, 1948, he died on the way to hospital.

• Sidney Leisure, of Toronto, served in 7th Brigade, 72nd Battalion, and was killed Sept. 7, 1948, during Operation Hiram in the battle for Tamra hill in the Galilee.

• Leonard Fitchett, of Vancouver, an ex-RCAF pilot, served in 103 Squadron. Downed in his Beaufighter by anti-aircraft fire on Oct. 20, 1948, while attacking Egyptian-held Iraq el Sueidan police fortress, he was buried in the Haifa Military Cemetery, non-Jewish section.

• Wilfred Canter (pilot) of Toronto, Willy Fisher (navigator) of Winnipeg and Fred Stevenson (co-pilot) of Vancouver were RCAF veterans who served in 103 Squadron. During a night supply run to Sdom, on Oct. 24, 1948, their C-47 exploded in the air after an engine caught fire. Stevenson was buried in Haifa Military Cemetery in the non-Jewish section.

• Ralph Moster (pilot), of Vancouver, was killed Dec. 7, 1948, with three others when their Grumman Widgeon crashed into the Sea of Galilee during a training flight.

Wilf Mandel
Thornhill, Ont.

* * *

Leave vengeance to a higher power

I was troubled to read that at last month's funeral for the Jewish teacher and children killed in Toulouse, France, that speaker after speaker vowed that the blood of the victims will be avenged. That statement sounds eerily like "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," which might seem to permit reciprocal justice. It troubles me, because I wonder if people will take vengeance into their own hands.

LET THEM GO...

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz

We have just recounted the Exodus story over Passover, in which HaShem rather than the Israelites avenged "the blood of the victims." HaShem unleashed the 10 plagues on the Egyptians, while the Israelites moved on. This Exodus is the moral high road, the right path for wronged people broadly. The Israelites, as far as we know, got their revenge by doing better: they built their society, developed, evolved. The rest, as my Baba would say, "You leave to the Boss."

Judaism's golden rule is to treat others as you wish to be treated. Many of us used the occasion of Passover to dwell on and advocate for social justice here and worldwide. As in ancient Egypt, the answer is to develop a fair, equitable, and just society. How might we respond constructively to these killings? First, by continuing dialogue: among Jews, between Jews and non-Jews including Muslims, between Israelis and Palestinians. Resume peace negotiations between the Israeli and Palestinian governments. Discuss dismantling the Jewish settlements in the West Bank, which now house more than 300,000 Jewish Israelis. Leave any vengeance to external forces, a higher power, whatever you believe. Let us respond completely oppositely: by treating one another as we want to be treated, by living as we believe everyone should live.

Tamara Micner
London, England

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Contemplating a future without survivors

Michele Alperin
JointMedia News Service

As the number of Holocaust survivors able to give direct testimony about their horrific experiences during World War II is dropping precipitously, the Jewish community must consider how the Holocaust narrative may adjust to a future where no eyewitnesses remain.

According to Hillary Kessler-Godin, of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany based in New York, about 500,000 survivors remain alive worldwide. She estimates that there were about 16,800 survivors in Canada in 2010. About 127,000 survivors are estimated to be alive in the United States.

Speaking to these demographic realities, Jonathan Sarna, professor of American Jewish history at Brandeis University, said, "As I tell my students, they are really the last generation that will be able to say they personally knew individuals who experienced the Shoah."

As scholars and educators consider a future without survivors, some focus on preserving the literal memory of the Holocaust as both a sacred obligation to the victims and an educational tool for ensuring "Never again." Others suggest that more effective ways to remember the tragedy will be new ritualized commemorations and even Holocaust fiction.

According to Sarna, the next generation of students will learn about the Holocaust through "received" rather than "perceived" wisdom. Since received wisdom is much more challenging to use in a commemorative event, the future will place new demands on the Jewish community. "I think what will need to happen is to somehow ritualize the commemoration of the Shoah the way we ritualize the commemoration of the destruction of the Second Temple," Sarna said.

As the generation now coming of age moves beyond simply hearing testimony to creating new ways to mark the Holocaust and keep it meaningful, Sarna suggests that new commemorations will have to evoke multiple meanings, as does the Passover seder – with lessons ranging from man's inhumanity to man to the importance of the State of Israel, as well as lessons of courage, resistance and the strength of the human spirit.

At the same time, the messages to young people need to be balanced if they are not to invoke what is termed "Holocaust fatigue."

"I'm sure we do not want to teach young Jews that the only reason to be Jewish is because people want to kill and destroy Jews and… because we don't want to give posthumous victories to Hitler," Sarna said. "Nevertheless, I think it would be disastrous for humanity if we allowed the memory of the Shoah to dissipate. Our job is to keep the memory fresh and to ensure that these lessons are learned anew in every generation."

For Jewish educators and museum professionals, the focus remains on survivor testimony. Diane Saltzman, director of survivor affairs at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, suggests that the survivors – as eyewitnesses –remain our best teachers. "While we are fortunate to still have them, we are trying to document from them as much as possible about their experiences," she said. "What they provide is something no one else can provide."

Prof. Sara Horowitz, the director of the Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Studies at York University, said that "the presence of Holocaust survivors has been fundamental to our understanding – to the extent that one can understand it – the horrifying fate of the murdered Jews of Europe under Nazism. Filmmaker Claude Lanzmann referred to them as 'living documents.'

"As witnesses to the past, survivors have a unique and irreplaceable role in conveying not only what happened during those dark years, but – even more importantly – depicting the human toll of those events. As relatives and friends of the victims, they restore to us the human faces of the millions who did not survive. There is no substitute for those voices," Horowitz said.

"We are fortunate in that many Holocaust survivors have consciously and deliberately made a stake in the future. Several important testimony projects have made it possible for thousands of Holocaust survivors to record their memories, making their faces and voices available for future generations. Survivors have written powerful memoirs. I see in my classes how powerfully these speak to students.

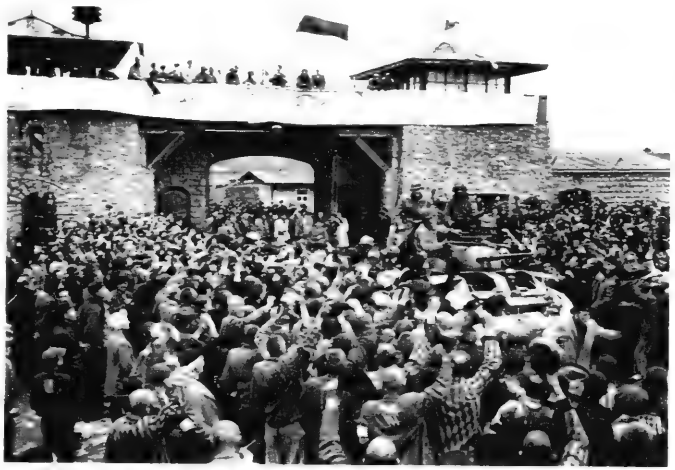
"Ultimately, I think that art, especially literature, will come to play an increasingly significant role in helping later generations [understand] the impact and implications of the Holocaust, not only on those who experienced it personally, but on all of us. Already in the ghettos, gifted writers expended considerable energy and scarce resources to write fiction, poetry, drama. After the war, some survivors continued to develop the literature of destruction, and their work continues to speak powerfully," Horowitz continued.

"And writers who were in a safer place during the war, or who were born later, but who regard the Holocaust as the most significant event of our culture – and by that I mean both Jewish culture and western culture – have placed it at the centre of their writing, probing its lasting effects on all of us. If we look ahead not merely decades but centuries, I think this will become increasingly important to keeping the Holocaust in deep remembrance."

Prof. Eric Caplan, chair of Jewish studies and director of the Jewish teacher-training program at McGill University, said, "Something precious will be lost when there are no more living survivors of the Holocaust. But there is also great power in the video testimonies that they have made.

"I have shown multiple testimonies of this sort to students in my course on the Teaching of the Holocaust and have seen first-hand how powerful these can actually be. Jews have shown a talent for creating rituals that call to mind the great events – both positive and negative – of our history. In time, emotionally and intellectually compelling rituals will be created for commemorating the Holocaust as well, and the video testimonies that survivors have left to us will no doubt play a large role in these rituals," Caplan said.

"Six million Jews perished in the Holocaust and tens of thousands survived. It is inevitable that we can't remember such a great number of people. But if, through education, each of us can learn about 10 victims and survivors of the Holocaust, it will be enough to keep the event vivid in our minds and protect us from forgetting that real lives were affected by this tragedy."



The liberation of Mauthausen
[Photo courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration]

Michael Marrus, Chancellor Rose and Ray Wolfe Professor Emeritus of Holocaust Studies at the University of Toronto, places some reliance for the future on the integrity of the historical record and of the historians who have painstakingly chronicled the events of the Holocaust.

"When we worry about Holocaust memory in a world without Holocaust survivors, we discount the way that we apprehend the historical past. Inevitably, the Holocaust has become history. But that does not mean that its chain of transmission should be broken," Marrus said.

"Fortunately, one of the goals of Nazism was decisively frustrated – the suffering and annihilation of the Jews was never hidden from view. Survivors, together with several generations of Jews and non-Jews, have bequeathed to us a wealth of information and analysis upon which we can rely.

"Holocaust history is now an international and thriving enterprise, operating at the highest professional level. We have Holocaust-related libraries, archives, testimonies, museums, memorials, commemorative events, books, journals, conferences, symposia, university chairs, scholars, teachers, writers, curricula and artists," Marrus continued.

"To be sure, it remains to be seen what use we make of these tools. But so long as we care about how our world has come to be, and so long as we think about it rationally, we will ponder what has been bequeathed to us – not only by survivors but also by so many who have laboured to represent the Holocaust as faithfully as possible."

Rabbi Adam Scheier, spiritual leader of the Congregation Shaar Hashomayim in Montreal, said that "our ability to perpetuate the memory of the Holocaust and those who suffered and perished in it hinges on our ability to ritualize the memory.

"Although there are no surviving eyewitnesses to the revelation at Sinai or the Exodus from Egypt, both play a central role in how we think of ourselves as Jews. We achieve this not by simply telling and retelling, reading and rereading; rather, the ritualization of memory – the Passover seder, daily recitation of *Shema*, etc. – perpetuates the story, he said.

"Likewise, if we determine that the tragedy of the Holocaust – together with modern Jewry's ability to rise from its ashes – is to be an essential component of Jewish identity, then introducing new rituals and adapting old rituals becomes essential to ensuring the story's survival.

"Introducing a new ritual might involve establishing an interactive and educational seder to be observed on Yom Hashoah," Rabbi Scheier continued. "Adapting an old ritual might be to add prayers of Holocaust-related lamentation on Tisha b'Av. Ritualizing moments of memory ensures that the tragic impact of the Holocaust is not exacerbated by the devastating influence of forgetfulness." Yom Hashoah v'Hagvurah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, falls this year on April 19.

– With files from Carolyn Blackman

Trying to comprehend the incomprehensible

Why did they do it? Can we find a reason for the madness that was the Holocaust?

Was it because they wanted the Jews' businesses? This economic motive is often cited for the pogroms of the Middle Ages, when Crusaders were joined by local inhabitants of Rhineland towns. They blamed the Jews for their onerous taxes and wanted their debts wiped out – just kill the Jewish moneylenders, burn the records, and clear the deck.

So, too, in the 20th century when seeking a motive for the Holocaust, we look at the economic benefit when Jewish businesses were taken over by "Aryan" owners.

Why did they do it? They believed Jews had killed Christ and were still using the blood of Christian children for their Passover rituals. So was their motive religious? Jews merited death in payment for the slaughter of the son of God?

Or maybe they did it because they believed the Jews were responsible for World War I and had profited from Germany's defeat and humiliation – an almost psychological explanation for the murder of millions.

Maybe the lawyers, professors and symphony conductors agreed to look the other way because Jews stood in their path for advancement. Just agree to legislation that, in the stroke of a pen, deprived all those Jewish professors, lawyers, judges, doctors, etc., of their jobs. Motive? Professional jealousy.

Why did they do it? Why did neighbours who had lived

Jean M. Gerber

in Vancouver

alongside ordinary Jewish families for centuries suddenly turn them over to the Gestapo? Was it for money? For food? For their own protection from the madness and bloodlust that gripped Europe from 1933 to 1945?

Was Anne Frank such an enemy of the people? And what reward did her betrayers reap? Was it enough?

Why did the soldiers do it? Why did they willingly, sometimes even joyously, herd the Jews of Yaltushkiev (my father-in-law's village) and thousands of other shtetls into the forest, strip them, and then shoot them and dump their bodies in ravines like Baba Yar? Were they drunk? Or had they ceased to regard the people they murdered as human, and thus considered themselves as exterminators of vermin?

Was it, then, the super-nationalism and racism of the Nazi ideology that led such willing executioners to fantastic heights of depravity?

The guards at the camps – why did they do it? For their own perverse satisfaction? Because they were just following orders? To feed their families?

We may ask why did the Pope turn aside from the protection of Jews and denunciation of Nazi persecution? Why did he trade papal supremacy within the Catholic Church for the lives of millions? Since the reasons are still partially hidden, we cannot know (although the book *Hitler's Pope* goes a long way toward explaining this).

As we approach another Yom Hashoah, have we solved the mystery that created the Kingdom of Night? Was the motive economic greed? Religious bigotry? Hunger for power? Fear for one's own life? Sheer hatred of the other? The madness of one man infecting millions of others?

All of these things went into the creation of this unique 20th-century horror, a carefully crafted machine for murder that found the spark to set it off.

The one answer we know is false is that, for some metaphysical reason, we brought it on ourselves by our backsliding ways. This obscenity should forever be put to rest.

One of the many survivors who have spoken about their experiences was a woman who told her story to thousands of high school students in British Columbia. She travelled our province for years speaking to them about her life. I quote from her eulogy about her effect on the students who heard her.

"There is an incredible archive of... letters written by students who heard [her] speak... But there is also a vastly greater and even more important legacy, an *invisible* legacy of things *not* said and *not* done by the young people of our province and elsewhere – the racist remarks that were not made, the jokes that were not laughed at, the gangs that were not joined."

Whatever the reasons for this great tragedy in the lives of our people, and of millions of others, the legacy of survivors' personal stories remains as a testament of hope for a better tomorrow.

From whence it comes

During the month of March, we had some spectacular days. The sun shone and people walked around with smiles on their faces. Winter seemed to have fled. Perhaps because we knew the storms were around the corner, the sense of a stolen summer's day pervaded our streets. I walked to work in sandals in March!

But I also felt guilty – or rather, I felt I should feel guilty. Wasn't this a sign of impending doom? Didn't this mean global warming was really coming? Look out! The sky is falling! How could I feel so happy? But everyone seemed blissful.

Obviously, I don't seriously think we must be sombre when it's lovely outside because we see the mild weather as a harbinger of bad tidings. But it does give us pause to think about the principle involved.

Can we benefit from bad tidings? I don't think we can find good in every evil event that occurs. Certainly, I don't endorse that awful aphorism, "There's a silver lining in every cloud." There isn't. But when we do encounter some event or person who despite a negative reality displays a positive affect, or somehow causes or does good, how do we react and remember them?

In the April 5 *CJN*, Sheldon Kirshner wrote an interesting column about an Iraqi general. In it, he noted that Saddam Hussein was "a brutal dictator who transformed Iraq into a model police state." Saddam killed thousands of his own people and caused national and international crises. Many Iraqis and non-Iraqis, Jews and non-Jews, celebrated on the day he died. But I know of one man, a Jew, who thought differently.

Jews had lived in Iraq for more than 2,000 years. They arrived before there was an Islamic faith. Over the centuries, there were good times and bad times, during which life flourished. But the 1940s inaugurated the last phase of Iraqi Jewish life.

In 1969, on Jan. 27, 11 Jews were hung in Baghdad. Their crime was that they were Jews, suspected of having spied for Israel. They had been jailed and tortured for 10 months, then subjected to a show trial. This man was one of the defendants. All of the others were hung. He doesn't know why he was singled out and saved. But he does know who saved him – Saddam Hussein. Sometimes bad people do good things.

This man's direct experience of Saddam is of goodness, of sunlight on a March day. But for me Saddam Hussein is still pure evil. Knowing what I know of my friend, how do I present the story of Saddam Hussein?

Thus, there are times when we experience goodness in the midst of evil. How do we deal with these contradictions and contrary images? Do we remain silent, or do we try to repair the image of the evil

Norma Baumel Joseph

in Montreal

one? Are we even allowed to enjoy the goodness amidst evil or misfortune?

In some contexts, like the summer weather in March, these questions are silly. But in others, they assume serious connotations and implications.

Before Yom Hashoah, some of these questions assume far-reaching proportions. At times of great misfortune good does emerge. Surely, we have acknowledged the Righteous Gentiles. Not all those who lived under Nazi rule accepted Nazi ideology or authority. We now know more about the sacrifices some people made to save others and help those slated for death and incarceration. There were those whose humanity dictated human responses to pure evil.

But of course their actions and reactions, which are treated as heroic, expose the immorality and inhumanity of those who went along with Nazi rules. Had they lost their humanity entirely? So how do we present the evil of humans and the goodness of the few? We say people are not all good or all bad. Usually I agree. But the Nazis were all bad. By that I mean what they did was all bad, and we judge them by the effects of their global actions.

But there were rare moments in the sun, and that's what I'm celebrating today. Not forgetfulness. Remember the criminal and immoral, but also rejoice with the decent and honest.

Don't lose the full picture.

A nuanced portrait of a dogged Nazi hunter

In his massive, highly informative and nuanced book, *The Life and Times of Simon Wiesenthal* (Doubleday), the Israeli journalist Tom Segev is critical of his subject, claiming the late Nazi hunter indulged in "flights of imagination" and revelled in "historical drama rather than sticking to pure fact."

Yet Segev looks up to Wiesenthal, a Holocaust survivor who founded the Jewish Documentation Center in Vienna and never flagged in his steely determination to bring Nazi war criminals to justice.

He describes Wiesenthal – who viewed Holocaust commemoration through a broad and humanistic prism – as a "tireless warrior" and a "central figure in the struggle for human rights."

Instead of memorializing the Holocaust as a Jewish event per se, he considered the murder of European Jews as a universal crime, linking the Shoah to Nazi atrocities against the Roma, the disabled and homosexuals. He also rejected the concept of collective guilt, saying that individuals should be judged on the basis of their deeds rather than their nationality

Despite his approach, Wiesenthal – whom I had the privilege of interviewing as the Waldheim affair exploded beyond the borders of Austria – focused his efforts on ferreting out Nazis who had been implicated in the killing of Jews. In particular, he played a role in the apprehension of Adolf Eichmann, Franz Stangl, Franz Murer and Karl Silberbauer.

He may have exaggerated his involvement in these seminal cases, but Wiesenthal's dedication in pursuing Nazis with blood on their hands is beyond doubt.

Born in Galicia in 1908, Wiesenthal was an engineer and architect who endured the horrors of a succession of concentration camps and three times tried to commit suicide. Liberated by the U.S. army in Mauthausen, he developed a life-long identity with the United States. And while he chose to live in Austria, his cultural and political homeland, he viewed Israel as his second home.

He and his wife, Cyla, intended to settle in Israel in 1951 after shelving a plan to move to the United States. Wiesenthal went to great lengths to prepare himself for aliyah, but Israel's unsettled state deterred him. "The reason I don't live in Israel," he wisecracked, "is that there are no Nazis or antisemites there."

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

There was an element of truth in his comment. Shortly after he settled down in Linz, Adolf Hitler's favourite Austrian city, he compiled a list of some 150 Nazi war criminals. Having established his raison d'être, Wiesenthal would become the bane of their existence, working closely with the Mossad to track down these loathsome creatures.

Wiesenthal scored a thundering coup in tracing Eichmann to Argentina. According to Segev, he embellished his feat in "a cloud of mystery and fantasy." Isser Harel, the head of the Mossad, was more scathing, claiming that Wiesenthal made no contribution to Eichmann's capture. True or not, Wiesenthal helped the Israeli police and prosecution prepare their case before Eichmann's trial in Jerusalem.

As Segev suggests, Wiesenthal fought an uphill battle in his quest to indict Nazi war criminals. Austria and West Germany opened 250,000 files against such suspects, but only 10 per cent hardened into indictments and less than half of these resulted in convictions.

Wiesenthal, too, was bitterly disappointed by the Allies' attitude. U.S., British and French courts imposed death sentences on several hundred Nazi war criminals, but stopped their activities shortly after the war.

In addition, he targeted Jews who had collaborated with the Nazis, sending the files of 31 "Jewish criminals" to Yad Vashem. He believed that more Jews would have survived had Jewish councils declined to co-operate with the Nazis.

Wiesenthal established his documentation centre in 1961 with three objectives in mind: to combat antisemitism, gather evidence on the Holocaust and find and prosecute Nazi criminals. He was flooded with letters from survivors and antisemites, some of which prompted him to break into tears.

As a rule, Wiesenthal passed on incriminating documents and located witnesses rather than personally pursuing Nazi war criminals. Thanks to his initiative, six Nazi war criminals were soon arrested and an arrest warrant was issued against Otto Skorzeny, an Austrian SS officer who freed the Italian fascist leader Benito Mussolini in a daring raid.

Rightly so, Segev credits Wiesenthal with having waged a successful campaign to repeal statutes of limitations in Austria and West Germany. These edicts imposed a 20-year limit to prosecute Nazi criminals. Wiesenthal argued they compromised efforts to draw a line between the present and the past.

In fighting this battle, he enlisted the support of of a panoply of eminent Germans, including Nobel Prize laureate Werner Heisenberg and an up-and-coming priest named Joseph Alois Ratzinger, the future Pope Benedict XVI.

Wiesenthal's success in overturning the statutes was a turning point.

As Segev puts it, "From now on he was no longer seen as an amateur sleuth or as a pest running from one official to another, or from one courtroom to another, but as a personage to whom many doors were open..."

Segev explores Wiesenthal's conflict with Bruno Kreisky, Austria's Jewish chancellor in the 1970s, at length.

When Kreisky appointed several former Nazi party members to his cabinet, Wiesenthal objected. Kreisky, defending

Simon Wiesenthal in 1995, a decade before his death

the right of former Nazis to serve in public positions if they had not been convicted of any crime, called Wiesenthal a "Jewish fascist." The feud turned nastier as Wiesenthal sued Kreisky for libel.

Segev shines light on Wiesenthal's testy relationship with the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles. From almost the moment of its inauguration, Wiesenthal fired off complaints. At first, he complained it was drawing donations away from his own centre. Once that problem was resolved, he claimed he was not being consulted.

Segev delves deeply into Wiesenthal's feud with the World Jewish Congress. In 1986, Kurt Waldheim, the former secretary general of the United Nations and a former officer in the German army, won Austria's presidential election. Some critics accused Waldheim of covering up his wartime record. Still others charged he was a war criminal. Wiesenthal, a conservative who had known Waldheim for years, rushed to his defence.

The World Jewish Congress was not amused. One of its top officials, Eli Rosenbaum, claimed that Wiesenthal was "a spreader of false information, a tragic figure." Wiesenthal may have succumbed to naiveté in the Waldheim affair, but his sterling record as a dogged pursuer of Nazi war criminals remains fully intact.

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Toronto home to largest Jewish film festival

Continued from page 3

Since then, the annual springtime event has grown to become the largest of more than 100 Jewish film festivals around the world, according to its founder and executive director, Helen Zukerman, who started it with funds from a family foundation and a charitable number from Revenue Canada.

"At first Revenue Canada said no, because they were afraid we were going to make money," Zukerman recalled. "After we got off the floor laughing, we tried again – our lawyers kept persevering. Finally, we got permission by using words like 'education' and 'culture' and 'outreach.'"

In truth, the festival has never come close to making a profit. Last year, it sold more than 30,000 tickets but relied as usual upon a multitude of generous corporate patrons and private donors to cover most of its approximately $700,000 in operating costs.

Part of the festival's success must have to do with the fact that it is located in one of the few large Jewish communities in the Diaspora with an increasing population. Another factor must be the rising quality and quantity of Jewish-themed films that have become available, especially from Israel, over the past two decades.

This year's headliner, *A Bottle in the Gaza Sea*, was shot in Israel but is a French and Canadian co-production. Based on a young adult novel by French author Valerie Zenatti, it was directed by French filmmaker Thierry Binisti, a French Jew whose parents are from Algeria.

The film was shown at two festivals in Quebec in March before going into general release there. The Montreal *Gazette* called it "must-viewing" and "a gripping, unsentimental drama with a lot of action and a pacifist message of hope and reconciliation."

***OSS177* is a comedy by the same team behind *The Artist*.**

Montreal's EMA Films co-produced the film, which is in Hebrew, Arabic and French with English subtitles. The lead actors are Agathe Bonitzer, a Parisian who had to learn Hebrew for the part, and Mahmoud Shalaby, a Palestinian who had to learn French.

Other festival highlights include *Miss Judy*, a documentary that honours local Toronto hero Judy Feld Carr, who helped more than 3,000 Syrian Jews escape to freedom. The film is receiving its international première at the festival.

OSS 117: Lost in Rio is a comedy by acclaimed director and actor team Michel Hazanavicius and Jean Dujardin, who scored best-picture and best-actor Oscars this year for their work on *The Artist*.

A spoof of 1960s spy films, *OSS 117: Lost in Rio* is being screened May 6 at the Toronto Underground Cinema as part of an "outrageously funny double bill." The capper is *This Is Sodom*, a Monty-Pythonesque biblical farce that was the biggest Israeli box-office smash in 25 years.

Other comic fare includes *Hitler: The Comedy Years*, which may sound like something from the Mel Brooks school of comedy, but is actually "an intelligent British documentary" that focuses on comedians who have poked fun at the Fuhrer. *Let My People Go* is an offbeat French comedy about a gay Jewish man and his dysfunctional family, while *Dorfman* is a romantic comedy with Sara Rue and American Jewish film icon Elliott Gould.

More serious pieces includes Kafka's *Last Story*, a documentary that explores the mystery behind the writer's legacy and manuscripts, which, strange as it sounds, are currently being guarded by an eccentric woman and dozens of cats in Tel Aviv.

Portrait of Wally and *My Best Enemy* are documentaries that deal with aspects of the art world, while *Cabaret-Berlin: The Wild Scene* focuses on Berlin's artistic scene of the 1920s and early 1930s and the Jewish artists who contributed to it.

The festival program also includes a variety of intimate documentary profiles. Subjects include Philip Roth, Howard Fast, Tony Curtis, Art Spiegelman, Henry Kissinger and Jascha Heifetz. *A.K.A. Doc Pomus* is a Canadian documentary about songwriter Jerome Felder, who wrote material for Elvis Presley, Ray Charles, Andy Williams, the Drifters and others.

The Sound of Movies: Masters of the Film Score is a robust sidebar series that celebrates the music of a multitude of acclaimed film composers, including Stephen Sondheim, Alex North, Bernard Herrman, Aaron Copland, Howard Shore, Danny Elfman and David Shire.

For festival tickets or information, visit tjff.com or phone 416-324-9121.

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Progressive Poles seek pluralistic nation: scholar

Sheldon Kirshner
Staff Reporter

The renewal of interest in Jewish culture and history in contemporary Poland is mainly rooted in a desire by liberal Poles to build a pluralistic society in their country, a Canadian sociologist says.

Genevieve Zubrzycki, a University of Michigan sociologist and director of its Polish studies program, said this interest cuts across various lines.

"It's hip to be Jewish in Poland," she declared.

This phenomenon manifests itself in the opening of new museums and memorials dedicated to Jews, the popularity of klezmer music, the proliferation of Jewish cultural festivals, Judaica bookstores and Jewish-cuisine restaurants and the increase in Holocaust tourism.

It is also evident in the emergence of Jewish studies programs at universities and the engagement of Polish artists and intellectuals with Poland's Jewish past and in Polish-Jewish relations.

Zubrzycki, a Québécois whose ancestors include a Polish grandfather, delivered her comments earlier this month at a University of Toronto forum sponsored by the Centre for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies and co-sponsored by the Chancellor Rose and Ray Wolfe Chair in Holocaust Studies and the Centre for Jewish Studies.

Genevieve Zubrzycki

Her speech was titled "Stretching the Symbolic Boundaries of the Nation: Jewish Renaissance and Philo-Semitism in Contemporary Poland."

Zubrzycki, who has carried out extensive ethnographic fieldwork in Poland, suggested that her topic is really about the politics of memory and identity.

Prior to World War II, she noted, Poland was a multiculturally diverse nation of minorities, with ethnic Poles, Jews, Germans, Ukrainians, Tatars and others comprising its polyglot population.

According to the 1931 census, 65 per cent of its citizens were ethnic Poles. But with the redrawing of Poland's borders after World War II, Poland became one of the world's most ethnically homogenous countries.

Today, 96 per cent of people living in Poland are ethnic Poles, while only 5,000 to 25,000 are Jewish, compared to three million in 1939, said Zubrzycki, whose last published book was *The Crosses of Auschwitz: Nationalism and Religion in Post-Communist Poland* (University of Chicago Press).

Since the collapse of Communism in the late 1980s, pluralism has been hotly debated in Poland, she said.

The Communist regime worked to create a homogeneous Polish society, which, ironically, was the objective of right-wing Poles and the Catholic Church, long the repository of Polish nationalism.

During this four-decade period, the historical Jewish presence in Poland was considered virtually a taboo subject.

But after Communism was swept away and replaced by liberal democracy, Poles, particularly young, progressive Poles who value tolerance and diversity, began delving into Poland's Jewish dimension.

Conservative, older Poles, on the other hand, continue to regard the concept of Polishness through the prism of ethnicity and Catholicism and associate Jews with the contagion of cosmopolitanism and liberalism, Zubrzycki said.

Poles who seek to build a pluralistic Poland present the Nazi mass murder of Jews during the Holocaust as a "tragic loss" for Poland.

They want Poland to revert to its "true essence" as a tolerant, open, heterogeneous, multicultural nation.

As well, they want to stretch the definition of Polishness to make it more inclusive.

Such Poles believe that Jews bring "colour" to Poland's present monocultural landscape," she said.

In a reference to antisemitism, Zubrzycki said their campaign to resurrect a multicultural Poland is also a function of a wish to exorcise "the demons of the past."

Speaking of current projects by artists to promote a pluralistic Poland, Zubrzycki mentioned several, including "I Miss you, Jew" and "Poland for All."

These projects are designed to reclaim and revive the memory of Poland's pre-war Jewish community, combat antisemitism, break the boredom of ethnic "sameness" and save Poland from the grasp of right-wing nationalists.

It is difficult to know what proportion of Poles are in agreement with the goal of grafting diversity onto Poland, she acknowledged.

But this vision is primarily supported by young Poles and is gaining traction, she added. She praised the Krakow Jewish Cultural Festival as a model of its kind, saying more than a dozen cities In Poland have established such festivals since the 1990s.

According to Zubrzycki, they are indicative of the fascination Jews exert on some Poles in modern Poland.

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Petah Tikva board rabbi's 'dream come true'

Sheri Shefa
Staff Reporter

Isaac Osiel, the incoming president of Petah Tikva Anshe Castilla Congregation, kicked off his presidency with a surprise party that left the shul's rabbi in tears and a congregation feeling united.

Rabbi Yoseph Oziel (no relation) not only celebrated his 40th birthday last month but also marked his 15th anniversary as leader of the 300-member shul.

Osiel said he worked under the rabbi's nose for three months to organize a surprise party for him with 200 of the rabbi's closest friends and congregants.

"The challenge for the surprise party was getting the rabbi to the building. Seeing all the cars, the people, right away he would know something was up," Osiel said.

On March 25, Rabbi Oziel was told to come to the synagogue for a "meet-the-board night," since a new board had just been elected.

"He was totally taken aback. He had no idea."

Speaking to *The CJN* about a week after the surprise party, the rabbi still had trouble expressing just how surprised, shocked and emotional the event had left him.

"I was moved to tears several times… It was just surreal and it was very emotional. It took me a few minutes to compose myself. I remember vaguely everyone coming from all directions to say something to me," he said.

Isaac Osiel, Petah Tikva's incoming president and Rabbi Yoseph Oziel.

"I caught a glimpse of my mother, and it took me a few moments to register that – and my brother, who came in with her from Montreal. My mother-in-law also came in from Montreal.

"It was disturbing how well my wife kept this secret from me," Rabbi Oziel added with a laugh.

Osiel said during the planning stages, he asked the congregants to e-mail pictures of themselves with the rabbi for a slide show, and he also organized a video tribute that featured well-wishes from his friends all over the world.

The night ended with Danny Soberano, the outgoing president who sponsored the dinner, presenting Rabbi Oziel with the ultimate birthday gift.

Soberano and four other Petah Tikva members chipped in to buy the rabbi a brand-new Kia Sportage.

"Generous is not the word," said the rabbi who felt he couldn't properly convey his gratitude.

Osiel said that while the surprise party, which was a members-only event, was meant to honour the well-loved rabbi, it was also an opportunity to reinforce a feeling of community.

"It really felt like one family coming together to celebrate," he said.

"What made this extremely special was the fact that these were 200 people or so who wanted to be there. It wasn't a synagogue function – it was an opportunity to come out – and every person who was there wanted to be there," the rabbi added.

"Looking around the room, I saw so many people and each person means something different to me, something unique to me. I don't have superficial, generic relationships with the people in our community. Because of our history, 15 years already, I've had opportunities to share personal moments and to make very personal and individual relationships."

Looking past the high of the surprise party, both Osiel and the rabbi couldn't contain their optimism about the future of the Sephardi Jewish community in Toronto.

Osiel, a 35-year-old father of five daughters, is one of the youngest presidents in Petah Tikva's nearly 40-year history.

"I'm the first Canadian-born president, signifying a change of the generation," he said.

Ten years ago, a number of Jewish organizations commissioned surveys and studies that tried to predict how the next generation of Jews would connect to the community their parents had built.

Many leaders of the organized Jewish world worried that young Jews – who voiced their desire for initiatives that offered something new and different – would be largely disengaged and unaffiliated.

Osiel, who paid his dues as the shul's vice-president for the past five years, said he is an example of a young Jew who is working to shape his community into what he wants it to be.

"People say I may be young to be doing this, but it's been a progression for me and this was the next natural step for me to take," he said.

"I've been volunteering there since I was bar mitzvah. I was the director of the camp at one point… at 15 I was running a baseball league, and then we started a hockey league, and that's been 19 years."

Rabbi Oziel said his new president "is one of the most dynamic young leaders in our community," and he's excited to be working with him.

"We have already sat for hours talking and exchanging ideas," the rabbi said.

"I really want to make this place an environment that people want to be a part of, something that attracts young people, something that attracts members to come more often and engage them in different programming," Osiel said, adding that he'd like to develop a Shabbat program for children.

"I recognize that our membership is big, and we have many members who pay $1,100 and come twice a year… I don't understand members at any synagogue who pay thousands of dollars and come twice a year. I feel like I have to give them value."

Osiel isn't the only young Jewish professional working to influence the next generation of Sephardi Jews.

Adding some more young blood to the shul's board is Jack Benarroch, 30, who is taking over as Petah Tikva's vice-president, and Ariel Oziel (Isaac's cousin), 30, who will serve as the shul's treasurer.

Rabbi Oziel said that having a new generation of Jews occupy the board is "a dream come true.

"This is what we've been dreaming about when we had our Shabbatons and our youth minyans… We always looked forward to the day when these young people would take over and we're living the dream now."

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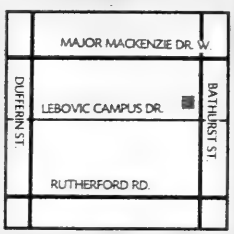

A lifelong love affair with summer camp results in a remarkable gift

The Pat and Jack Kay Centre Camp readies for an unforgettable summer

By Daniel Horowitz

As one of the youngest campers to ever take to the cabins of Winnipeg's Camp B'nai Brith and Camp Massad some 63 years ago, Jack Kay was bitten by the camping bug earlier than most.

His career as an overnight camper began at the age of eight, followed by his turn as a Counselor in Training (CIT), and finally, a counselor.

Today, Jack, 71, along with wife Pat, is taking his ongoing love affair with Jewish camp to a whole new level, and Jewish youngsters across the Greater Toronto Area will reap the benefits with a Jewish summer camp experience they will remember for a lifetime.

The Toronto couple recently made a remarkable $5 million gift to UJA Federation's Tomorrow Campaign and as a result, The Jack and Pat Kay Centre Camp, the largest Jewish Day Camp in the GTA, is set to deliver a summer like no other.

The Kay's gift will benefit the two current locations of Centre Camp - one on Glenview Campus, and its newest location on Vaughan's Joseph & Wolf Lebovic Jewish Community Centre - as well as any future sites.

The Jack and Pat Kay Centre Camp is an initiative of the Prosserman JCC on Sherman Campus and York Region's Schwartz/Reisman Centre.

"For Pat and myself, this is all about supporting those who need a helping hand; it's that simple," says Jack, the President of Apotex who decided to get involved with Centre Camp and the Sherman Campus after his friend and colleague, CEO of Apotex, Barry Sherman along with his wife, Honey, gave a gift to the Tomorrow Campaign, creating Sherman Campus.

Pat and Jack Kay

"Barry and I have very similar goals," explained Jack who avoids the spotlight, but agreed to be interviewed in the hopes that it would inspire others to give. "Once he and Honey made their gift to the Tomorrow Campaign, I told him that we would be happy to support Sherman Campus, too. And, with the Prosserman JCC there, and with my love for summer camp, it was a perfect fit. Barry and I are both proud of our Jewish heritage, and the Jewish culture. We are proud to represent – through our philanthropic giving – important Jewish values such as *tikkun olam* and *tzedakah*."

And, when it comes to giving back, Jack does more than just talk the talk. In fact, he is also chairing the fundraising committee for the new Humber River Regional Hospital being built in Toronto's Jane and Finch Corridor, one of this city's most economically depressed areas.

"We all have an obligation to give to those who are less fortunate," he says. "Let's face it; you can't take it with you, so we need to help others. I want to make sure that, with our gift to Centre Camp, the camp is sustainable and that Jewish youngsters enjoy the camping experience because I can personally attest to how it provides an important foundation for their Jewish lives. The only reason Pat and I let the camp use our names is because we have a Foundation, and we wanted our children and grandchildren to learn about, and understand, their responsibility of *tzedakah* and to do what's right, because one day, they will administer the funds in that foundation."

"Our camp family is greatly appreciative of the Kay's generous donation," said Phil Faibish, Director of The Jack and Pat Kay Centre Camp. "We are committed to ensuring that every child has the opportunity to benefit from a Jewish camping experience and we are looking forward to many memorable summers at our Sherman and Lebovic campuses."

Jack, who along with Pat, are fitness buffs and workout at least three times a week, knows full well the importance of a Jewish summer camp experience.

"Let's put it this way," says Jack. "It's been over 60 years since I was a camper in Winnipeg, but I still remember the fun, the excitement and the experiences I had. It made such a strong and important impression in my life. I even remember some of the great friendships I made back then. And, it's funny, it may have been more than 60 years ago, but it still feels like it was only yesterday."

"Our Jewish Community Reads!" with the help of UJA Federation's Itanu Toronto

Jews are known as "The People of the Book", so, really, it should come as no great surprise that an exciting new UJA Federation of Greater Toronto initiative called *Our Jewish Community Reads!* is underway.

A project of Itanu Toronto - UJA Federation's Inclusion Initiative - *Our Jewish Community Reads!* was created to encourage all members of Jewish Toronto to become passionate about reading, while highlighting various social issues. This year's reading theme is about promoting the importance of being a truly inclusive Jewish community.

Itanu Toronto, chaired by Stan Kugelmass, is passionate about living in a community in which people with special needs and disabilities are able to fully participate in community life, and are treated with respect, dignity and equality.

On Thursday, May 10, 2012, at 7:00 pm, Itanu Toronto will be holding a unique event in the Tamari Hall at the Lipa Green Centre (4600 Bathurst Street) featuring author Rachel Simon who will speak about her recent book, *The Story of Beautiful Girl*, a New York Times bestseller. The book, a poignant and moving love story about the seemingly impossible odds faced by a couple with disabilities and a lost child, explores empathy and tolerance in a unique and unforgettable way.

A book signing and a wine and cheese reception will follow.

"What an honor it is to have Jewish Toronto - one of the strongest champions of inclusion in North America - invite me to Canada," said Simon. "Not only do they have a vision of community that truly embraces everyone, they are passionately and thoroughly committed to making that vision a reality. Jewish Toronto is the advocate the people in my books could only dream of. Thank goodness they are here, making that dream come true."

Organizers are also planning to host a day-time program with Simon at The Schwartz/Reisman Centre on Vaughan's Lebovic Campus, created especially for service providers who work with special needs clients.

Rachel Simon

"We have made considerable strides since the time that this story takes place in transforming physical environments that acted as barriers between different populations," explains Itanu Toronto member, Rhona Shulman. "We have closed institutions, mainstreamed students, legislated accessibility and implemented customer service standards. Now we must focus on the human dimension by creating and embracing inclusive relationships where all individuals, no matter how different, are respected, welcomed and engaged meaningfully in our community. Rachel Simon in her personal life and as an author shows us how to do just that."

The event featuring Rachel Simon is sponsored by Itanu Toronto. Co-sponsors include Indigo Books, the Miles Nadal JCC, The Prosserman JCC, Schwartz/Reisman Centre, Koffler Centre, PJ Library, UJA Federation's Centre for Jewish Education, Reena, Jewish Family & Child, JVS Toronto, JIAS Toronto and Chai Tikvah. For more information and to register for the Rachel Simon event, please contact Anna Fanizza at 416-635-2883 x 5263, or at inclusion@ujafed.org

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Reflecting on tragedy

Rabbi Moshe Stern

Sitting at the Pesach seder and reciting the words "*B'chol dor vador, omdim alaynu l'chalotaynu*,"- "In every generation, they rise against us to destroy us." I couldn't not help thinking about the rabbi and three children mercilessly murdered at their Jewish school in France. Will this hatred ever cease?

Yom Hashoah is upon us again, and rather than simply going through the motions of lighting candles and reciting poems, I believe we need to reflect on what we can do to usher in a new messianic age, free of hate and where Israel will find peace and serenity. How can we achieve this utopia?

The Ben Ish Chai traces the devastating effect of *sinat chimam* – senseless hatred among ourselves – to biblical history, which we re-enact at the seder.

The third of the four questions in the Hagaddah asks: "On all nights of the year, we do not dip food even once – but on Pesach night, we dip twice." This refers to dipping vegetables in salt water (karpas) and maror (bitter herbs) in charoset (mixture of wine, nuts, etc.).

The Ben Ish Chai says these two dippings remind us of the first two dippings in Jewish history.

The first evokes the story of the desire of Jacob's sons to rid themselves of their brother, Joseph. They take his coat, dip it in the blood of a goat and present it to their father.

So the first dipping on the night of Pesach is to remind us of the horrific plague of hatred among our own brothers, which we have suffered from throughout our history.

The second dipping at the seder reminds us of the dipping of blood in a bunch of hyssop and smearing it on the doorposts of the Jews at the outset of the 10th plague.

Rabbinic Reflections

The Ben Ish Chai says it's no coincidence the Torah uses the expression *agudat ayzav* (a bunch of hyssop), the first word of which is derived from the word *agudah* – unity.

The redemptive process came about as a result of the unity of the Jewish people. This display of unity was an absolute prerequisite to redemption, because it acted as a *tikkun* – a collective response and correction – to the hatred the brothers exhibited toward Joseph. The dipping of the hyssop branch and dabbing the blood on the doorposts corrected the dipping of Joseph's coat.

The Ben Ish Chai concludes that if we're serious about bringing about the final redemption, we, too, must correct that symbolic dipping of Joseph's coat and bring about an era of *Ahavat Yisrael*, unconditional love among the entire Jewish nation.

The lingering effects of *sinat chinam* prevents the messianic age from happening. We'll honour the memories of the millions who were murdered in the Shoah and those murdered by Arab terrorists by kindling lights of Torah and mitzvot, and by providing affordable Jewish education and ceasing to fund projects that have little or nothing to do with preserving our Jewish heritage.

Most importantly, we must find the ability to extend our hands in the true spirit of *achdut* – unity – so that God will surely bless us with the final redemption.

Rabbi Moshe Stern is spiritual leader of Shaarei Tefillah Congregation in Toronto.

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Donors should trust the trustees

Poor Jim Balsillie. Over the past year or so, he has watched as the company that he led and grew into an international success story has made misstep after misstep. Research in Motion has lost 90 per cent of its value amid a feeling it can no longer compete with Apple or Google.

Forced out of RIM, Balsillie, one of Canada's greatest philanthropists, can't even give his money away. This month, York University's faculty recently voted to reject a $30 million donation from his Centre for International Governance. The school claimed the donation came with too many strings attached, including veto power over some faculty appointments. For the university world, in which academic freedom is sacrosanct, such conditions were deemed unacceptable.

It's most inspiring to see people turn down large sums of money if acceptance would jeopardize principles they hold dear. Perhaps those in the academic world, enjoying the benefit of tenure, can more readily ignore the economic fallout of turning down millions of dollars. And while one can debate whether these particular principles are correct, this most honourable display of intellectual honesty raises the interesting question of the proper relationship between donor and recipient. There's no doubt that many, and likely most, donations come with many strings attached, some overtly mentioned and other implied, at times quite strongly, even if never stated.

Jewish philanthropy, *tzedakah*, has traditionally been composed of two parallel tracks – public and private, corresponding to what we might call taxes and charity. Members of autonomous Jewish communities were taxed, with funds going to pay for the necessities of Jewish communal life, primarily free education for young people.

Money Matters

Rabbi Jay Kelman CA

Just as governments rely on the private sector to fund many worthy causes, individual Jews were expected to do the same. In the western world, where Jewish communities no longer have coercive powers of taxation, *tzedakah* is completely voluntary. And rabbinic authorities have generally assumed that individuals will direct their monies as they see fit. With needs and requests far outstripping the abilities of even the wealthiest of donors, choices need to be made.

We should expect donors to fund projects that align with their goals. Questions can be asked, and if the answers are unsatisfactory, donations can be directed elsewhere. And, theoretically, conditions can be made as to the use of the money. Provided that at the end of the day money is given away, one can and should give to those institutions that meet donors' stated objectives. The problem is that often the conditions are not necessarily the most appropriate, and the strings may hamper rather than help those in need.

Jewish law demands that those in charge of charitable funds be of unimpeachable character, people who command our fullest trust and confidence. It is questions of integrity, even more than policies, that should concern donors. When we're confident that our money is in good hands, we should thank God that we are blessed to be a donor and give the money with a full heart and with no strings attached. Let us trust the trustees of those funds to use them in the most appropriate manner.

Send comments to rabbijay@torahinmotion.org.

Rabbi Amital's yeshiva combined army, Torah study

It is inspiring to read the stories of Holocaust survivors whose world was destroyed and who, nevertheless, went on to lead productive lives. One such survivor was Yudl Klein, born in Romania in 1924.

All of his family were sent to death camps, but he, a young healthy male, was sent to a labour camp and survived. After liberation, Yudl made it to pre-state Israel and fought in the War of Independence in 1948-1949.

Like many new arrivals in Israel, Yudl took on a modern Israeli name: Yehuda Amital. He grew up to be one of the most widely respected rabbis in Israel, a beloved rosh yeshiva. The yeshiva that he founded, Yeshivat Har Etzion, was one of the first on the hesder model, combining army service with intense Torah study. Rabbi Amital worked there from its founding in 1968 until his death in 2010. It remains one of the most respected yeshivot in Israel.

Most rashei yeshiva live a cloistered life, surrounded by books and students. Not so Rabbi Amital, who was a true public intellectual, friendly with leading secular Israeli writers, thinkers and politicians, and often quoted in the secular Israeli press. He even ventured into politics, serving as minister without portfolio in the short-lived cabinet put together by prime minister Shimon Peres after the assassination of prime minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995.

Eliashiv Reichner, a religious Israeli journalist, came out with a biography of Rabbi Amital in 2008 and updated it after Rabbi Amital's death in 2010. The updated version has now been translated into English, by Rabbi Elli Fischer, under the title *By Faith Alone: The Story of Rabbi Yehuda Amital*. Rabbi Fischer is a seasoned translator, expert in Judaica and in Israeli politics. He skilfully makes even detailed descriptions of issues in halachah and the always complicated machinations of Israeli politics intelligible to the lay reader of English.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Rabbi Amital was one of the leading religious proponents of a dovish position on Israeli politics. He argued that, in the scale of Jewish priorities, the people of Israel should outrank the Land of Israel. Accordingly, territorial compromise with the Palestinians was desirable if it would improve the peace and tranquility of Jews in the Jewish state. The book shows that Rabbi Amital was actually a rather complex character who may have evolved over time into the man known as a relative leftist.

I was intrigued by the story of the establishment of his yeshiva. It is located in Gush Etzion, an area just south of Jerusalem where, before 1948, there were a few small religious Jewish communities surrounded by Arab communities. During the War of Independence, these Jewish communities were in grave danger. Women and children were evacuated, but the men stayed to defend their homes. They

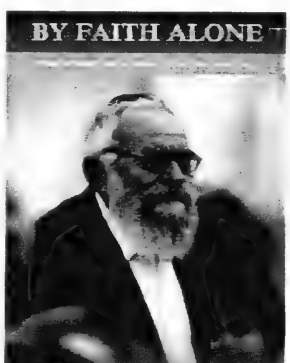
Views & Reviews

Martin Lockshin

were overrun and massacred. When the armistice ("Green") line was drawn in 1949, Gush Etzion was outside of it, under Jordanian control.

From 1949 until 1967 Jews, particularly those who had been evacuated, longed to return to Gush Etzion. There was no place inside the Green Line from which they could see their former homes. But just one hill over from Kfar Etzion, the main Jewish community that had been razed, there was a lone oak tree at the top of a hill, visible even from within the Green Line.

In the Six Day War, Israel recaptured Gush Etzion. Kfar Etzion was one of the first "settlements" beyond the Green Line, rebuilt by Jews, including some of the by-now



grown children who had been evacuated in 1948. Yeshivat Har Etzion was first set up inside this new/old kibbutz. But the yeshiva needed its own home. After a year or two, the yeshiva moved not for away, to the hill with the lone oak tree. The community surrounding the yeshiva was (and still is) named Alon Shevut ("the Oak of Return," a play on a phrase in Genesis 35:8).

The story is moving and well-known. But what I learned from this book is that the "return" of Jews to the hill of Alon Shevut was much more controversial than their return to Kfar Etzion. Jews had never (at least in modern times) lived on the hill of Alon Shevut. The site had deep symbolic meaning, but Jews could not build there unless the Israeli government expropriated the land from its Arab owners. The government hesitated to do so, but Rabbi Amital was one of the primary people who urged the government to establish his yeshiva there.

I also learned from this book that in those crucial years right after the Six Day War many people believed that Rabbi Amital was a proponent of a Gush Emunim (Bloc of the Faithful) worldview that opposed all territorial compromise – not on security grounds but simply because all of Eretz Yisrael should be under Jewish sovereignty. Many say that his shift to the left began when many of his yeshiva students were killed in uniform in the 1973 Yom Kippur War, losses that affected him deeply. He became publically perceived as a dove in 1982 when he broke ranks with most rabbis and spoke out strongly against the Sabra and Shatila massacre and criticized the hesitation of many Israelis, including prime minister Menachem Begin, to set up a commission of inquiry. In later years, Rabbi Amital would argue that his apparent metamorphosis had not been so radical.

The secular Israeli poet Abba Kovner, also a survivor, once appeared with Rabbi Amital on a television show discussing the Holocaust. Kovner asked him how he could continue to believe in God after the Holocaust. Rabbi Amital asked Kovner how he could continue to believe in man. "I *believe* in God," Rabbi Amital told Kovner, "but I don't understand Him. But we're supposed to understand man."

Rabbi Amital was a true leader of our generation. He taught Torah to thousands of students. He broke the stranglehold that Gush Emunim ideology had had on the modern Orthodox in Israel (and he often paid a price for his outspoken views). Most of all he taught his students that yeshiva studies are compatible with involvement in the wider world.

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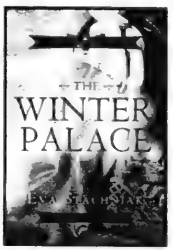

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German poet just doesn't get it

Earlier this month, Germany's most famous author, Gunter Grass, published a poem in the leftist Munich newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung* that created an international storm.

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

Under the title *What must be said*, Grass claimed that Israel is a threat to world peace and is prepared for a nuclear first strike against Iran that would annihilate the Iranian people.

The April 12 *CJN* editorial (aptly titled "What must be said") rebutted Grass and pointed out that the famous German writer was soundly criticized at home by political leaders and literary critics. Indeed, Grass was similarly rebuked by leading journalists in Germany, though he did have some defenders.

In the *New Republic*, historian Jeffrey Herf discussed Grass' obliviousness to the essential fact that it's Iran that has repeatedly threatened to annihilate Israel, not the other way around. By making Iran appear the potential victim of Israeli nuclear aggression, abetted by Germany's supplying Israel with submarines, Grass had egregiously inverted reality including, foremost, cause and effect.

But Herf went further. Translating part of the poem, he cited a passage in which Grass attempts to inoculate himself from the charge of antisemitism by raising it as a predictable slander for daring to say "what must be said" about Israel. If anything, Grass argued, he's demonstrating courage by speaking up – as if condemning Israel were a rare phenomenon.

This is yet another dimension of Grass' delusion, but it's one shared by other detractors of Israel, who often try to pre-empt criticism of their own positions by claiming that they're struggling against those who suppress the truth.

Herf sharply dismissed this nonsense. "The idea, put forward by Grass, that there is a taboo in German intellectual and political life about criticizing Israel and its policies has been a favourite theme of Israel's critics since the 1960s. On the contrary, hostility to both Israel and the United States, and the view that these two countries are the major threat to world peace, became embedded in the German left-wing and left-liberal mainstream many decades ago. In this sense, Grass' diatribe is part of a long established conventional wisdom. It takes neither courage nor intelligence to run with the mob."

The German-Jewish historian Michael Wolffsohn has followed Grass' writings closely over the years, including his 2006 autobiography *Peeling the Onion*. In that book, Grass revealed, 62 years after the fact, that at 17 he had joined the Waffen SS. In a *Der Spiegel* interview, Wolffsohn pulled no punches about this latest controversy: "It would have fit well in the [German far-right weekly] *National Zeitung* – and I mean that with no ifs or buts. In the poem, Grass makes the victims into perpetrators, and otherwise it contains pretty much every other antisemitic stereotype that we know from the far-right scene." Wolffsohn noted he's not one to bandy about the term "antisemitism," but that in this case "what Grass has written is an antisemitic pamphlet compressed into pseudo-poetry."

The international criticism falling on Grass almost came to a sudden halt when attention was distracted by the Israeli Interior Ministry's decision to declare Grass "persona non grata," thus barring him from Israel. In the eyes of many, Grass was seen as a victim of an emotional overreaction by the Israeli government. Alan Dershowitz, for one, said (in a piece in the Huffington Post) that this move was unbefitting of democracy, which should only ban people who are security risks. Dershowitz argued that as reprehensible as Grass' views are about Israel, the proper way to respond to him is through argument.

On that note, the last word should go to Anshel Pfeffer, who noted in *Ha'aretz* that rational discourse will have no impact on the likes of Grass: "Logic and reason are useless when a highly intelligent man, a Nobel laureate no less, does not understand that his membership in an organization that planned and carried out the wholesale genocide of millions of Jews disqualifies him from criticizing the descendants of those Jews for developing a weapon of last resort that is the insurance policy against someone finishing the job his organization began."

Paul Michaels is director of research and media relations for the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs.

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Correction

There was incorrect information in the article "Italian honoured as Righteous Gentile" (April 5). Mary Siklos, who works at the Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre, is not a Holocaust survivor. Her late mother, Aniko Konigsberg, who was rescued by Giorgio Perlasca, was a survivor. In the film that was screened at the event, Konigsberg is speaking, not Siklos, as the article stated. In reference to the number of Hungarian Jews saved by Perlasca, authorities differ. The number is generally agreed to be between 3,000 and 5,000. Yad Vashem suggests it was 3,000. *The CJN* regrets the errors.

Pianist explores Hatikvah's origins

Vicky Tobianah
Special to The CJN

Pianist Astrith Baltsan spent eight years doing research on the history of *Hatikvah*, Israel's national anthem, which became the basis of a book and a musical performance.

Baltsan, who will be touring the United States with her *Hatikvah* performance, will stop in Toronto at the Glenn Gould Studio on May 6, in honour of Israel's Independence Day.

Hosted by the Canadian Committee for the Haifa Foundation, the show will support the rebuilding of a park and playground near the Carmel forest in northern Israel, the site of a 2010 fire in which 44 people died and more than 12,000 acres of forest were destroyed.

Baltsan, 55, was born in Tel Aviv, where she studied piano and musicology at Tel Aviv University. She received a scholarship to pursue graduate studies at the Julliard School in New York and completed her doctorate in piano performance at the Manhattan School of Music. She has been an artist-in-residence at the Banff Centre for the Arts in Alberta.

Musicologist and concert pianist Astrith Baltsan
[Ariel Jerozolimski photo]

In 1986, she returned to Israel. She became interested in the origin of *Hatikvah* when a scandal arose because many Israeli children did not know the words or origin of the Israeli national anthem. The Israeli Ministry of Culture and Education commissioned Baltsan to research the origin and meaning of *Hatikvah*. Her research surprised her. She discovered that the words of *Hatikvah* were written by Naftali Herz Imber in Romania in 1878, using some biblical expressions. In 1882, during the first wave of Israeli immigration, Imber came to Israel.

"He visited Rishon Lezion, Rehovot, Gedera, Yessod Hamaala – and sold them again and again that same one anthem. To this day, each settlement claims that the national anthem was written just for them," said Baltsan.

When the poem reached Shmuel Cohen, a young immigrant from Romania, he adapted an ancient Sephardi melody to the first stanza and an Ashkenazi melody to the second stanza of the poem. The song then spread across the Jewish Diaspora. Baltsan discovered that the melody for *Hatikvah* was used throughout Europe in works by famous composers such as Gasparo Zannetti, Mozart and Bedjic Smetana.

Hatikvah became the official Israeli anthem more than 120 years after it was first written. As a result of her research, Baltsan wrote a book called *Hatikvah: A Hymn Is Born* and presented it to the Israeli Ministry of Education.

"By the end of my presentation, everyone got up to sing *Hatikvah* and I saw the minister with tears in his eyes," Baltsan said. "It made me understand that this is not only a book but a performance."

Baltsan's multimedia *Hatikvah* performance is a 90-minute presentation that explores the origins of *Hatikvah* and includes music by Mozart, Chopin, Smetana, Jewish and Israeli folk, pop and rock tunes and rare historical recordings and video clips.

"I've reached far more people than I ever thought I could reach because [the story of *Hatikvah*] is relevant to everybody – to every Jew in the world," Baltsan said. "In a way, this *Hatikvah* was also my hope to reach out to a wider range of people who want to know more about their roots."

She said that "it's very important to know why this land, this people, this nation survived – which is expressed in our national anthem. I'm lucky enough to get to show these truths, through one tiny motif – a one-minute song."

Lisa Gardner Plant, executive director of the Canadian Committee for the Haifa Foundation, said that the committee's "assistant director in Haifa saw Astrith perform and called the next day to say that everyone in Israel is raving about her show, and that I had to bring her to Canada.

"The whole concept of the concert is unique," she said. "*Hatikvah* is a song that brings people to tears, but what do we really know about it? Do we know its history? It will be really interesting to learn where the anthem came from."

For tickets to the *Hatikvah* performance, at Glenn Gould Studio, contact the Roy Thomson Hall box office at 416-872-4255 and online at www.roythomson.com.

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Helping hands

As part of a tikkun olam initiative at Robbins Hebrew Academy, Grade 7 students went to the DANI house to meet and bake with participants in the DANI program, which provides programs and services to young adults with special needs to enhance their lives and Jewish identity. Soon, DANI participants will visit RHA to take part in Hebrew and music activities with the Grade 7 students. Pictured, from left, are students Eden Kliger and Kylie Cohen, Rebecca Erlich and Melanie Rose with Ryan from DANI.

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Teens to serve community

Five hundred Toronto-area teens will participate in an afternoon of community service on April 22.

They, along with 10,000 Jewish teens from around the world, will take part in J-Serve, the Global Day of Jewish Youth Service.

J-Serve is the Jewish service component of Youth Service America's annual Global Youth Service Day and also coincides with the fifth annual ChangeTheWorld – Ontario Youth Volunteer Challenge. The province's three-week challenge kicked off April 15 in partnership with Volunteer Canada's National Volunteer Week, Canada's largest celebration of volunteers, volunteerism and civic participation.

This year marks the third year in which Toronto-area teens will participate in the international initiative, thanks to funding by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto and the BBYO Panim Institute.

The Toronto project, hosted at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto, Wallenberg campus, from 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., has been coordinated by BBYO in an effort to encourage community building and connections across religious and societal lines.

"When registering at Jserve.ca, teens are asked to choose one of 16 service opportunities across the city," said Kevin Goodman, executive director at BBYO's Lake Ontario region. "The site also enables parents and community members to register as project chaperones to see first-hand the power of 500 young people eager to impact their world."

J-Serve Toronto 2012's service opportunities include the following activities.

- Tree-planting and cleanups at three Toronto parks
- Packaging books for a Frontier College literacy program
- Leading a thank-a-thon for the Jewish National Fund
- Joining DANI (which helps young adults with physical and/or cognitive challenges) participants for an Olympic day
- Preparing clothes for distribution by a clothing bank
- Participating in a political letter-writing workshop facilitated by the Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee, a social justice workshop facilitated by Free the Children's youth programming department, or a social-media focus group for Pencils for Kids
- Providing child care at the Schwartz/Reisman Centre
- Assembling school supply kits for families in need and making sandwiches for distribution to Toronto's homeless with Ve'ahavta, the Canadian Jewish Humanitarian and Relief Committee
- Working the phones at a Zareinu Educational Centre telethon to promote its 15th annual Moveathon

For more information, visit www.jserve.ca or contact Kevin Goodman at 416-398-2004 or kgoodman@bbyo.ca.

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80 Gould St.
Adi Nes speaks about his artistic perspective on contemporary Israeli society and the politics of identity, introducing his newest body of work, *The Village*, which will be premiering this year in New York and Paris.

Adi Nes is a Featured Exhibition in the Scotiabank CONTACT Photography Festival.
Image: Adi Nes, *David and Jonathan*, 2006.

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Diaspora is concerned

Continued from page 1

He's an enthusiastic and articulate spokesperson for the committee, which is co-chaired by agency head Natan Sharansky and includes representation from the Diaspora and Israel and from all streams of Judaism. It meets when JAFI's board of governors gathers three times a year in Israel. It also holds teleconferences and communicates electronically, Silver said.

Recently, certain events in Israel have been front and centre in the committee's deliberations.

At the last board of governors meeting, the unity committee examined the role of haredim within broader Israeli society. The discussion came shortly after news reports of haredim in Beit Shemesh spitting and yelling insults at a seven-year-old girl for dressing immodestly. That came after reports that haredim had demanded that women be segregated on buses, sidewalks and supermarket lineups.

Anti-haredi protests were followed by haredi demonstrations that turned violent. Later, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu floated the idea of dividing the city in half, one part for haredim and the other for non-haredim.

Several speakers addressed the committee on the topic, looking at the haredi desire to remain apart from the wider society.

"It was clear in the session that Diaspora communities were concerned about it and wanted to know what the Jewish Agency would do about it," Silver said.

A Canadian perspective was offered by Linda Kislowicz, CEO of Jewish Federations of Canada-UIA, who discussed the concept of "reasonable accommodation," Silver said. "I saw that some people were quite intrigued, as they were not familiar with that concept. At least there was some listening and attentiveness to it."

Silver, who served for four years as chair of JAFI's budget and finance committee, said, "The main agenda item for the last several years has been the issue of conversion."

Conversions to Judaism in Israel are conducted exclusively by the Orthodox rabbinate. The issue affects hundreds of thousands of immigrants, many from the former Soviet Union, who are not halachically Jewish. Tension has arisen between the haredim and other strands of Judaism, including more liberal Orthodoxy, over the stringency of requirements associated with conversions.

The Jewish Agency, in particular, feels a responsibility to help resolve the issue. JAFI plays a "pivotal role in bringing people to Israel and we feel an obligation to try to resolve the problems of those who work to be Jews, while respecting the expectations of as many Jews as possible," Silver stated.

"Several years ago, when there was a conversion crisis, the Jewish Agency worked with the Israeli government to establish the Ne'eman committee, [which looked] for solutions to Diaspora wishes for Conservative and Reform involvement in the conversion procedures," Silver said.

A compromise was reached in which non-Orthodox rabbis helped prepare candidates for conversions, but even that has been rejected by haredi rabbis.

"I sense that the compromise has not held," Silver said, adding that the Jewish Agency had heard many complaints that "obstructions had been put in the way of applicants."

There is a "good faith disagreement over theology," he said, and discouraging conversions has some precedent in Jewish history. But the Jewish Agency believes the best way to proceed is to "get the widest possible acceptance from the Jewish community and get the widest number of people converting under it."

That may require "a more liberal approach to halachic conversions within Orthodoxy, a more tolerant approach."

Linda Kislowicz

There are elements within Israel's Orthodox community who are promoting an alternative in which local city rabbis who are Orthodox perform conversions using less stringent standards than those required by the haredi-controlled rabbinical courts, he said.

A task force on conversions, chaired by Sharansky, is looking into the issue of conversions to bridge differences between the various strands of Judaism. For purposes of the Law of Return, JAFI has been granted exclusive rights to determine whether recognized rabbinical authorities carry out conversions outside Israel.

Silver acknowledged that Israeli lawmakers have much on their plates, including security concerns, but "the point we want to make is, don't ignore the Diaspora. If you want to be the Jewish state, keep in mind the perspective of the Jewish world.

"The point was made within the Jewish Agency and the federations [which raise funds for JAFI] that this is an issue that matters beyond the borders of Israel. We have to be listened to and influence the decision," Silver said.

JAFI, along with the Joint Distribution Committee, received funds from North American federations to allocate for initiatives that promote unity and Jewish identity. The Israel and overseas department of Jewish Federations of North America reported that in 2011, $6 million (all figures US) was allocated to community, camp and education programs of Orthodox, Conservative and Reform movements in Israel.

"About another $4.9 million enabled JAFI to offer diverse Jewish experiences to both Israeli and Diaspora communities."

Among the JAFI programs supported were its "youth futures program for ultra-Orthodox," which helps disadvantaged

Continued on page 23

Ramah Canada hires new director

Frances Kraft
Staff Reporter

Ron Polster, whose history with Camp Ramah in Canada goes back to his bar mitzvah year, when he first attended the camp, has been hired as Ramah's next director, effective June 1.

Polster, a 45-year-old father of three who is currently director of education and family programming at Beth Tzedec Congregation, was director of Jewish camping initiatives at UJA Federation of Greater Toronto from 2007 to 2011. He spent the preceding five years as director of URJ Camp George and also served as assistant director of Camp Ramah in the Berkshires from 1994 to 1997.

Ron Polster

A native of Cleveland, Ohio, Polster, who succeeds Michael Wolf as director of Ramah, has a PhD in religion from the University of Toronto and is an alumnus of the Foundation for Jewish Camp's Executive Leadership Institute.

He said that his focus this summer – aside from learning the names of some 450 campers and 150 staff members – will be on staff training, "customer service," and looking at offering more specialized programming in areas such as sports and performing arts.

"That's one of the directions in Jewish camp in the States... having the Jewish mission, but being able to cater toward a niche market," he said.

Another trend he's seen is an increase in the amount of funding required for camp fees. "There's a constant need for fundraising to make sure we cannot leave any children behind," he said.

For parents who are also paying day school tuition, the cost of summer camp – as high as $1,500 a week at Ramah – is "a challenge," Polster said.

He acknowledged "a concern in the community" that Jewish camp might become an attractive alternative to Jewish day school education because of the relatively lower cost, but he hasn't seen that happen.

"Everbody's looking for the golden ticket. I think the key is making sure there's formal and informal education. Both provide literacy and identity."

He noted also that, in Jewish schools, "the lines are blurring" between formal and experiential education. He cited school Shabbatonim geared to leadership training as one example.

"I'm just thrilled to be the director of the camp that I literally grew up at," said Polster, who – after his years as a camper – returned to Ramah as a staff member.

'Global Jewish partnership'

Continued from page 22

youths develop their academic and social skills. It is run in co-operation with federations, philanthropists and the Israeli government. And its Partnership2gether program in Mateh Yeduda-Beit Shemesh is carried out in co-operation with Washington's Jewish federation and Jewish communities in South Africa, this program reaches out to haredi Jews and offers business development courses and mentorship for women seeking to create small businesses.

In addition, JAFI runs its MASA Israel Journey, which, in partnership with the Israeli government, provides long-term Israel experience programs.

The Nativ program, a co-operative effort of JAFI, the Israeli Defence Forces and the government, educates immigrant soldiers in Jewish history and culture. It also provides a route to conversion

Can the issue of conversion and the attendant questions of who is a Jew and who is entitled to decide who is a Jew be wedges that push Diaspora Jews away from Israel?

"There are people in the Diaspora, hopefully a small number, who say, 'If the Jewish state does not recognize me,' they throw up their hands," Silver said. "That's not the perspective of the Jewish Agency."

The agency, he continued, is "a global Jewish partnership with Israel at its heart. Israel, with all its flaws, is our state, our only Jewish state, so we have to work with Israel to improve it and at the same time not abandon it for its flaws."

Mazel Tov
מזל טוב

Fern Stein, Sergio & Vivian Bercovici (Guadalajara, Mexico) announce the engagement of Jordana & David. Thrilled grandparents Barry & Fran Stein, Miriam Birbaum, Sally Aron.

Sylvia Bornstein & Abraham Bornstein, Ricky & Michael Klein are delighted to announce the engagement of Michelle & Ryan. Mazel tov from the entire family.

Mazel tov on the engagement of Avi Varnai & Ashy Levinson.

Howard & Alona Donn announce the birth of their first child, April Roni, April 5. Proud grandparents are Beverly Donn and Michael & Irena Tabachnikov.

Mazel to on the engagement of Sarah Schanfield & Yosef Wilbur.

Mazel tov on the engagement of Zvi Rapps & Chaya Eichen.

as featured on onlysimchas! Celebrating Jewish Life www.onlysimchas.com

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What's New

By LILA SARICK

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Deadline reminder: April 23 is the deadline for the issue of May 3. April 30 is the deadline for the issue of May 10 . Please note all deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; fax 416-391-0829 or e-mail whatsnewcjn@gmail.com.

Thursday, April 19

YOM HASHOAH

Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism holds a ceremony honouring Jewish Holocaust refugees in the Soviet Union, 7 p.m. at 18 Wynford Dr.

TanenbaumCHAT Kimel presents a Yom Hashoah program at Shaar Shalom Synagogue , 7:30 p.m. Call 905-787-8772.

Beth Tikvah Synagogue holds a commemoration service and screens the film *La Rafle* (suitable for students over 16), 7:30 p.m.

JEWISH DECORATIVE ARTS

ROM curator **Corey Keeble** discusses "Jewish Decorative Arts," Congregation Darchei Noam. Doors open at 7:30 p.m., lecture at 8 p.m. Suggested donation, $5 for members, $10 for non-members.

SPRING SHOPPING

Summit Heights community holds a spring shopping extravaganza, 4-9 p.m. Temple Sinai.

Friday, April 20

DRUMMING FOR KIDS

Chabad of Markham offers a musical drumming program for children aged 6 to 24 months, starting today at 9:15 a.m. 905-886-0420, ext. 227.

Saturday, April 21

YOUNG FAMILY SERVICE

Shaar Shalom Synagogue has a young families service at 10:30 a.m.

TORAH STUDY

Morley Goldberg speaks about the parashah at Beth Tikvah Synagogue at 9:45 a.m.

PARASHAH AND PEIROT

Rabbi Jennifer Gorman speaks about the parashah at Pride of Israel Synagogue at 9:45 a.m. Light refreshments provided.

SHABBAT CHAZZANUT

Cantor Sol Zim, composer of many favourite Jewish songs, is at Beth Sholom Synagogue, 8:45 a.m.

MOVIE NIGHT

Or Hadash Synagogue, 451 Botsford St., Unit 5, Newmarket, shows the film *Defiance* at 7:30 p.m. RSVP susan@orhadash.org or call 905-898-2220.

Sunday, April 22

THE GREAT MYSTERION

Shaar Shalom Brotherhood invites everyone to be dazzled by "The Great Mysterion," 7:30 p.m.

MEMORIAL CONCERT

Holy Blossom Temple presents the Srul Irving Glick Memorial Concert with the Holy Blossom Choir, Lachan Jewish Chamber Choir and **Cantor Benjamin Maissner, Cantor Tibor Kovari** and **Cantor Efraim Sapir**, 8 p.m. For tickets call 416-789-3291, ext. 224.

KAVANAH GARDEN

Help prepare Shoresh's Kavanah Garden, 11 a.m.- 4 p.m., 18 Lebovic Campus Dr. Open to b'nei mitzvah students and older because of the tools and materials being used. Call 416-805-8382 or sabrina@shoresh.ca.

Continued on page 25

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for the Israeli Defense Forces

Wednesday April 25, 2012
Yom Hazikaron Commemoration
"What are we fighting for? The Challenge of Instilling Ideology in the IDF"

Thursday April 26, 2012
Yom Ha'atzmaut Program
"Israel: Struggle for Survival and Vision of Continuity."

With the participation of Cantor Tibor Kovari
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There is no charge for this program but voluntary contributions may be made to Beth Tikvah Adult Education Programming.

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Continued from page 24

BOOK LAUNCH
Jacob Sivak discusses his new book *Chienke's Motl and Motl's Chienke: A Twentieth Century Story*, 2 p.m. at Hashomer Hatzair, 4700 Bathurst St.

STRAIGHT TALK ON AGING
Dr. Brian Goldman discusses why seniors face ageism in health care, 10 a.m., Temple Emanu-El. RSVP 416-449-3880.

MEMORIAL SERVICE
Poet **Arnold Friedman** is the guest speaker at Beth Zion Synagogue and B'nai Shalom V'Tikvah's Holocaust memorial service, 7 p.m., 144 King St. E., Oshawa.

WARSAW MEMORIAL
Sylwia Szymanska-Smolkin is the guest speaker at a memorial of the 69th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, 2 p.m. Workmen's Circle Centre, 471 Lawrence Ave. W.

Monday, April 23

CHELM TO CHOLLYVOOD
Medina Theatre presents a staged reading performance of *From Chelm to Chollyvood*, 7:30 p.m., Temple Sinai. **Fran** 416-638-2716 or **Morris**, 416-785-0344.

SPRING LECTURE SERIES
Arne Kislenko discusses "Guarding the Borders: Immigration and National Security in Canada," 2 p.m., Temple Emanu-El. To register, 416-449-3880.

Tuesday, April 24

JEWS OF MAURITIUS
Jerry Ziedenberg discusses "The Jews of Mauritius," noon at Beth Tikvah Synagogue. By reservation only, 416-221-3433, ext. 352 or helen@bethtikvahtoronto.org.

THE WINTER PALACE
Eva Stachniak discusses her novel *The Winter Palace*, 8 p.m.,Temple Sinai. Sponsored by the family of Sharon Cole and Club Dayan, Na'amat Canada.

Wednesday, April 25

JEWISH GENEALOGY
Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada presents 5 authors from its *Tracing Our Roots* publication, Temple Sinai , 8 p.m. www.jgstoronto.ca.

YOM HAZIKARON
Rabbi Shalom Hammer, former chaplain for the Israel Defence Forces, speaks at 8 p.m. tonight and April 26, Beth Tikvah Synagogue.

JEWS FOR JUDAISM
Rabbi Michael Skobac discusses "The Elephant in the Room of Judaism," Shaarei Tefillah Congregation, 8:30 p.m., toronto@jewsforjudaism.ca or 416-789-0020.

Thursday, April 26

OPEN HOUSE
Danforth Jewish Circle's Children's Jewish Studies program holds an open house 4:45-6 p.m., Ms. Miriam's Stay and Play, 583A Danforth Ave. RSVP info@djctoronto.com.

YOM HA'ATZMAUT
Ward 10 **Coun. James Pasternak** is holding an Israeli flag raising, Toronto City Hall, 10 a.m., 100 Queen St. W. Meet at the information counter. RSVP 416-392-1371.

HARBORD REUNION
Harbord Collegiate Institute is holding its reunion April 26-27. www.HarbordClub.com.

Other News

THEATRE TRIPS
Temple Sinai Seniors Club is seeing *Lost in Yonkers* on June 6. Deadline for reservations is May 1. 416-487-3281.

HIGH TEA
Chabad of Markham Women are having a high tea for mothers and daughters, May 6, 3 p.m. Tickets $36 before April 20, $45 after. RSVP 905-886-0420, ext. 227.

JF&CS GROUPS

All programs require preregistration and are open to all members of the community. To register, call **Shawna Sidney,** 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or www.jfandcs.com. All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst. St., unless otherwise noted.

Widows/Widowers 65+: A 6-session group for people over 65 who have recently lost a spouse. Starts April 18, 1 p.m.

Mind, Body Connection for Women: An 8-session group for women who want to learn mindfulness and meditation. Starts April 25, 3 p.m. at 35 Madison Ave.

One Family, Two Homes: A 6-session series for families experiencing separation and divorce. Children and parents participate in separate groups. Starts April 25, 6:30 p.m.

The Challenge of Anger for Women: A 6-session group to learn how to express anger in an assertive, non-aggressive way. Starts April 26, 7:30 p.m.

Beyond the Chupah, Becoming a Couple: A 6-session marriage preparation group for couples, offered with the Rabbinical Assembly of Ontario. Starts April 26, 7:30 p.m., Beth Emeth Synagogue.

SINGLES EVENTS WILL RETURN

BEREAVED PARENTS
Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups. Call **Beth Feffer** at JF & CS, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or bfeffer@jfandcs.com.

Association of Jewish Seniors. Tammy, 416-635-2900, ext. 458. April 19, program to commemorate the Shoah, Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue. Refreshments 9:30 a.m., program at 10 a.m.

FOR SENIORS

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park. (60+). **Valerie**, 416-395-7881. Dance with live music, April 29. Tuesdays, gentle exercise, 10 a.m.; Wednesdays, duplicate bridge, 12:30 p.m.; Thursdays, line dancing, 10 a.m.; social bridge, 12:30 p.m. Non-members welcome.

PEP Group monthly meeting April 19, Earl Bales Community Centre, with entertainment, socializing and refreshments. New members accepted this month only. Call **Terri**, 416-785-0335.

Temple Sinai Senior Club. ROM curator **Corey Keeble** discusses "Jewish Rhode Island," April 24, 1:30 p.m. RSVP 416-487-3281.

Seniors Cultural Club meets Tuesdays, 10 a.m., Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell. 416-630-9444.

New Horizons is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club that offers kosher food, card games, casino trips. 416-256-1892.

Adath Israel Congregation. Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub. Refreshments $2. Call **Pearl**, 416-635-6317, or **Sheila**, 416-665-3333.

Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue welcomes new players for mah-jong and Rummikub Monday and Wednesday afternoons. 416-633-3838.

Bernard Betel Centre 416-225-2112. April 24, **Gerald Ziedenberg** discusses "The Jews of Mauritius,"10 a.m. April 25, Yom Ha'atzmaut party 6 p.m. April 26, **Laura Arrizza** discusses what the Toronto Public Library has available for seniors.

Active Seniors, Miles Nadal JCC, 416-924-6211, ext.155. Psychiatrist **Lesley Wiesenfeld** talks about "Positive Aging and Adaptation," April 19, 1:30 p.m. Israeli Independence Day musical program and brunch with musician **Eldan Cohen**, April 26, 11:30 a.m.

PROSSERMAN JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com.

Tickets for spring/summer theatre trips are on sale now. The spring/summer program guide is available now, ext. 4235.

MILES NADAL JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org.

Felix Opatowski, author of *Gatehouse to Hell*, shares his experiences in Auschwitz, April 22, 11 a.m.

Tickets on sale for Stars on Spadina Gala with **Theresa Tova, Moshe Hammer, Hilario Duran** and more, April 23, 7:30 p.m.

Reading Jewish, a class with **Rabbi Elyse Goldstein,** starts April 30, 8 p.m.

Brunch for Israel's birthday, April 26, 11:30 a.m.

Toronto Jewish Film Society screens the 1922 film *Hungry Hearts*, 4 and 7:30 p.m. Ext. 606.

Summer Institute for Creative Adults offers classes for adult singers, July 16-20. $300 before May 1, $350 after May. Ext. 250.

TORAH FAIR: This year's Torah Fair at Joe Dwek Ohr Haemet Sephardic School focused on the theme Wonders of the World. For the fair, Grade 1 teachers Sarah Praver, centre, and Michelle Nacson, right, and their students did a project on the six days of creation.

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Funding for McGill Mideast program to end

Janice Arnold
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — The McGill Middle East Program (MMEP) is facing the termination of its $1-million annual funding from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) after 15 years.

Director and founder Jim Torczyner said the money was supposed to run out this spring, but with lobbying, the MMEP was able to get an extension for one more year to carry on its activities in Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian territories.

He is, however, confident that new funding sources will be found and the MMEP will continue. Perennially optimistic, Torczyner envisions an expanded, rather than, diminished future.

The MMEP is becoming the International Community Action Network (ICAN), giving it a new name, but a similar mission.

CIDA funding covers about half of MMEP's total budget, or 80 per cent of the costs if the Israel portion is excluded. CIDA never covered the bill for bringing Israeli students to McGill University or for setting up community service and advocacy centres in Israel, because Canada doesn't consider Israel to be a developing country.

The Israel part of the program has largely been covered by private fundraising, which Torczyner is now spending much of his time trying to further develop in Canada and internationally.

Torczyner describes ICAN as "the coming of age" of MMEP. Its co-chairs are two MMEP stalwarts, former McGill chancellor Gretta Chambers and retired Superior Court justice Herbert Marx, a former Quebec justice minister.

The new configuration makes fundraising outside Canada easier (ICAN is recognized as a charitable group for tax purposes in the United States.)

MMEP – whose full name is the McGill Middle East Program in Civil Society and Peace Building – was launched in 1993 and began being funded by CIDA in 1997. The centrepiece was a specially designed two-year master's program in social work, with an emphasis on learning North American-style community organizing.

Students initially came from Jordan and Israel, and included both Jews and Arabs. By the late 1990s, Palestinians were included.

The "fellows" spent one year studying at McGill and then a second year in the field establishing and leading "rights-based community action centres" in their homelands. There have been no fellows at McGill since 2007-2008, due to an earlier reduction in the CIDA grant from $1.4 million to $1 million.

McGill University social work professor Jim Torczyner, left, and Sami Al-Kilani of An-Najah National University in Nablus are planning a new future for the McGill Middle East Program.

Fifty-three students completed the program, and there are now 11 centres in poor neighbourhoods in the Middle East: five each in Israel and the West Bank, and one in Amman.

Torczyner is aiming to open five new centres over the next five years.

MMEP has nine institutional partners in the region, mainly universities and NGOs such as the Red Crescent.

The centre's staff and volunteers guide the disadvantaged in how to secure their rights – in housing, education, health care, employment and the legal system. The centres reach about 120,000 people a year.

Torczyner believes the MMEP is a casualty of the Harper government's "shortsighted" withdrawal of funding from other Canadian non-governmental organizations working in the Middle East.

"We were basically told by CIDA that the government's priorities have changed [with regard to the West Bank and Gaza], and it will be focusing on physical infrastructure projects such as courthouses in Ramallah and a forensic laboratory somewhere else," said Torczyner.

"They also said we had been funded for 15 years and that they recognize our valuable contribution, but that we should not count on getting government support forever."

In December 2007, the government made a commitment of $300 million to the Palestinian Authority over five years, mainly for projects related to security, governance and economic prosperity. But Foreign Minister John Baird reportedly dropped a reference to that aid in his speech to the UN General Assembly last September.

Although Torczyner has successfully staved off past CIDA warnings that the money was going to end, this time he is resigned that his recourses have run out.

The cutback isn't due to the MMEP's track record, Torczyner insisted, noting an independent evaluation commissioned by CIDA that said the MMEP has achieved excellent results despite political and economic instability in the region.

It continues to receive more modest support from the Quebec Ministry of International Relations and the Open Society Foundation, founded by billionaire George Soros, which promotes democracy around the world.

The "first generation" of the community centres are totally self-sufficient, the second are on their way, and the newest ones are still in the building stage, he said.

Torczyner believes the MMEP has made a practical contribution to not only bettering the lives of people, but to fostering peaceful co-existence between ordinary Israelis, Palestinians and Jordanians.

It has turned former enemies into allies. One of the most notable is Sami Al-Kilani, a Palestinian poet and PLO activist who spent five years in prison in the 1980s because the Israelis considered him a security threat, although he never engaged in any violent or subversive activity.

Al-Kilani, who was born into a poor West Bank farming family, was in the first group of Palestinians at McGill in 1998-99 and founded the first MMEP centre in the Palestinian territories.

Today, at 60, he is the dean of the faculty of educational sciences at An-Najah National University in Nablus, a member of the Palestinian National Council, a founding member of the Arab non-violence movement, and an MMEP executive committee member.

The MMEP has gone a long way to alleviate the social inequities among his people that are often at the root of discontent that can translate into conflict, Al-Kilani believes.

"There is a very thin line between hope and hopelessness," he said. "If you give people hope in solving their problems, the hope will oppose this mentality of hatred and revenge. Empowering people makes them less likely to be exposed to extremism.

"Although I never supported violence and always believed in a two-state solution, my personal transformation was not easy. But I decided I could no longer be a prisoner of my pain."

OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Cwang, Pola	April 1/12	1101 Steeles Ave. W
Weiss, Yelena	April 2/12	129 Brickstone Circle
Moryoussef, Alegria	April 2/12	54 Whitney Place
Parr, Richard Jay	April 2/12	Private
Nisenbaum, Sam	April 3/12	1131 Steeles Ave W
Rosenblatt, Slomo (Sam)	April 3/12	10 Tangreen Crt
Gantman, Eva	April 3/12	
Nardea, Rafael	April 6/12	111 Inverlochy Blvd
Malinsky, Ruby	April 6/12	Private
Regev, Gabriel	April 1/12	Private
Bloch, Ernest Hans	April 6/12	7 York Downs Dr
Kirsh, Gerald Robert	April 7/12	33 Blue Forest Dr
Naft, Helen Muriel	April 7/12	33 Claridge Dr
Windwar, Harry	April 9/12	623 Finch Ave W
Berens, Ben	April 9/12	3560 Bathurst St
Shiller, Polina	April 9/12	Private
Voikhansky, Lev	April 9/12	Private

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Mynne Soupcoff	Mar 28/12	3600 Yonge Street
Samuel Shainhouse	Mar 30/12	49 Timberlane Drive
Hana Moncarz	Mar 30/12	333 Clark Avenue West
Mildred Selznick	Mar 30/12	19 Lower Village Gate
Chetti Knoll	Mar 29/12	20 Tarbert Road
Anne Jellinek-Siegel	Mar 30/12	43 Bain Avenue
Frances Goodman	Apr 4/12	260 Heath Street West
Sidelle Weiss	Apr 3/12	900 Steeles Avenue W.
Yetti Lightstone	Apr 4/12	100 Promenade Circle
Ernest Goodman	Apr 4/12	625 Avenue Road
Marek Lipsztajn	Apr 2/12	1137 Royal York Road

HEBREW BASIC BURIAL

Sheila Greenberg	Mar 27/12	8 Bank Street, South
Doreen Segel	Mar 31/12	18 Lower Village Gate
Fay Urman	Apr 4/12	550 Cummer Ave.

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Cotler slams decision to shutter rights agency

Janice Arnold
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Irwin Cotler, the Liberal critic for justice and human rights, has deplored the federal government's decision to disband the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, better known as Rights and Democracy.

The Montreal-based nonpartisan organization, established by Parliament in 1988 during the Mulroney era, has never fully recovered from the crisis within its ranks that came to light more than two years ago.

Irwin Cotler

Differing views on the Arab-Israeli conflict between certain members of the board of directors, notably its chair, University of Toronto professor Aurel Braun, and president Rémy Beauregard and other staff was at the heart of the dispute, the House of Commons standing committee on foreign affairs and international development concluded in its report on the affair released in June 2010.

Beauregard died of a heart attack the night after a particularly acrimonious board meeting in January 2010. Braun objected to a staff proposal to give grants totalling $30,000 to three non-governmental organizations – two of them Palestinian and one Israeli – to monitor human rights in the aftermath of the Israeli-Hamas war in Gaza in 2008-2009.

Braun, who was appointed chair by the Harper government in 2009, believed these NGOs were anti-Israel and possibly linked to terrorism.

Other government board appointees had become the majority on the 13-member body by the time the internal battle reached a head. Rights and Democracy was supposed to have an arm's-length relationship with the government of the day.

"By closing down this important organization, a creature of Parliament and responsible to Parliament, the Harper government peremptorily undermines Canada's standing as a leader in international human rights, and our capacity for the promotion and protection of democracy around the world," said Cotler, who served as the organization's acting chair in the 1990s.

Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird announced April 3 that the government would soon introduce legislation to terminate funding of Rights and Democracy. It depends on Ottawa for about 80 per cent of its budget, which was $11 million last year.

Baird said the cutback was part of the government's effort to "find efficiencies and savings" in its budget. The Foreign Affairs and International Trade Department and the Canadian International Development Agency will assume the functions performed by Rights and Democracy, he said.

The March budget did not specifically mention Rights and Democracy, but it does speak of the government's intention to "examine its participation in some international organizations to ensure that they are relevant to Canada's interests and priorities."

Cotler commented, "A budget is more than a financial statement. It is a statement of values. By doing away with a group like Rights and Democracy in budget 2012, this government demonstrates that the cause of international human rights is simply not among its priorities…

"It is troubling, indeed shocking, that the government did not even deign to propose an alternative mechanism for defending human rights and democracy worldwide."

The New Democratic Party also condemned the shutting down of Rights and Democracy. Foreign affairs critic Hélène Laverdière said that having its functions taken over by the foreign affairs department is not the right course, because the department is "increasingly politicized by this government" and does not have the resources to assume additional responsibilities.

"Conservative mismanagement ruined this once-respected organization," she said.

The House of Commons committee, which held hearings on the matter in 2010, had recommended that the board of Rights and Democracy be dismissed and that before they go, they apologize to the family of the late Beauregard for "any statements damaging his reputation." That did not happen.

Rights and Democracy was one of three Canadian organizations cited as problematic with regard to Israel by Canadian-born Bar-Ilan University professor and *CJN* columnist Gerald Steinberg on his NGO Monitor website. The other two, Kairos and Alternatives, lost their federal government funding in the past couple of years.

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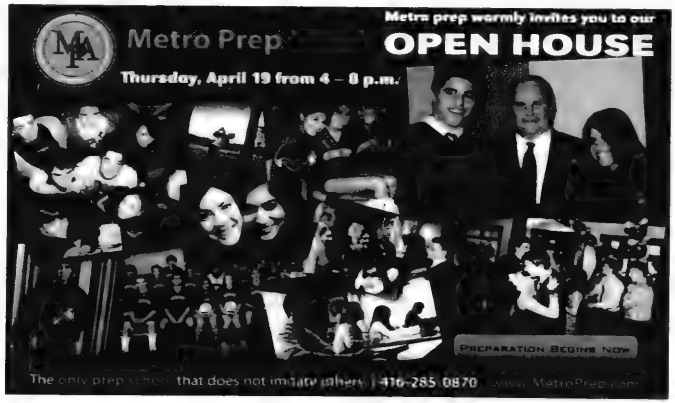
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Ghetto Shul to close

Janice Arnold
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — The Ghetto Shul, the storefront student-run synagogue on Park Avenue, is closing at the end of this month after being open for more than a decade.

Its spiritual leader for most of its history, Rabbi Leibish Daniel Hundert, is leaving and no replacement is being sought.

The participants will for the meantime be davening at Congregation Beth Shloime, better known as the Bagg Street Shul, the oldest synagogue in continuous use in Montreal. It's located on Bagg at Clark Street in what was the heart of the prewar Jewish district.

"It's pretty hard to find someone who is able to raise $150,000 a year, is prepared to make $30,000 a year and to live downtown where there is no eruv, which is difficult when you have a young family," said Rabbi Hundert.

He and wife Dena, who has been an active partner in running the shul, have two young children.

"Basically, anyone who might have been interested in the job has been scared away by that."

With a growing family, he also found it difficult to spend as much time with students as is expected of a college rabbi.

At 34 and after leading the shul for 10 years, Rabbi Hundert is moving on to other things. He is working on a PhD in religion and Jewish studies at Concordia University and is teaching Jewish studies at McGill University.

The shul runs Friday night and Saturday services, as well as holiday services. For a number of years, there was a daily minyan. The shul has also served as a drop-in centre through the week and a popular venue for contemporary Jewish music at night. Rabbi Hundert, a saxophonist himself, conceived of turning the place into a "synagogue-bar."

"We get anywhere from 50 to 90 people at services, 90 per cent of them students. But it has been going down a bit," he said.

Rabbi Hundert has had to raise the Ghetto Shul's budget, a large part of which is the rent for its premises, since funding from Federation CJA ended in December 2009. The recession forced the federation to make broad cutbacks at the time.

Although it has been a struggle, Rabbi Hundert is happy to be leaving the Ghetto Shul without a deficit.

The money has come from a major benefit concert by Matisyahu, the then-chassidic Jewish singer at the Olympia Theatre in November 2009, as well as smaller year-round concerts at the shul, including a series during the Montreal International Jazz Festival. A number of individuals, including alumni, have been generous as well.

The concept of a downtown music venue for young Jews didn't really take off, he said. "We had about 40 people coming out to 13 or 14 concerts a year."

The Ghetto Shul, named for the Student Ghetto east of the McGill campus, opened in August 2001 and was originally located in a duplex on Lorne Crescent, nearer to the campus. The synagogue had a close relationship with Hillel from the outset, but relied financially on private donors for its founding, he said.

It was the brainchild of Tawn Friedman, then Hillel's program director, and was led by Rabbi Avi Poupko initially. They were looking for an unusual way of keeping university students engaged with Judaism by creating a "grassroots" synagogue.

By 2003, the shul was receiving almost all of its budget from the federation and Hillel, Rabbi Hundert said.

The shul had to vacate its first premises in 2007 because the number of people using it was exceeding the space's legal capacity of 50. The Park Avenue site, between Sherbrooke and Milton Streets, is a former restaurant that was considerably bigger but also more expensive.

Rabbi Hundert and the student committee that runs the shul tried a number of ventures in recent years to keep it afloat, fashioning itself as a "synagogue-bar" where traditional Judaism fused with modern culture. A Jewish Community Foundation grant paid for the musicians, but the jam session did not generate much revenue, he said.

Rabbi Leibish Hundert

Last year, a vegetarian restaurant was launched, but running a restaurant is an arduous business and the idea was abandoned.

The Bagg Street Shul has been experiencing a revival in recent years, with more young people going there. Weekly Shabbat services are held under lay leader Michael Kaplan, a retired McGill engineering professor.

His grandfather Baris Kaplan's construction company was responsible for the conversion of the former late 19th-century residence into a synagogue in 1921.

Whether there will be a legal merger "remains to be sorted out," Rabbi Hundert said. "The Ghetto Shul is a non-profit organization, recognized for charitable purposes. That may be dissolved. It's up to the students associated with it.

"But the Bagg Street Shul has been very welcoming, very accommodating."

Rabbi Hundert noted out that the McGill Chabad House is also undergoing a renewal and will meet the religious needs of some students. It has a new young director, Rabbi Shmuely Weiss, and the Peel Street centre is being renovated.

"I'm leaving feeling grateful that I had the opportunity to give something to the young Jewish community and to many individuals who were supportive of the Ghetto Shul," Rabbi Hundert said.

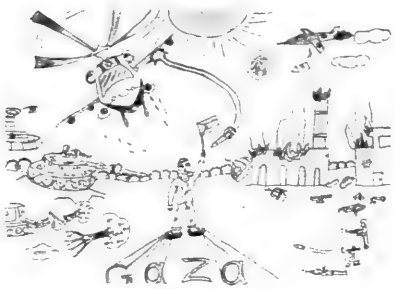
Gaza children's exhibit draws criticism

Janice Arnold
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — A controversial exhibit of art said to be done by children in Gaza expressing hardships due to the conflict with Israel is scheduled to continue at Cinéma du Parc until May 3.

A Child's View from Gaza is sponsored by the pro-Palestinian Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME). The exhibition's planned eastern Canadian tour opened in March at the Pierre-Georges Roy Public Library in Lévis, near Quebec City.

A poster publicizing the month-long



exhibition shows a drawing of a kneeling child with his arms raised as a soldier points a rifle at him.

CJPME plans to take the exhibition to Ottawa, Toronto, London, Hamilton and other Ontario cities between May and November, and then to the Maritimes next winter. The organization is soliciting donations during the tour.

CJPME describes the 26 works, plus accompanying photos, as "depicting the daily life of Gaza under siege." The art is said to have been done by children aged five to 14 as part of art therapy classes.

"*A Child's View from Gaza* tells a story about children who are forced to witness horrors and how they are able to make sense of their experiences through art," said CJPME president Thomas Woodley.

Cinema-goer Harold Toulch objected to the exhibition, seeing it as "deeply offensive antisemitic propaganda." He said he won't consider going back to the cinema until the exhibition is down.

"[It] did not just describe the plight of Arab children but placed the blame for their condition solely on the shoulders of the Jewish state of Israel," he e-mailed *The CJN*.

Cinéma du Parc owner Roland Smith responded: "It is clear the exhibition... is a powerful one [and]... contains many riveting images."

He believes the CJPME has been "careful to contextualize the drawings and photos and to provide footnotes where appropriate. "Viewers of the exhibition are reminded that the hand-drawn works are indeed children's drawings – with all this may imply – and that the photos in the exhibition are those of eyewitness photographers, including Palestinian, Israeli and international photographers. Viewers with comments are encouraged to contact CJPME directly with those comments."

Toulch wonders why the exhibition makes no mention of the fact the children of Gaza are living under a Hamas regime, an organization designated as terrorist by the Canadian government.

It also doesn't mention that this regime is "dedicated to the destruction of the Jewish state" and regularly fires rockets towards Israeli civilian populations, "often from launchers placed in or near Gaza schoolyards," Toulch said.

He added that there's no indication of Hamas' repression of women and homosexuals, either.

Cinéma du Parc was the Montreal venue for another CJPME-sponsored exhibition in early 2010 titled *Human Drama in Gaza*. It consisted of 44 photos taken in Gaza mainly in the aftermath of Israel's conflict with Hamas in the winter of 2008-2009. Most showed devastation and human suffering.

On the other hand, the independent cinema is the venue for the annual Festival du Cinéma Israélien de Montréal, sponsored by the Communauté Séphardade Unifiée du Québec. The seventh edition was held in March.

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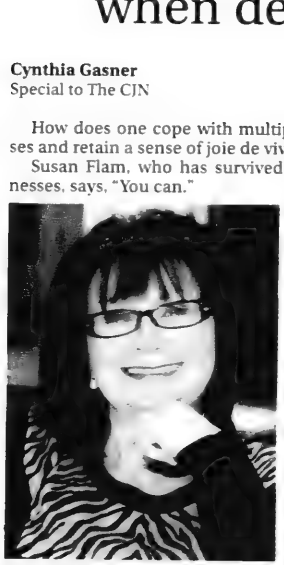
Author stresses positive reinforcement when dealing with health crises

Cynthia Gasner
Special to The CJN

How does one cope with multiple health crises and retain a sense of joie de vivre?

Susan Flam, who has survived a cycle of illnesses, says, "You can."



Susan Flam is the author of *Choices: Lemons or Chocolates.*

She wrote a book titled *Choices: Lemons or Chocolates* "as a cathartic journey outlining my 30-year-plus struggle with chronic illnesses and the resulting depressions," she said.

The book is really not about her, though, she says. "Everyone experiences obstacles in life, and not until you make choices on how to follow your path to a better quality of life, do you know what you are going to get. Life is like Forrest Gump's box of chocolates."

The character Forrest Gump, in the 1994 movie of the same name, says, "My momma always said, 'Life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're gonna get.'"

In her 109-page book published by BookCrafters, Flam tells about her self-discovery and how she survived many roadblocks, "to empower and motivate readers into believing that whatever hand they have been dealt, you have to find a positive out of it all to move forward so you can be productive and happy."

Flam, 64, a mother and grandmother, was born in Germany and immigrated to Toronto with her parents, Esther and Harry Fish, both Holocaust survivors, when she was six months old.

Flam has sprinkled her book with quotes about survival and hope from famous people, including Friedrich Nietzsche, Winston Churchill, Christopher Reeve and others.

> ***'Life is like Forrest Gump's box of chocolates'***

She gives her readers the opportunity to choose a way out of their misery through positive reinforcement and simple methods that work for her.

"I feel that my book contains good elements that could really make a difference in the lives of people who are looking for answers to coexist with their afflictions," Flam said.

One of her many coping tools, she says, is to remain active. Flam is a volunteer for several charitable organizations, including Beit Halochem, Na'amat and the Starlight Children's Foundation.

Choices: Lemons or Chocolate is available at the Batner Bookstore in Thornhill, Ont., and online at Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble and Smashwords.

MONTREAL — Pioneering HIV/AIDS researcher Mark Wainberg of the Jewish General Hospital's Lady Davis Institute (LDI) and McGill University has been awarded the $100,000 2012 Killam Prize in health sciences.

To read full story, go to cjnews.com

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דער יידיש ווינקל

דזשערי קעין

דער יידיש לייענקריַיז, געגרינדעט אין טאָראָנטאָ אין 1990, האָט גיט נאָך אַלץ אָן מיט איר אַרבעט
פון היתידאָן פּעלץ

מיט עטלעכע צענדליק יאָר צוריק האָט אין דער יידישער נעמינדע פון טאָראָנטאָ געבליט די קולטור אין יידיש. בייַ יידיש רעדנדיקע יידן פון פּרינציפּיקע דורות איז יידיש געווען די טאָג טעגלעכע שפּראַך, די אומגאַנגס שפּראַך.

די יידיש רעדנדיקע יידן האָבן געגרינדעט און אָנגעפּירט מיט א ריי אַרגאַניזאַציעס און אינסטיטוציעס פון פּאַרשידענע ריכטונגען: סינאַגאָגעס, לאַנדסמאַנשאַפטן, פּראָפעסיאָנאַלע אַרגאַניזאַציעס, ציוניסטישע אַרגאַניזאַציעס, חלילטלעכע שולעס, און אַזוי ווייַטער. אָבער צום באַדויערן, זיַינען היַינט די יידיש רעדנדיקע גרופּעס, צום בייַשפּיל, דער אַרבעטער רינג אָדער די יידישע פאָלק-שולע (דער פּאָרויסגייער פון דער היַינטיקער ביאָליק טאָג-שולע) נעבליבן וויַ שאָנטע פון זיירע פּאַרגאַנגענע פּאַרקערפּערונגען.

אָבער, ס'זיַינען פּאָראַן אין אונדזער שטאָט געוויַלטע מענטשן האָבן האָבן יאָרן לאַנג געאַרבעט שוואַר אויפּצוהאַלטן אין פּאָרשפּרייטן די יידישע שפּראַך און קולטור, און זיַינען עד היום אָקטיוו אין יידיש-קרייַזן. אָזאַ מענטש איז יאַנקל קיַין, דער רעדאַקטאָר פון דעם יידיש וויַנקל, און אַ צווייטע איז סילוויע לוסטגאָרטן, די געווועזענע דירעקטאָרין פון דעם קאָמיטעט פאַר יידיש בייַם אַמאָליק טאָראָנטאָר יידישן קאָנגרעס. ווי די דירעקטאָרין האָט זי פיל אויפגעטאָן לטובת יידיש. אָבער חוץ איר אַרבעט בייַם יידישן קאָנגרעס, האָט סילוויע אין 1990 געהאָלפן צו גרינדן, אין טאָראָנטאָ, אַ ליינקריַיז פון פּרויען, וואָס איז געבליבן לעבעדיק אין פּאָרשידענע פּאַרוואַנדלונגען ביז היַינט.

אין אָנהייב איז די גרופּע פּרויען זיך צוזאַמענגעקומען צו לייענען און איבערזעצן די דערציילונגען פון כּמעט אין גאַנצן פאַרגעסענע יידישע שרייַבערינס. אַ דאָנק דער אַרבעט פון אַן אַנדערע טוערין לטובת יידיש, פּרידא (פּריידל) פאַרמאַן, זיַינען די פּרויען- שרייַבער אויפגעלעבט נעאָרן, די צווייטע פון יענער וועלט. מאַנאַמן לאַנג האָט פּריידל, אַ פאַרבערגטער פּעמעניסטקע, געוווקט און געפאָרשט אין ניו- יאָרק , אין ישראל און טאָראָנטאָ, צו אַנטדעקן און אַנטפּלעקן אַם די שרייַבונגען. צוזאַמען מיט די גרופּע פון מער וויַ צען פּרויען וואָס סילוויע האָט צוזאַמענגעשטעלט, האָט זי עטלעכע דערציילונגען איבערגעזעצט, און דערנאָך אַרויסגעגעבן דעם זייער געלונגענעם בוך *Found Treasures*. דאָס איז נעהיַן דאָס ערשטע מאָל וואָס אַ זאַמלונג פון יידישע שרייַבערינס איז דערשיַינען ערגעצוווּ אין דער וועלט, סיַ אין יידיש סיַ אין אַנדערער שפּראַך.

עס זיַינען פּאָראַן אין אָט דער גרופּע אויסערגעוויינטלעכע טוערינס לטובת יידיש. קודם כל, מרו איך דערמאָנענן עטעל רייקוס, וועלכע האָט געאַרבעט זייַט בייַ זיַט מיט פּריידלען אין רעדאַקטירן דאָס בוך. אין ליינקריַז האָט אַנטייל גענומען איבערגעגעבע יידישסטן אַזוי וויַ ברייַנע ראָז, חנה ערליך, העניע ריינהאַרץ, און די דיכטערין מירים וואַדינגטאָן. צום באַדויערן, זענען עטלעכע פון די באַאַבטע מיטגלידער מער ניט מיט אונדז. אָבער דער ליינקריַז האָט איבערגעלעבט כאָטש אין נייַ פּאָרמאַנדלונגען. אין אַ צוויַיט אַרטיקל, וועל איך דערציילן וועגן זיַין איצטיקן גילגול.

פון דער רעדאַקציע: אויב איר האָט געדאַנקען וועגן אונדזער וויַנקל לאָזט וויסן, דורך פאָסט אַדער בליץפּאָסט: cjninfo@gmail.com

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No 'freebie' to Iran: Obama

JTA

WASHINGTON — U.S. President Barack Obama has responded to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's claim that world powers gave Iran a "freebie" by agreeing to hold more talks.

"We're going to keep on seeing if we make progress. Now, the clocking is ticking and I've been very clear to Iran and to our negotiating partners that we're not going to have these talks just drag out in a stalling process. But so far at least, we haven't given away anything," Obama said late Sunday during a news conference in Cartagena, Colombia.

"The notion that somehow we've given something away or a 'freebie' would indicate Iran has gotten something. In fact, they've got some of the toughest sanctions that they're going to be facing coming up in just a few months if they don't take advantage of these talks," Obama added.

Talks between Iran and the six world powers – the United States, Britain, France, China, Russia, and Germany – about Iran's nuclear program resumed April 14 after more than a year's hiatus. The sides agreed to meet again on May 23 in Baghdad.

"My initial impression is that Iran has been given a freebie. It's got five weeks to continue enrichment without any limitation, any inhibition," Netanyahu said Sunday in Israel.

Iran says its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes, but the western world fears that Iran may be enriching uranium in order to produce a nuclear bomb. Netanyahu has called on the international community to halt Iran's nuclear production by force if necessary, and has warned that the window in which to prevent Iran's production of a nuclear bomb is rapidly closing.

U.S. President Barack Obama

In related news, a dozen Iranian nuclear experts visited North Korea last week to observe its failed rocket launch on Friday, South Korean state news agency Yonhap's Washington correspondent reported on Sunday.

"On March 31, 12 Iranians of the Shahid Hemmat Industrial Group (SHIG) arrived in North Korea. "The Iranians undoubtedly were there to observe the missile launch and receive test data from North Korea," the correspondent quoted a diplomatic source, who wished to remain anonymous, as saying.

Defying international pressure, Pyongyang launched a long-range missile, but U.S. and South Korean officials said it crashed into the sea a few minutes after launch, dealing a blow to the reclusive state.

The launch of the three-stage Unha-3 rocket took place at 7:39 a.m. local time on Friday, according to South Korean officials. Pyongyang has claimed that the launch was meant to place a communications satellite in space, but the United States, Japan, South Korea and other nations view it as part of North Korea's attempt to advance its military ballistic missile capacity.

The launch was timed to celebrate the 100th birthday of Kim Il-sung, the deceased founder of the state, and to coincide with the ascent to power of his grandson Kim Jong-un.

North Korea admitted its long-range rocket failed to deliver a satellite into orbit on Friday, and the United States condemned the provocative action as a threat to regional security.

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Apr. 17
Bernie Farber a proud fighter for human rights. Bernie most recently served as CEO for the Canadian Jewish Congress. He serves on several local boards including the North York Committee for Community Race and Ethnic Relations, the York Region Community Safety Committee and the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police. Bernie will talk about heroism during the Shoah - Jews and non-Jews - who had the courage to act.
"The Shoah and the Courage to be a Hero"

Apr. 24
Jerry Ziedenberg historian and chair of Beth Tikvah's Adult Education. Jerry will talk about the incredible saga of thousands of Jewish refugees fleeing the Nazis only to be captured, imprisoned and then exiled by the British to the island of Mauritius.
"The Jews of Mauritius"

May 1
Dov Altman Executive VP and CEO, Canadian Friends of Bar-Ilan University. The university is fast becoming one of Israel's scientific incubators, actively involved in technology transfer and commercialization. Dov will speak about
"Improving Lives: Israel's Technological and Scientific Achievements"

May 8
Tarek Fatah Canadian political activist, writer, and broadcaster. Tarek has also written opinion pieces for Time magazine, Toronto Star, National Post and the Globe & Mail, and guest hosted TVO's "The Agenda" filling in for Steve Paikin. In February 2007, Fatah was on Maclean's list of 50 Canadians described as "Canada's most well known and respected personalities" Tarek will talk about the relationship between Jews and Muslims as author of
"The Jew is Not My Enemy"

May 15
Rosalie Moscoe is a health and wellness speaker, a registered nutritional consultant practitioner and author of "Frazzled Humed Woman! Your Stress Relief Guide to Thriving...Not Merely Surviving.
"Beyond Retirement: Pathways to Well-Being"

May 22
Marilyn Herbert founder of "Book-in-a-Box" book club – a discussion companion for contemporary fiction. Marilyn is an educator, school librarian, writer, book-talk presenter and facilitator. We welcome her back to Lunch & Learn to review David Bezmozgis novel that was shortlisted for the *Scotiabank Giller Prize and the Governor General's Awards*
"The Free World"

May 29
Moshe Hammer world renowned and award winning violinist. He will talk about his musical experiences and philanthropic work with the non-profit program he founded, teaching children music and violins to get them away from violence.
"From Violence to Violins"

June 5
Aubrey Dan businessman and philanthropist Aubrey Dan has called himself a risktaker and one who doesn't accept the status quo. He launched Dancap Productions Inc. in 2007 to fill what he saw as a void in the Toronto entertainment industry. Aubrey will be talking about
"There's No Business Like Show Business"

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Yad Vashem releases new Soviet documents

Revital Blumenfeld
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — More than a million new testimonial pages about Jews in the Soviet Union will be released by Yad Vashem, starting today, in the wake of agreements with the KGB archives and the national archives of Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

The documents, which include personal papers belonging to World War II survivors from these states, are expected to help researchers measure the scope of persecution and extermination of Jews in the former Soviet Union.

"There are many black holes concerning communities and individuals in central and eastern Europe, where the majority of Jews lived," says Haim Gertner, head of the archives division of the Yad Vashem World Center for Holocaust Research, Documentation and Education. "It has been very difficult for us to copy records from this region. It includes entire villages that were wiped out by the Nazis in one day, and nobody was left to narrate what happened."

Since the Iron Curtain fell in 1991, materials documenting the lives of Jews in the Soviet Union began to accumulate, but they were relayed to the West in small batches. In the current documentation project, personal papers belonging to survivors from these states were copied by Yad Vashem crews over the past two years. The document collection includes passports, identity papers, documents about house use (attesting to entry and occupation procedures enforced under Communist rule), demographic registries, medical records, personal files of schoolteachers and more. The records cover the lives of Jews before, during and after the war.

Arkadi Zeltser, head of Yad Vashem's centre for the research of Jews of the Soviet Union during the Holocaust, says the new documents should help break the silence surrounding the murder of Jews in the Soviet Union. On the eve of the war, some five million Jews lived in the Soviet Union. By the end of the war, some 2.7 million had been murdered, estimates Zeltser, one of many researchers who refer to the extermination of Jews of the former Soviet Union as the "Holocaust that was silenced."

"The Holocaust of Jews in the former Soviet Union was never written about as a phenomenon of genocide. They [the Soviets] claimed that Soviet Jews were murdered as Soviet citizens, not as Jews," says Zeltser, adding that the process of breaking the silence "will be a very long one."

The records include those of renowned Jews such as former prime minister Menachem Begin. "Begin was detained by the Soviet authorities on charges of anti-Communist, Zionist activity," notes Gertner. "The investigation file has 140 pages, in which everything is recorded, including who he was, what he studied, his fingerprints and more. We are copying hundreds of files of people who had no idea that they were under investigation."

Haim Gertner

The cache of papers is also shedding light on little-known heroes. One dramatic story that has never been disclosed is that of Chaim Feyglman, commander of Unit 106 of the Jewish partisan platoon, which operated in Belarus during World War II.

Feyglman grew up in a large family, in a town near Minsk. When war erupted in Belarus in 1941, he was detained while trying to escape from Minsk and return to his hometown. He was first sent to the Drozdi concentration camp, close to Minsk, and later transferred to a prison in Minsk, while his family remained in the city's ghetto. Feyglman managed to elude the Nazis. He found work in the ghetto's hospital, where he met Hersh Smolar, who later became a leader of the ghetto underground. Together with Smolar, Feyglman established the ghetto's underground in August 1941. Feyglman had access to a storage area in the ghetto where firearms and medicine were kept, and he smuggled items to the partisans. When the Nazis learned about the hospital's underground cell, they murdered all the patients and doctors in the facility.

In August 1942, the Nazis murdered some 20,000 residents of the ghetto via gas trucks. At the end of June 1943, Feyglman escaped to neighbouring forests, and became the commissar of Unit 106, which had 1,000 fighters. The unit took part in a number of underground missions, including the dynamiting of railroad tracks. In July 1944, the unit disbanded and Feyglman was discharged. He worked at a series of jobs until he retired in April 1977. Feyglman, who was injured during the war, had a son, a daughter and grandchildren. In 1991, he immigrated to Israel, together with his daughter and her family. Testimony provided by his comrades after the war was held at an archive in Belarus. These documents, together with Feyglman's personal papers, allow researchers to piece together his dramatic life story.

Yad Vashem begins releasing the documents today, on Holocaust Remembrance Day. The agreements, signed between Yad Vashem and the various national archives about five months ago, were supported by the Genesis Foundation and the European Jewish Fund.

March OF THE LIVING CANADA

Expresses its sorrow over the passing of

ERNEST BLOCH ז"ל
(1927-2012)

Holocaust Survivor & March of the Living Chaperone

The only survivor from his family, Ernest Bloch accompanied the Toronto March of the Living delegation in 2009 and 2011 to Poland and Israel, imparting his story and the lessons of the Holocaust to some 700 students and chaperones. Ernie will forever be remembered for his love of people, compassion, optimism, his will to overcome, his generous spirit and wisdom, and for the many lives he touched.

May the entire family be comforted among the mourners of Zion.

Laura Bennie
National Chair
March of the Living Canada

Eli Rubenstein
National Director
March of the Living Canada

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Arab who sold property to Jews sentenced to death

JTA

JERUSALEM — Jewish leaders in Hebron have called for international intervention to help the Palestinian man sentenced to death for selling a home near the Cave of the Patriarchs to Jews.

A letter on behalf of Muhammad Abu Shahala, a former intelligence agent for the Palestinian Authority, was signed by Hebron Jewish community leaders David Wilder and Noam Arnon, and addressed to, among others, the secretary general of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, the president of the European Council of the European Union, Herman Van Rompuy, and the director general of the International Red Cross, Yves Daccord, among others.

Shahala reportedly was sentenced to death for his part in selling to a group of Jews what has become known as the Machpelah House. He reportedly confessed to the sale after torture and was given a rushed trial, according to Arutz-7, which cited various news agencies. Palestinian officials said Shahala was not authorized to sell the home.

The death warrant still has to be signed by Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas, according to reports.

"It is appalling to think that property sales should be defined as a 'capital crime' punishable by death," the Jewish leaders write in their letter. "The very fact that such a 'law' exists within the framework of the PA legal system points to a barbaric and perverse type of justice, reminiscent of practices implemented during the dark ages.

"What would be the reaction to a law in the United States, England, France or Switzerland forbidding property sales to Jews? Actually, less than 100 years ago, such acts were legislated and practised, known as the infamous 'Nuremberg laws.'"

At least seven Jewish families were evicted from the house earlier this month, a week after they entered the home in the middle of the night on March 28 armed with documents saying they had purchased the building from its Arab owner.

'Fly-in' protesters detained at Ben Gurion Airport

JTA

JERUSALEM — At least 43 foreign pro-Palestinian activists who arrived in Israel for a "fly-in" protest were detained at Ben-Gurion Airport.

Two protesters, citizens of France and Italy, made it through security to Bethlehem.

Thirty-one of the detained activists were transferred to a detention centre and 12 were deported to their point of origin, Israel Police told reporters. Nine local activists who protested the detentions at the airport also were arrested.

The foreign activists who arrived Sunday from several European countries and North America are part of the "Welcome to Palestine" campaign in which activists declare their intention to travel to the West Bank to highlight that there is no way to visit what they call Palestine without travelling through Israel.

The group had plans to travel to Bethlehem and lay a cornerstone for an educational institution. The campaign said it expected up to 2,500 activists to attempt to make it to Israel.

Several airlines, including Lufthansa, Air France and Easyjet, cancelled the flights of known activists before they could leave from their points of origin. Israel had requested that airlines prevent activists from boarding flights. In addition, if fliers are turned away from Israel and put on a flight back to their point of origin, the airline must absorb the cost of the return flight.

More than 600 unarmed police were stationed at Ben-Gurion Airport to intercept the activists who arrive in Israel unchallenged, according to Israel Radio.

Several dozen pro-Palestinian activists protested Sunday morning at the airport in Geneva, Switzerland, saying that authorities prevented about 100 activists from boarding a flight bound for Israel.

Dozens of activists reportedly also protested at Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris after being denied entry to their flights to Israel. The protesters chanted "Today the barrier is here" and "Israel get out, France is not yours."

Sunday, the day after Passover ended, is one of Ben-Gurion Airport's busiest flying days.

Activists who managed to arrive in Israel reportedly received a sarcastic letter issued by the Prime Minister's Office thanking them for "choosing to make Israel the object of your humanitarian choices" instead of protesting human rights abuses and terrorists in Syria, Iran and Gaza, according to *Jerusalem Post*, which printed a copy of the letter.

The letter suggests to the activists that they "first solve the real problems of the region, and then come back and share with us your experience." It also tells them to "Have a nice flight."

Last July, some 300 activists flew to Israel for a protest fly-in. About 120 were detained.

NEWS UPDATES

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Israel Briefs

Massive fraud alleged

A senior executive of a Jerusalem-based charity that purported to aid the needy and Holocaust survivors was ordered to remain in custody on suspicion of stealing tens of millions of shekels from international donors. The official, who cannot be named, and nine other employees of the nonprofit are accused by police of conducting a "massive scheme" to mislead Israeli and international donors about the scope of its aid to Israel's poor and Holocaust survivors. Operators of the charity are accused of pocketing "tens of millions of shekels" in donations and selling food earmarked for Holocaust survivors and the needy.

Navies co-operate

The Israel Navy has strengthened its co-operation with the Lebanese Navy in the Mediterranean as it prepares for possible pro-Palestinian flotillas to Gaza on Nakba Day later this month. According to Israel Navy officials, the indirect co-operation between the two navies has increased. The Lebanese Navy has also recently aided the IDF in driving out foreign fishing boats that have been approaching Israeli waters.

Attack prevented

Israeli soldiers discovered seven homemade bombs on the body of a Palestinian man at a checkpoint in the Jordan Valley. The 19-year-old Palestinian tried to cross the checkpoint with the bombs and several knives, according to the Israel Defence Forces. He planned to attack during the intermediate days of Passover. It's at least the third time in recent months that a Palestinian planning to carry out a terror attack has been caught at the same checkpoint.

Files from JTA and Ha'aretz

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About CHW Canadian Hadassah-WIZO (CHW) is Canada's leading Jewish women's philanthropic organization. Founded in 1917, CHW is non-political, volunteer driven and funds programs and projects for Children, Healthcare and Women in Israel and Canada.

Urban renewal and missed opportunities

Doron Tsur
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

TEL AVIV — Everyone is waiting to see whether masses of protesters fill Tel Aviv's Rothschild Boulevard this year, after last summer's demonstrations. But strolling down the boulevard and the nearby streets, one can't help but notice a socio-economic phenomenon of an entirely different sort.

It seems construction work is taking place on every other building and on every empty lot. On some sites, we're talking about high-rise apartment buildings or huge, glittering office towers; elsewhere, it's the renovation and preservation of old structures, newly beautiful in their fresh paint.

At the corner of Ahad Ha'am and Balfour streets, an old building is being expanded and renovated. Beneath it a huge pit is being dug for underground parking. In the end, the sign promises, the project will turn an old, neglected three-storey building into a renovated gem, with additional floors on top.

For decades, a process has been taking place in Israel that would be familiar to urban dwellers around the world. City centres have deteriorated, losing their residents as well as their spirit.

The desire to move from old, crowded apartments to more spacious and modern housing in outlying neighbourhoods and the suburbs where it's more convenient to raise children creates a clear social process. Young people gradually leave, city centres lose their affluent young population, public services deteriorate and building maintenance is neglected. It's a self-sustaining downward spiral: abandonment leads to neglect, neglect leads to abandonment.

That happened in Tel Aviv, too. Over many years, the city centre was gradually abandoned. Apartments and whole apartment buildings were turned into offices and warehouses. For anyone who could afford it, the urban fabric moved north or outside the city.

Of course, that happened in Haifa and Jerusalem, too, not just in Tel Aviv.

Since this is a long-term, self-perpetuating economic and social process, it isn't easy to reverse. Municipalities all over the world are racking their brains in an attempt to reverse the decline of city centres.

Young Israelis are seen in front of one of the renovated buildings on Rothschild Avenue in Tel Aviv. ***[Flash90 photo]***

In Israel, this is egregious waste. Israel is a small, crowded country that is becoming more crowded. It's very hard to find available land for construction, and everyone rightly wants to preserve open green spaces. Meanwhile, thousands of old buildings stand in wretched condition in city centres, half empty or not used for housing. They're an eyesore.

The good news is that if, for any reason, the trend is reversed and renewal begins, that process is self-sustaining, too. The well-to-do move to the city centre, creating momentum for change. That's what's been happening in Tel Aviv in recent years – the hammering on Rothschild Boulevard and nearby is a clear sign.

Of course, everything good has a downside. The construction momentum in the heart of Tel Aviv, which has positive economic implications for both the country and the municipality, couldn't have taken place without the price increases of recent years. This process is strongly in evidence in Tel Aviv, but barely so in other city centres that have suffered similar declines.

The economy has its own slow ways of restoring balance. Despite the waste and urban blight, an old and neglected building can stand deserted for years if the sale price after the investment in renovation doesn't generate a profit. But if the prices increase enough, the financial interest of the landlords and the developers who are pushing for renovation or construction will overcome any obstacle. That's what's happening now.

On the other hand, if prices increase too much, no buyers will be found for these buildings, and the process will stop. In the end, things balance out, but slowly. In the case of construction and renovation in the city centre, the problem becomes even more acute because the municipality wants – and rightly so – to preserve buildings of architectural and historic value. That greatly increases construction costs.

It's much cheaper and easier to put up a new building on the ruins of an old one than to renovate an existing building. But a city has to preserve its past and its character. That's in the public interest. The result is that without high sales prices, there will be no renewal. There will be no preservation and renovation on the one hand, and no high-rise buildings on the other.

This process is taking place now in Tel Aviv, both in the city centre and in the more neglected area south of the city. But we barely see it, for example, in Haifa's lower city, which could be an urban jewel. The reason is prices.

If real estate prices in Haifa increased significantly, it would be worth it to renovate the historic buildings in the lower city. At present, any brief tour of the area creates a sense of missed opportunity – the built-up area could look so much nicer.

So, if you've been hoping for a sharp decline in housing prices, you should be careful about what you're wishing for. Below a certain price level, the momentum of urban construction and renewal that we're seeing in Tel Aviv will stop with a screech. In other places, we won't even have a chance to begin.

The good news is that wherever resources have been wasted, there is room for improvement. The global economic outlook isn't bright these days, and that will affect us too. Momentum for urban renewal and massive rehabilitation of city centres could generate economic activity in Israel, which would compensate somewhat for the global slowdown.

In the past, global recessions actually benefited the Israeli construction market. When the situation around the world is tough, more Israelis return and fewer leave the country. There's also an increase in immigration. This process creates greater demand for housing.

The spring holidays are a good time to think about renewal. Let's hope the process we're seeing in Tel Aviv picks up speed and spreads. The decline and neglect of our city centres went on for decades – two generations. Renewal will also last many years. Someone walking slowly in the right direction will reach his destination faster than someone walking fast in the wrong direction.

Doron Tsur is the CEO of Psagot Compass Investments.

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Learn how to prevent and detect melanoma of the skin on yourself and in your family
To Save a Life presented by
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Assistant Professor of Medicine (Dermatology), University of Toronto
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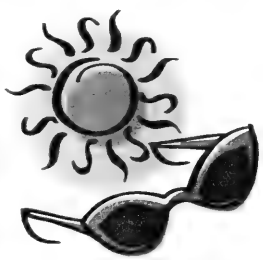
Alex Tobias Hall
Adath Israel Congregation, 37 Southbourne Avenue

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First 100 people to pre-register will be guaranteed to receive a melanoma detection kit.
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Secret World of Stolen Art reads like crime fiction

Bill Gladstone
Special to The CJN

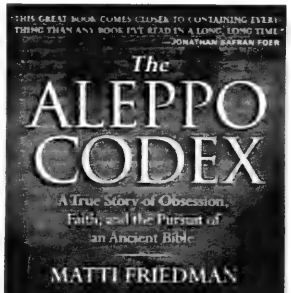
Some years ago, while researching an article for *The Walrus* magazine on art theft, Joshua Knelman interviewed a convicted art thief in a Toronto restaurant. While providing some quotable patter, the thief threatened to break Knelman's legs if he used his real name, and handed him some rolled-up items, which proved to be stolen artworks, now bearing Knelman's own fingerprints. But the Toronto writer survived this brush with danger and found that rogues can also be gentlemen. After his story appeared, the thief phoned to let him know "how much I enjoyed your piece."

For some reason probably having to do with Hollywood, the subject of art theft seems sexy, even glamorous, and Knelman soon won a contract for a book. *Hot Art: Chasing Thieves and Detectives through the Secret World of Stolen Art* (Douglas & McIntyre) is a colourful, tautly written narrative in the true-crime genre featuring characters from both sides of the fence: sharp detectives, wealthy collectors, talkative criminals, and art dealers and gallery owners. As Knelman chronicles, some dealers and gallery owners sit on both sides of the fence –simultaneously fencing stolen goods while fencing off suggestions of their complicity in the highly profitable black market of stolen art.

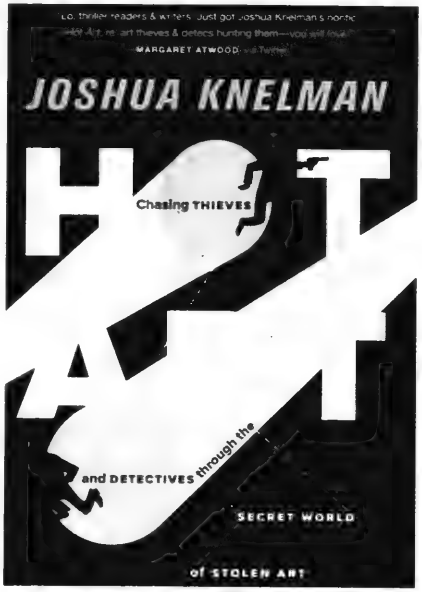
Hot Art opens with a CSI-type investigation of a burglary in a Los Angeles gallery, conducted by LAPD detective Donald Hrycyk, one of only a handful of police specialists in stolen art in North America and Europe. Another chapter introduces us to Richard Ellis, the detective who started Scotland Yard's Art and Antiques Squad, who has helped to recover Edvard Munch's *The Scream* and works by Vermeer, Goya, Rubens and other high-profile artists.

Here the narrative veers deliciously into ransoms, raids and other cops-and-robbers-type high jinks. Knelman also interviewed special agent Robert K. Wittman, senior art investigator for the FBI, as well as Alain Lacoursiere, a dedicated stolen-art detective in Montreal.

Although Toronto doesn't have a dedicated police pro, the city may claim lawyer Bonnie Czegledi as its own. Czegledi is a leading international authority in stolen art and a key source for Knelman. After years in the art world, she is still amazed when lawyers ask her advice on how to sell a valuable antique tapestry that had been stolen during World War II. "You shouldn't be selling a piece of art if it's been stolen! And you don't need to be a lawyer to understand that," she tells Knelman after receiving such a call. But she long ago realized that the lawyer's attitude is typical and that it is her own that is deviant.


THIS GREAT BOOK COMES CLOSER TO CONTAINING EVERYTHING THAN ANY BOOK I'VE READ IN A LONG, LONG TIME"
—JONATHAN SAFRAN FOER
The
ALEPPO
CODEX
A True Story of Obsession, Faith, and the Pursuit of an Ancient Bible
MATTI FRIEDMAN
A TREASURE BOX OF HISTORY, MYSTERY, CONSPIRACY, AND CONVOLUTIONS THAT WOULD DO ANY BIBLICAL THRILLER PROUD. A REMARKABLE JOB."
—BOOKLIST

Paul, the brash British career-thief and "Brighton knocker" who steals much of the limelight in *Hot Art*, seems to understand this attitude better than anyone. "I'd go as far as to say that the term 'honest antique dealer' is an oxymoron," he comments. "No one cares about selling stolen art as long as you're smart about it. It's not even considered criminal. It's more as if it's naughty behaviour. You know… wink, wink. It's the norm."



Paul apprenticed by knocking on doors in the seaside retirement community of Brighton, England, offering to buy antiques from residents while secretly casing their premises for valuables to loot. Eventually, he knocked on doors across England and had teams of thieves working for him. He disposed of the merchandise in antique markets, usually for 10 per cent of its presumed value.

To what did he attribute his largely successful career? For one thing, he never attempted to do the burgling himself, realizing after one early bungled attempt that he was terribly clumsy at it. "I'm so sorry to disturb you," he had told the couple he had awakened in the middle of the night. "You have my word that I will never break into another house again in my life." He kept his promise.

Paul "kept below the radar," never pulling spectacular heists, never keeping stolen goods in his possession for long, and never going after what he called "headache art" – high-profile works with equally high price tags that would be impossible to fence. He also conducted much of his business in towns far from his own home. "I became very good at a bad thing," he told Knelman. "Actually, I became ruthless. Margaret Thatcher had swept to power in Britain in 1979, her Conservative party preaching an aggressive brand of capitalism. These were the '80s. It was a decade of excess, and I was a pure, cutthroat capitalist."

In a chapter titled *Headache Art*, Knelman recounts the tale of a 1981 theft of 10 paintings from a major London gallery, including a small Rembrandt then worth more than $20 million. Another chapter is devoted to the looting of the National Museum of Iraq in Baghdad after the second U.S. invasion and the largely futile attempts of a U.S. military investigator, Matthew Bogdanos, to recover the scattered antiquities. At the international level, as at the domestic level, there is a pathetic lack of official attention paid to the problem of the black market in stolen art and its obvious links to organized crime.

Knelman describes several noble attempts to create a comprehensive catalogue of stolen art, most notably the Art Loss Register, which allows dealers to research works of unknown provenance being offered to them at bargain-basement prices. Understandably, many dealers prefer to remain ignorant – and rich. As art prices continue to soar, some estimate stolen art as a $4- to $6-billion industry globally. It may be much higher; no one knows for sure.

Although *Hot Art* lacks a neat conclusion and seems to repeat itself toward the end, it is still, for most of its length, an enjoyable and compelling page-turner in the best true-crime tradition.

* * *

Matti Friedman's *The Aleppo Codex: A True Story of Obsession, Faith, and the Pursuit of an Ancient Book* (Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill) is a true-life detective story that provides a new theory about how the 10th-century Codex, a sacred Hebrew Bible, was spirited from a grotto in Aleppo, Syria, in 1940 to its new home in the Israel Museum, the country's national museum in Jerusalem, losing some pages en route.

Upon first encountering the Codex in 2008, Friedman, a staff reporter of the Associated Press in Jerusalem, resolved to uncover its secret journey. He found that official accounts of the Codex seemed "oddly blurred and contradictory" and that when he asked pointed questions, many doors were closed in his face. That made him even more determined to delve into the "real-life mystery with clues still hiding in forgotten crates of documents and in aging minds."

'KOSHER' LABEL IN ADVERTISING

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency Guide to Food Labelling and Advertising reads as follows:

"In the labelling, packaging and advertising of a food, the Food and Drug Regulations prohibits the use of the word kosher or any letter of the Hebrew alphabet, or any other word, expression, depiction, sign, symbol, mark, device or other representation that indicates or that is likely to create an impression that the food is kosher, if the food does not meet the requirements of the Kashruth applicable to it.

The terms "kosher style" and "kind of kosher" are not allowed, unless they meet the requirements of the Kashruth. "Jewish-style food" or "Jewish cuisine" are not objected to, although the foods may not necessarily meet the requirements of the Kashruth.

Rationale: "Kosher style" is considered to create the impression that the food is kosher, and therefore the food must meet the requirements of the Kashruth. "Jewish style" food may not necessarily create this impression."

The CJN makes no representation as to the kashruth of food products in advertisements.

Festival offers something completely different

Joseph Serge
Arts Editor

The Toronto Jewish Film Festival returns in May, and as usual, there's a huge variety of movies (over 95) to choose from. In addition to the heavy, historical or Holocaust-themed films and documentaries, there's also a wealth of off-the-wall comedies and light-hearted movies. I've picked out four of these for closer examination:

The first is ***How to Re-establish a Vodka Empire*** by Dan Edelstyn, a rather unusual, funny documentary about the young British filmmaker's quest to track his ancestor's pre-revolutionary business in Ukraine.

His quest begins when he discovers his grandmother Maroussia's ancient manuscript in an old suticase at his mother's home in England. Reading the manuscript, he finds himself intrigued by her story.

Maroussia was the daughter of a wealthy Jewish sugar factory owner some 200 kilometres from Kiev in Ukraine. After the Communist revolution, she fled and ended up in Northern Ireland.

Edelstein decides to go to Ukraine to seek out his family factory, bringing his wife, Hilary, along to film his quest.

All he has to go on is his family's last name, Zorokovich, and the knowledge that, somewhere in Ukraine was a sugar factory that once belonged to them.

Secretly he dreams that he will find the factory and ask for the key, offering a hundred *spasibas* (thank-yous) if its current owners leave without a fuss.

After several weeks of searching through archives, he finds the factory, only to discover that it closed down in 2000, leaving the small town destitute and run down. By chance, though, talking to an old villager, he finds that the Zorokoviches owned another factory – a vodka factory not too far away.

Edelstyn presumes that his grandmother never mentioned the vodka factory in her manuscript to avoid the stereotypical antisemitic charges that Jews were alcohol peddlers stupefying the Christian peasants so that they could go about their sinister deeds without impediment.

Finding the vodka factory still up and running, he goes back to England with the dream of raising money to buy the factory. Realizing the impracticality of that, he instead dreams up a smaller scheme to import and sell the vodka in England.

This lighthearted documentary follows Edelstyn's ups and downs in trying to launch the product and, at the same time, uses hilarious low-budget sepia-toned re-enactments to parallel his grandmother's quest to escape Russia.

A film about a vodka importer seems an odd choice for a tongue-in-cheek documentary. But it works. It's a must-see. Try to sneak a bottle of vodka and some dried fish tails into the theatre. But if you get caught, don't mention that we told you to.

***

If that's not really your thing, you might prefer the more straightforward romantic comedy ***Dorfman.***

Debbie Dorfman is a mousy, single woman who lives with her depressed, widowed father, played by veteran Elliot Gould, in the suburbs of L.A.

She works in her brother's accounting firm and has a lifelong crush on Jay, a reporter, who, she admits, doesn't see her the same way.

When she finds out he's going to spend a week in Kabul, she volunteers to stay at his downtown L.A. apartment to look after his cat. Over the course of the week, she goes through a self-discovery period, meets an artist, befriends models and tries to keep her brother from destroying his marriage.

Dorfman is low-key and a bit hokey at times, but Sara Rue (Stephanie on *Big Bang Theory*) as the title character makes it work. Viewers will also enjoy Gould's Woody Allen-esque neurotic character who spouts Yiddishisms effortlessly.

***

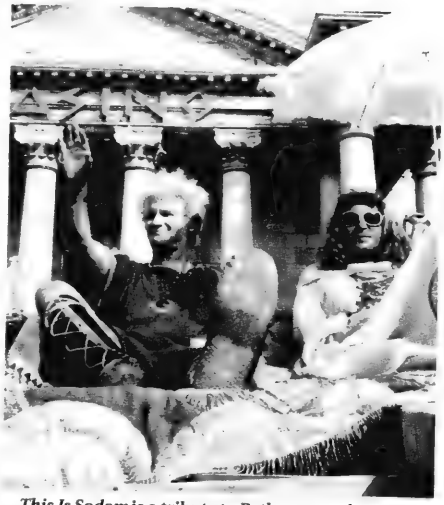
And now for something completely different: if you're a fan of the irreverent humour of Monty Python, you'll love the Israeli film ***This is Sodom.***

An ode to such Python biblical spoofs as *Life of Brian*, *This is Sodom* takes the story of Lot and – well, makes it its own.

It begins with God, dressed in a three-piece suit and wearing a "Gumby hat"– a handkerchief tied at the corners and worn over the head – knocking on Abraham's door.

He tries to sell Abraham monotheism and insurance from crime and calamity. If Abraham signs on, God says, he will destroy the sinful city of Sodom and turn it into a parking lot.

Abraham signs on, but he is worried about the fate of Sodom's only righteous man, Lot, (social insurance number 0 000 000 006), who runs the only legal gambling kiosk in the city. God agrees and dispatches his motorcycle police, Raphael and Michael, to rescue Lot.



This Is Sodom **is a tribute to Pythonesque humour.**

Mayhem follows when Sodom's mayor hatches a plot to replace Lot and be rescued in his place.

There are a lot of silly puns, fart jokes, innuendos and even stupid songs. In Python style, Lot's wife, named Lot's Wife, is played by a male actor and Lot wears an outfit that is exactly like the one worn by Brian in *Life of Brian.*

Surprisingly, the gags hold up for 90 minutes, and along the way, the film makes fun of contemporary Israeli politics, Susan Boyle, Georgian thugs and reality TV. Highly recommended for those with an off-kilter sense of humour. In Hebrew with subtitles, this was Israel's biggest blockbuster in 25 years.

***

Finally, there is the less absurd, though quite charming, coming-of-age Israeli "dramedy" ***Off-White Lies.***

Libby, wonderfully played by Elya Inbar, is a 13-year-old girl who is sent by her mother in California to live with her estranged father in Israel.

The trouble is that it's not such a great time for him. The failed gadget inventor is currently "in between homes," meaning he's homeless and unemployed. After picking her up from the airport in an old girlfriend's car, he drives up north to stay with a friend.

But just as he arrives there, Hezbollah begins lobbing missiles over the Lebanon border and they're forced into a bomb shelter.

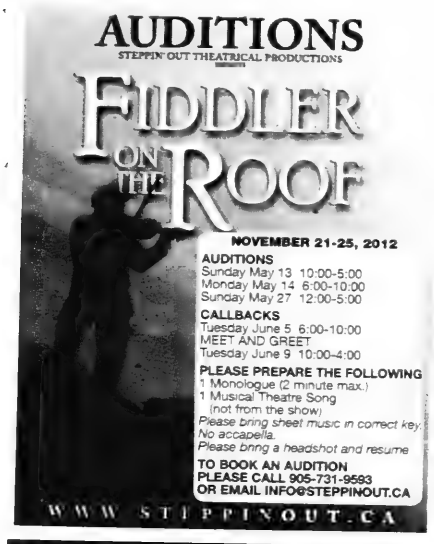
Leaving his friend, he seizes an opportunity, and pretending to be refugees from the beseiged north, they stay with a family in Jerusalem, one of many who took in displaced people during the crisis.

There, the father perfects his new gadget, the Smokeless, a portable filter device that allows smokers to smoke in public without sharing the smoke and smell. Perfect, he figures, for people in bomb shelters.

But just when his invention is about to take off, something happens between him and his daughter that forces him to reconsider his priorities.

Off-White Lies, also in Hebrew, with a smattering of American slang and subtitles, is a moving and delightful film.

The festival runs May 3-13. For locations, dates and screen times visit www.tjff.com



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MEMORIAL CONCERT FOR SRUL IRVING GLICK AT HOLY BLOSSOM

The 10th anniversary of the death of renowned Canadian Jewish composer **Srul Irving Glick** is being marked with a memorial concert at the Holy Blossom Temple featuring the **Temple Singers, Temple Choir** and the **Lachan Jewish Chamber Choir,** all directed by **Cantor Benjamin Maissner.**

Also participating is the choir of Beth Tikvah Synagogue, where Glick was the choirmaster and composer-in-residence for many years. The choir is led by **Klara Bagley**. Beth Tikvah **Cantor Tibor Kovari** will join with Maissner in singing several of Glick's pieces. **Cantor Efraim Sapir** will also perform.

Tickets $30. Holy Blossom Temple, Sunday, April 22, 8 p.m. 416-789-3291, ext. 224. A special tribute concert is also being planned for Beth Tikvah Synagogue on June 7. For details, call 416-221-3433.

* * *

New York Bound: *Living with Henry*, a musical drama by **Christopher Wilson** about living with HIV-AIDS, premièred to critical acclaim at the Toronto Fringe Festival last summer, and has been invited to the New York Musical Theatre Festival this summer. A benefit musical theatre celebration has been organized to raise funds to send the production to New York.

The Block to Broadway! Benefit features **Gabi Epstein, Sherry Garner, Konstantinos Haitas, Kelly Hollif, Ryan Kelly, Lisa Kisch, Lizzie Kurtz, Lori Nuic, Nadine Roden, Ari Wienberg** and others. Bathurst Street Theatre, 736 Bathurst St. Monday, April 23, 8 p.m. $35, $25. 416-504-7529, www.artsboxoffice.ca

* * *

Literary Events

• **Felix Opatowski**, Holocaust survivor and author of *Gatehouse to Hell*, shares the story of his experiences in Auschwitz and his risky encounters with the Auschwitz underground. Co-presented with the Azrieli Foundation. Miles Nadal JCC, Sunday, April 22, 11 a.m. Free admission. 416-924-6211, ext. 154.

• Quattro Books hosts the launch of *Something Small to Carry Home*, a new book of poems by Victoria-based **Isa Milman**, whose two previous collections each won a Canadian Jewish Book Award for poetry. Works by three other poets are also being launched. Supermarket, 286 Augusta Ave., south of College. Tuesday, April 24, 7:30 p.m. Admission free.

* * *

Names in the News: Montreal-born singer **Kathleen Reiter**, who only recently made aliyah to Israel, has been crowned victor on the Israeli television show *The Voice* after wowing the judges and audience with a performance of British singer **Adele**'s song *Rolling in the Deep*. The video is on YouTube at http://bit.ly/zZ6Mnt.

Last October, Reiter got all four judges on the vastly popular live talent show to turn around in their seats, signalling they liked what they heard. In fact, they seemed to find it irresistible. Earlier this month Reiter, who was the only contestant to sing in English, French and Hebrew, was chosen the season's favourite performer. She's already released her first single, a dance number that is getting lots of radio play in Israel. "The goal is to get to a place where I can release an album and play shows and all of that stuff," the powerfully voiced 23-year-old told a reporter.

* * *

Arts in Brief

• Ghetto Songs and Poems are part of a Memorial Program of the 69th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto, featuring speaker **Sylwia Szymanska-Smolkin**. Workmen's Circle, 471 Lawrence Ave. W. Sunday, April 22, 2 p.m.

• Profs. **Jeffrey Shandler** and **Edna Nahshon** discuss aspects of **Anne Frank**'s famous diary in a program titled "Anne Frank – 70 Years Since the Diary," hosted by the Leonard Wolinsky Lectures on Jewish Life and Education. Free admission, everyone welcome. Israel and Golda Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Studies, Schulich School of Business, York University. Sunday, April 22, 3 p.m.

• The Miles Nadal JCC presents an exciting lineup of local talent including previous and current Juno Award nominees. The Stars on Spadina Gala features **Marilyn Lightstone, Theresa Tova, Moshe Hammer, Hilario Duran, Laura Tucker, Daniela Nardi** and **Ron Davis**. Funds raised support cultural arts programs. Al Green Theatre, Monday, April 23, 7:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 0.

• Active Seniors hosts an Israeli Independence musical program and brunch with musician **Eldan Cohen**. Celebrate Israel's 64th birthday and sing along with lyrics provided for both traditional and modern songs in Hebrew and Yiddish. Miles Nadal JCC, Thursday, April 26, 11:30 a.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 155.

* * *

At the Galleries

• Works from *Toronto Transformed*, **Harry Enchin**'s collection of modern photographs of Toronto cityscapes juxtaposed onto matching older scenes from the City of Toronto Archives, are on view at the Toronto Art Expo, Metro Convention Centre, April 19 to 22. www.torontoartexpo.com

• Beth Emeth Sisterhood presents a guided tour led by a qualified curator of *The Icons of Loss: The Art of Samuel Bak*. Joseph D. Carrier Gallery, Columbus Centre. Tuesday, April 24, 8 to 9:30 p.m. Contact Joan Segal to register: call 416-633-3838 or e-mail sisterhood@beby.org

• *Silk Stones: Works by Rochelle Rubinstein*, an exhibit by the Toronto artist who is described as a "visual poet of transformed objects," remains on view at Yeshiva University Museum, 15 W. 16th St., New York, through May 6.

Shabbat Itanu 2012
Friday, April 20 – Saturday, April 21

Each year Itanu Toronto, congratulates synagogues across Toronto participating in Shabbat Itanu – by reaching out and welcoming all members of the community to their services and programs.

This year's participating synagogues are:

Adath Israel Congregation • Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am Synagogue • Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue Beth Torah Congregation • Beth Tikvah Synagogue • Beth Tzedec Congregation • Temple Sinai Congregation Congregation Beth Haminyan • Congregation Darchei Noam • First Narayever Congregation • Shaar Shalom Synagogue Shaarei Shomayim Congregation • Danforth Jewish Circle • Temple Emanu-El • Temple Har Zion • Temple Kol Ami Pride of Israel • Lodzer Centre Congregation • Shaarei-Beth El Congregation, Oakville • Temple Shalom, Waterloo

For more information, please contact inclusion@ujafed.org or 416.635.2883 ext. 5385 or visit www.itanutoronto.com

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Alon Eizenman named to U.S. college Hall of Fame

Paul Lungen
Staff Reporter

Alon Eizenman, a former centre for the Penn State Nittany Lions, has been named to the American Collegiate Hockey Association (ACHA) Hall of Fame.

Eizenman will be inducted into the Hall at a ceremony on April 28 in Naples, Fla.

News of the induction came "completely out of the blue," Eizenman said. He was informed of the honour by his former coach – and fellow hall member – Joe Battista. "I was completely unprepared," Eizenman said. "It's really nice. I'm the third player inducted."

Eizenman played for Penn State from 1997 to 2001 and guided the team to four consecutive ACHA men's Division 1 national championship games, winning in 1998, 2000 and 2001. He was named the ACHA men's Division 1 player of the year in 2000 to go along with the Bob Johnson Award, given to the player who best demonstrated hockey ability, achievement, leadership, sportsmanship, as well as academic excellence and community service.

A four time ACHA men's Division 1 All-American, he was also an Academic All-American and was twice named most valuable player in the men's Division 1 national championships.

The ACHA is a U.S. college league that differs from the NCAA in that it doesn't offer scholarships. Observers consider top ACHA teams more or less the same calibre as NCAA Division III teams.

Alon Eizenman

Alon, along with his brothers Erez and Oren, represented Israel internationally. He helped lead the Israeli team to a gold medal in an IIHF Group D tournament in 2000 and to another gold in Division II action in 2005.

Eizenman attended the Pittsburgh Penguins training camp and played two seasons of professional hockey in France. He averaged more than a point per game with A.S.G. Tours and led the team to the Magnus Cup finals in 2005.

After being called to the bar in Ontario, he joined the law firm of Stikeman Elliott, where he specializes in municipal and planning law.

He still plays recreational hockey a couple of time a week. The most competitive games he plays now come during the Christmas season. He's been a part of the Israeli Stars of David in the Canadian Multicultural Hockey Championship, a tournament the Stars of David have won three of the last four times.

Looking back on his career, he said that "the single biggest and most important memory for me was when I scored the overtime goal to win the national championship in my junior year, 1999-2000. If I have one memory from all my playing days, that's the one. Everyone who plays hockey dreams of scoring the winning goal in a championship."

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Israeli sailors finish high in Spanish regatta

Arie Livnat
Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

TEL AVIV — Olympic hopefuls Gidi Kliger and Eran Sela took fourth place in the mens 470 class in the 43rd Trofeo S.A.R. Princesa Sofia MAPFRE, the third event in the ISAF Sailing World Cup circuit in Mallorca, Spain last week, protecting their silver medal in the overall standings.

Kliger and Sela set out for the medal race in second place and knew they would take home a medal. During the race, they opened up a formidable lead over their main competitors, the French pair of Pierre Leboucher and Vincent Garos, who finished in fourth place.

It was enough to maintain their second-place position in the overall standings. They finished the competition with 57 points, 18 more than Australians Mathew Belcher and Malcolm Page.

In January, Kliger and Sela set out for Miami for the first round of the current World Sailing Championships, and finished eighth in the 470 class.

"We competed without our boat," Kliger explained. "We rented a boat, and it was like a training exercise. So it didn't count."

The second competition, in Palme de Mallorca, was another story.

"We are very pleased," Kliger said. "All the competitions this year are important, but today's had special import, because this competition is like the Olympics, and we wanted to see where we stand. We started the medals race with a medal guaranteed, and we finished with a big lead over our competitors, and that's a great sign."

Eyal Levin, Kliger and Sela's manager, said: "All the best sailing crews took part in this competition. The first day went a little less well, but as the days went by, things looked up. This achievement will give Gidi and Eran a lot of confidence for the future."

Vered Buskila and Gil Cohen came in sixth place in the women's competition. They finished sixth in the medals race.

Crisis-hit Greek Jews fear for their future

Gavin Rabinowitz
JTA

ATHENS, Greece — Patricia Alcalay, 24, has been unemployed since she finished her nursing degree in December 2010. Her father lost his job four months ago, a year shy of retirement.

Her older sister, who was studying abroad, meanwhile, found work in the Netherlands and is not coming back to Greece anytime soon.

Stories like these have become common among the Jewish community in Greece, which, like the rest of the Greek population, is struggling to stay afloat in a country engulfed in the fifth year of an economic crisis that shows no sign of abating.

For the young, the future looks like a wasteland

Approximately 5,000 Jews live in Greece – about 3,500 in Athens, 1,000 in Thessaloniki and the rest scattered elsewhere – and community leaders say they are labouring to maintain Jewish institutions and deal with the additional heavy demands on welfare programs.

Some of the leaders fear a greater threat to the community's future: an exodus of young, unemployed Jews leaving a country where they see little hope.

"It is a very difficult situation for us because of the financial crisis in Greece. It affects the Jewish community very heavily," said Benjamin Albalas, the president of the Jewish Community of Athens, an association that provides funding for the city's Jewish institutions. "We are supporting two synagogues, the school, the cemetery, a community centre and a number of needy people that is growing all the time."

As the need for community aid has increased, the funding to the communal institution has decreased sharply.

Much of its revenue comes from Jewish community-owned commercial and residential properties dating back before World War II, when some 78,000 Jews lived in Greece – many in the northern port city of Thessaloniki, a community that was almost wiped out entirely in the Holocaust.

But in the past year the Greek government, faced with chronic income tax evasion, imposed steep property taxes in a bid to raise state income. "And because of the general situation, the people who rent our properties have either left or they have asked us to lower rents," Albalas said.

'Our two main problems now since the crisis are that pensions have gone down and there is very big unemployment'

In addition, he said, donations from hard-hit community members have dropped 50 per cent.

Albalas declined to give specific figures, either for income or for the needs.

As part of the harsh austerity measures imposed on Athens, the Greek government has slashed pensions, lowered public and private sector wages, and reduced tens of thousands of state jobs, all of which have hurt the weaker sectors of the Jewish community.

"Our two main problems now since the crisis are that pensions have gone down and there is very big unemployment," said Isaak Mordechai, the deputy head of the Athens welfare committee. "Pensions have diminished so much, people cannot live."

The Jewish Community of Athens is providing direct assistance – financial help, supermarket food vouchers, and medical and psychological support – to some 60 people. "But it is clear that a lot more people are going to need help," he said.

Thousands of Greeks recently took to the streets in Athens to protest the austerity reforms implemented by their government. *[Flash90 photo]*

In February, the Jewish Agency for Israel's Board of Governors voted to grant about $1 million over two years to help Greece's Jewish communal institutions continue operating. Other Jewish groups have offered aid, too.

However, community leaders in Athens and Thessaloniki say they have not been officially informed of the decision and the money has yet to arrive.

The money, though, will focus on Israel education, and is earmarked to help the Jewish communities of Athens and Thessaloniki cover specific initiatives, according to JAFI spokesperson Josh Berkman. Among those initiatives are shlichim (Israel emissaries to the community), counsellors for the Jewish summer camp and financial assistance to the Jewish school in Athens.

"I can assure you we are in touch with the Jewish leadership in these communities," Berkman said.

As of late February, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee had donated $330,000 for welfare and school scholarship to the Athens Jewish Community, according to a news release.

Such funding, however, will not keep the institutions alive and support the needy.

National unemployment is more than 21 per cent and tops 50 per cent among those under 25. Albalas says the levels are about the same in the Jewish community.

For the young, the future looks like a wasteland.

"I have occasionally had some part-time jobs, but nothing permanent. It's very disappointing," said Alcalay, who has been searching for work as a nurse for 16 months and is considering abandoning her profession.

"I'm looking for a job in any field now because I need the money. I don't have anything else apart from my parents, and both of them are also unemployed," she said.

Alcalay is not alone.

"There are many of my friends who have just finished university this year or last and can't find jobs," said Evie Leon, 24, a former head of the Jewish Youth of Athens.

The community tries to help. Jewish businessmen network to find jobs for the young unemployed. Two young men receive stipends for taking part in daily minyan.

"We are talking about simple jobs. We are not head hunting," Mordechai said.

But ultimately it is not enough.

"The unemployment is so bad that unfortunately they are leaving for abroad, either to study or find work," said David Saltiel, who heads Thessaloniki's Jewish community, where the situation is equally grim, and is president of the Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece.

Leon says her friends in Greece are "depressed and stressed." The rest have left and "are not planning on coming back until the situation gets much, much better." Even though she has a job, she also is "looking into opportunities to leave the country."

Alcalay's 25-year-old sister is among those who left to study and did not return after she found a job with an information technology company in the Netherlands.

"She wants to come back in a few years, but I don't recommend it," Alcalay said. "Even though I love her, I say, 'Don't come back because you will be unemployed.'"

Those who leave are doing what they can for themselves and their families. But leaders know and fear the toll this will have on the community.

"When our young generation leaves and becomes well established abroad, I think it will be difficult for them to return," Saltiel said. "We will become a community of old people."

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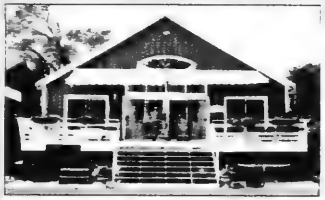

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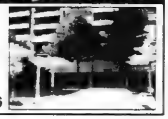

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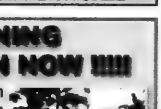

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LAWYER ADVOCATES FOR PALESTINIAN CHILD SUICIDE BOMBERS

Sheri Shefa
Staff Reporter

It was the haunting image of a misguided 15-year-old Palestinian boy – a would-be suicide bomber with eight kilograms of explosives strapped to his chest – that sent human rights attorney Brooke Goldstein on an entirely different career path.

The 31-year-old Toronto native was studying to be an entertainment lawyer at the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law in New York in 2004 when she saw a news report that shook her to her core.

"I was in my second year of law school taking an elective course called human rights and the child," Goldstein recalled.

"I came home and I sat on my couch with my homework, turned on my TV and I saw this image of a 15-year-old physically [stunted], rumoured to be mentally handicapped [boy, who] had his arms in the air and he had this explosive belt strapped around his waist."

She said at that point, in 2004, adult male suicide bombers were not a new phenomenon, but this was the first time she'd seen a child converted into a human bomb.

"It was reprehensible and egregious, and I was shocked," Goldstein said.

Hussam Abdo had been sent by the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades to the Hawara checkpoint out of Nablus in the West Bank to kill Israeli soldiers manning the checkpoint.

But at the last minute, Abdo either got caught by the soldiers or turned himself in to the Israel Defence Forces because he decided he didn't want to die (reports vary).

Abdo was tried and convicted of attempted murder and is serving what is left of his eight-year prison sentence in an Israeli jail. When Goldstein learned that Abdo had been convicted, it didn't sit right with her.

"I thought, 'Wait a minute, we learn about [African] child soldiers and we learn about them as victims. Surely, a child suicide bomber is as much a victim of an egregious form of child abuse as are child soldiers in Africa,'" she said.

"I didn't think he deserved to pay for the crimes of the adults who recruited him. On the other hand, Israelis are stuck between a rock and hard place because once they captured this child, they have a fiduciary duty over him. They can't just release him back into a society that just tried to kill him."

This dilemma compelled Goldstein to learn more about the glamorization of martyrdom and the lack of coverage in the mainstream media about the murder of Muslim men and women in Islamic society.

She said she raised some money, teamed up with a producer and travelled to Palestinian cities, including Jenin and Ramallah, to conduct interviews with leaders of terrorist organizations and families of suicide bombers.

These interviews resulted in an award-winning 2006 documentary called *The Making of a Martyr*, which examines the state-sponsored indoctrination and recruitment of Palestinian children for suicide attacks.

Brooke Goldstein

"A big part of being a martyr is the 15 minutes of fame aspect. When you become a suicide bomber, you become a hero. You're in music videos, there are schools named after you, streets are named after you, people worship you, there are posters of you all over the place," she said.

"I was talking with teenaged fighters who don't necessarily understand the concept of death because they've been brainwashed to think they're going to heaven."

She said when her documentary began gaining recognition and winning awards, she took a year off after completing her law degree to screen her film at various film festivals.

"I became sort of de facto spokesperson for this phenomenon of child suicide bombers just because no one else was talking about it."

Taking advantage of the momentum that resulted from the film, in 2007 Goldstein founded the Children's Rights Institute, a non-profit organization that tracks and legally combats violations of children's basic human rights, with a special focus on child suicide-homicide bombers, child soldiers, and the phenomenon of human shields.

Goldstein caught the attention of the Middle East Forum founder Daniel Pipes, who hired her to run an arm of the organization called the Legal Project, which arranges pro-bono and reduced rate council for people wrongfully sued for speaking about issues of national security.

Goldstein, who directed the Legal Project for two years, said people who have the courage to speak out against terrorism and militant Islam are being sued in Europe and North America as a ploy to intimidate them into silence.

"They were doing this to intimidate them, to bankrupt them, to create a chilling effect on free speech about issues of national security," she said.

"I coined the term 'Islamist lawfare,' as a weapon of war, as a manipulation of the legal system to impose tenets of sharia law."

Goldstein currently directs the Lawfare Project, an organization that addresses the manipulation of legal systems – a strategy she feels is being employed to "delegitimize the rights of sovereign states such as Israel and the United States, and... to frustrate and hinder the ability of western democracies to fight against and defeat terrorism."

Goldstein's latest project is a book she co-authored last year, titled *Lawfare Against Free Speech: A First Amendment Guide For Reporting in an Age of Islamist Lawfare*, which gives practical guidance to journalists who want to write about national security threats.

"There were so many people calling and e-mailing me, expressing a desire to write about what's happening, and yet they were afraid... and wanted to know how to legally protect themselves."

Just last year, U.S. Representative Peter King (R-New York), chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee, held a series of congressional hearings on the radicalization of American Muslims.

"He put Somali parents on the stand to testify with tears in their eyes about how their children were practically being kidnapped by Al Qaeda – these are American-born Muslim children. They're being flown across borders and trained to become terrorists."

Goldstein said she was disgusted when media outlets labelled King as "Islamophobic" for advocating for the protection of Muslim children.

She said since her documentary was released in 2006, the phenomenon of child suicide bombers has become more widespread in the Middle East and has reached the West as well.

But she refuses to be discouraged and will continue to spread the word.

Goldstein plans to release two more books – one is a companion to her first book, which informs students who face antisemitism and other forms of discrimination on campus of their rights.

The second book she described as a memoir about her experience while filming *The Making of a Martyr*.

Goldstein said she's hoping to produce another film on the subject of terrorism and has ambitions to establish a Canadian chapter of the Lawfare Project.

For more information or to join Goldstein in her fight against terrorism, visit the Lawfare Project and/or the Children's Rights Institute websites for internship opportunities.

More news for young Jews on heebonics.ca

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אז אני צפונית

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"שבוע הבא יום העצמאות!" מבשרת טלי לאומה, כשהאומה מתיישבת מולה עם הקפה שלה. "זוכרת איך קראנו לזה בישראל? יום העצבנות". אני מעלה נשכחות. "זוכרת איך עשינו טררם מכל העסק של המנגל, על-האש? היום, אין כמעט ערב או לפחות סופשבוע שאנחנו לא זורקים כמה נקניקיות, או עוף על הברביקיו בחצר. איך השתנו לנו החיים, מה, נינה? פה הכל פחות מסובך. אני: אני נורא שמחה לשמוע אותך אומרת את זה. בדרך כלל את נורא בעד 'לחזור הביתה', ו-'היה שם הכי טוב' ו'קנדה משעממת אותי, אין לי אתגרים'.

טלי: אני לא אומרת שרע לי פה. רק, את יודעת, געגועים. בכל זאת, איך כל המדינה הייתה יוצאת החוצה וחוגגת את יום ההולדת שלה? אנשים היו שמחים.

אני: שמחים? ממ. אני גרתי מול פארק הירקון. מתחת לחלון שלי כולם היו צורחים בטריטוריאליות על פיסת דשא. כמעט רוצחים אחד את השני על מקום חנייה, שומעים מהמכונית, שחונה רחוב ליד, מוזיקה ערבית עם מילים בעברית. ורבים על כדורגל. אז לזה להתגעגע? (בתרתחת) לזה? לא! שמעת אותי?!

טלי: תירגעי, שמעתי, גם כל השולחנות לידינו ולא לידינו שמעו אותך.

אני: אז אני רוצה להגיד לך משהו (לוקחת שאיפה עמוקה וקולנית).

טלי (בוחנת אותי בדאגה קלה): מה, שאת אסמטית?

אני: גם, אבל עזבי. אני רוצה להגיד לך שזהו. נגמר יום העצמאות מבחינתי. אפילו לא ברביקיו סימלי. נכון, זו המולדת שלי, אבל כל כך הרבה דברים הרגיזו אותי שם. אתגרים חסרים לך כאן? בשבילי לתפוס מונית ולהתוודע, תוך כדי נסיעה של ארבע וחצי דקות, לכל מהלכי חייו של הנהג, כולל מסלול גירושיו המכוערים של האחיין של השכנה של אחותו המאומצת, זה אתגר. או, להיכנס לחנות ולהבין שהמוכרת שונאת אותי עד זוב דם, עוד לפני שהיא בעצמה גיבשה את התחושה, זה אתגר. או לקבל מבט מלוכלך מאיזה מכוער, רק בגלל שפעם אחת בקיץ הרותה, התחשק לי ללכת עם מיני, זה אתגר.

טלי: נו אפנס, אבל באמת לא טוב עלייך מיני. וחוץ מזה, מה רע פה ושם במבט זימה? אני הולכת כאן עם מיני, על עקבים, אחרי צבע ופן, כל ישראל כבר היתה לוטשת בי עיניים, ופה כלום. כאילו אני אוויר. נורא לא פמיליארי. זהו.

אני: דבר ראשון - נהדר! מכבדים את הפרטיות שלך! לא נכנסים לך לנשמה. דבר שני - גם לך לא משהו מיני.

טלי: אפשר להוציא אותך מישראל, נינה, אבל לא את ישראל ממך, מה?

אני (מהורהרת): אבל תודי שבישראל הברביקיו יותר טעים, לא יודעת למה...

STRAWBERRY, PEAR AND FETA SALAD

Recipe is for 1 Serving – Multiply as necessary

2 c fresh spring greens, spinach, or mixture of the two
1 medium pear, thinly sliced
4-5 medium strawberries, thinly sliced
2 tblsp crumbled feta cheese
2 tblsp slivered almonds, toasted
Olive oil, balsamic vinegar, salt and pepper for serving

Arrange ingredients in the order listed.
Drizzle with olive oil, balsamic vinegar and season with salt and pepper.

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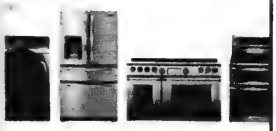

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On cjnews.com

The CJN's French-language reporter in Montreal, Elias Levy, writes about:

The annual Montreal Israel Day rally to celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut which will take place April 26 at Phillips Square.

A production titled *Sauver un être, sauver un monde*, written by Sonia Sarah Lipsyc, director of Centre Alef, and 18-year-old Catherine Shvets, which is based on stories told to Shvets by her grandmother, a Holocaust survivor.

Exclusive to cjnews.com

David Peleg, former Israeli ambassador to Poland and current director general of the World Jewish Restitution Organization expresses dissatisfaction with progress of property claims.

In Februrary, a new school system in Israel, that will encourage observant and secular students to study together, was approved by the Knesset.

Hebrew-language web columnist Yossi Tastassa urges us to remember all who have fallen defending the State of Israel.

The San Blas archipelago of sun-drenched, palm-fringed islands and islets are a traveller's dream come true. Consisting of more than 300 islands, 49 of which are inhabited, this 2,360-square-kilometre chain of idyllic islands are the domain of Panama's indigenous people, the Kuna Indians.

Remember the seamstresses

Urban Writer

Avrum Rosensweig

An old Jewish woman stepped out of her home in a shtetl in Poland alone, her hands above her head. Her husband had died two years earlier and the couple had been without children.

She was known in the shtetl as the seamstress. She would get jobs, small ones, from the townsfolk. That's how she paid for wood to keep her hovel warm and enough food for the week. She was lent money from the *kupah* (the central fund for food for the poor) in the shul for food for Shabbat. That bill was almost paid.

The old woman was a compelling sort because she gave tzedakah despite the fact that her finances were so strained. When she would hand a coin to the destitute man sitting on a stool near the shul, she knew he would be eating that evening and she would not.

Although the Torah says you should not become poor yourself by giving more charity than you can, she didn't see herself that way – as poor, that is.

Once, a mother of a big brood of children asked the seamstress if she would do a complicated job for them and stitch all the family's woolen coats, as the winter was coming. The mother explained that she couldn't pay the seamstress for a few weeks. The old woman responded that she couldn't do the job because it would take her from the work she had to do for her paying customers.

Disheartened, the mother accepted the old woman's response. The old woman felt bad, but there was nothing she could do. She had been paying off a German soldier stationed in the village, so that he wouldn't take away her home. She was late with her payment and couldn't afford to take on a job with deferred compensation.

A single shot rang out and a bullet entered the old woman's heart. She stood for a moment, looked at the young Nazi soldier and then fell, relieved, at his feet.

Her body lay on the dirt pathway in front of her home all day. Evening arrived, and the woman with the brood of children came with her husband and neighbours to where the old woman lay, respectfully collected her body and put it in a cart.

They wheeled her to the Jewish cemetery, buried the old woman in a shallow grave, and the husband said a short eulogy.

"Here lies our town's seamstress. Once she was a child, then she became old and God took her. She sewed all of her life, a lofty occupation. The Jewish People sewed in the desert to decorate the Tabernacle's colourful curtains. We are thankful for her work. May she rest in peace and for eternity sit at God's feet sewing His holy garments."

The men said *Kaddish*, then pushed the cart out of the cemetery. The old Jewish woman's soul went to heaven.

The next day came, as it always does, and the German soldier moved into the old woman's home. He picked up an ornately designed sewing box, opened a window and dumped the contents into the street.

On Yom Hashoah remember the Jewish people and all peoples murdered by the Nazis – those who had no family, and those who sewed.

"No one yet knows what awaits the Jews in the 21st century, but we must make every effort to ensure that it is better than what befell them in the 20th, the century of the Holocaust." -Benjamin Netanyahu

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Remembering is for all

For the first time ever, with the help of the Canadian Jewish community, a group of blind Israelis and their guide dogs took part in the March of the Living from Auschwitz to Birkenau on Yom Hashoah 2012. Approximately, 800 Canadian students, survivors and adults took part in the annual March.

[*Yossi Zeliger photos*]

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Egypt cancels gas delivery contract with Israel – please see page 29

CANADA

Sports Reporter Dies

TORONTO — *Toronto Star* sportswriter Randy Starkman, the country's leading print reporter on amateur athletics, died April 16 in Toronto of pneumonia. He was 51. He took ill earlier this month after returning from covering the Canadian Olympic swim trials in Montreal. Starkman covered 12 Olympic Games and won two National Newspaper Awards. In 1993, he also exposed disgraced sprinter Ben Johnson's second positive steroid test. He is survived by his wife, CBC Radio host Mary Hynes, and his teenaged daughter, Ella.

WORLD

Painting Returned

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — A painting stolen from its Italian Jewish owner and sold by France's Vichy government was returned to his heirs last week. *Christ Carrying the Cross Dragged by a Rogue*, a 16th-century work by Girolamo de' Romani, is going back to the heirs of Federico Gentili di Giuseppe, who owned the painting until he died in France in 1940. In February, a U.S. federal judge ordered that the painting be returned to his grandchildren, who filed a lawsuit in 1997 to have the painting and others restored to them. The heirs intend to auction off the work, estimated to be worth $3.5 million. It was seized last November by U.S. officials from the Mary Brogan Museum of Art and Science in Tallahassee, where it was on display with 50 works on loan from the Pinacoteca di Brera Museum in Milan, Italy.

Adelson Donates

LAS VEGAS — Casino mogul Sheldon Adelson, a major giver to Newt Gingrich's presidential bid, has donated $5 million to a super political action committee that backs Republican candidates. The billionaire Adelson and his wife, Miriam, made the gift in February to the Congressional Leadership Fund, a super PAC linked to U.S. House of Representative Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) that supports establishment Republican candidates, Politico reported, citing a newly filed campaign finance report. Adelson also reportedly hosted a fundraiser April 20 at one of his Las Vegas hotels for a Boehner umbrella group that works closely with the Republican National Committee. The donation is a positive sign for Republican frontrunner Mitt Romney, because his campaign is hoping to attract wealthy donors of GOP presidential hopefuls he appears to have beaten.

Arab MK Tests Israeli Boycott Ban

Ahmad Tibi

OTTAWA — An Arab-Israeli member of Israel's Knesset appears to have contravened an Israeli law by calling on Canadians to boycott Israel.

Ahmad Tibi, deputy speaker of the Knesset, called for a boycott of firms and products linked to Israeli towns in the West Bank and other disputed territory, Postmedia News reported.

During a visit to Ottawa last week, Tibi tested the Boycott Law, which came into force in Israel last July and allows civil actions against those who encourage boycotts against the Jewish state.

"I said that I am willing to test this immoral law trying to prevent me, as a member of the parliament, from expressing my views against the settlements in a peaceful way," Tibi said.

Jewish settlements in the West Bank "are a cancer spreading all over Palestinian land, and cancer should be treated and eradicated," he said. "I am talking about a peaceful and non-violent way by not buying or selling or dealing in these products from these settlements."

Tibi said Canada's pro-Israel government "is not willing to differentiate between… products coming from settlements and products coming from Israel."

The *Jerusalem Post* reported that the next morning, Israel Beiteinu Anglos, the English arm of the nationalist Israeli political party, began a social media campaign against him on Facebook.

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New defence attaché eager to build bridges

First such posting to Canada from Israel

Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf
Staff Reporter

Another layer has been added to the ever-deepening bilateral relationship between Canada and Israel.

Last December, Israel quietly named Brig.-Gen (Res.) Eden Attias as its first Ministry of Defence attaché to Ottawa. Prior to that, Israel's only defence attaché in North America was stationed in Washington, D.C.

Given the deepening ties and friendship between Canada and Israel, the moment was right for his new post to be created, Attias said.

"Due to the flourishing relationship between Canada and Israel, one of the recent discussions between our defence ministries involved looking for ways to get more people on the ground in each country. We have a lot of things we're sharing," he said.

In his first full interview with the media since taking up his post, Attias, 45, told *The CJN* last week that he's eager to begin making contacts across the country, as well as to promote Israel's interests to Canadians, and vice versa.

"I'm here as a two-way servant: at once a representative of the Israeli military and of the Israeli people," he said while on a two-day visit to Toronto last Thursday and Friday.

Eden Attias
[Asaf Geva photo]

While in the city, he gave a briefing to staff at the Canadian Forces College, and he also met with UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, among other engagements.

Attias said that he's familiar with Canada, "but to really learn about a country, you have to live it. And that's what I'm here to do."

He noted that while he's maintaining his own mission in Ottawa, he's working closely with Ambassador Miriam Ziv and Israeli embassy staff to promote his country's interests.

While his diplomatic career is in its early stages, Attias has a distinguished military resumé, mostly as a pilot and leader in the IAF.

As a young pilot, he helped with the covert rescue of thousands of Ethiopian Jews who were making the harrowing trek across the desert.

Continued on page 20

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A primer on the Jewish state

From the editor's desk...

Barry Rubin is a straightforward, no nonsense observer and analyst of the Middle East. Never shy, occasionally gruff, Rubin speaks his mind and writes without ambiguities. His research is thorough, his familiarity with the subject matter unassailable.

As the director of the Global Research in International Affairs Center at the Interdisciplinary Center in Herzliya, Israel, and as the editor of the *Middle East Review of International Affairs* Rubin has a perfect perch from which to observe and study quickly unfolding events in the region as well as the punditry from around the world that purports to inform the uninformed and/or curious of the import of those events.

Anyone familiar with Rubin's writing will know that he doesn't mind pointing out, especially to western analysts and journalists who regularly opine on Israel and the myriad conflicts in the Middle East, the flaws in their conclusions. According to Rubin, a great many of the western "experts" just don't get it when it comes to Israel. They are often unfamiliar with the historical background of the peoples in the area and of their cultural differences and are hard-pressed or unwilling to upgrade themselves in the deficient areas for many reasons, not least of which is a failure to speak or read the local languages.

But their lack of sound, substantive grasp of the subject of the State of Israel has never inhibited western journalists and analysts from commenting on any number of aspects concerning the Jewish state. Indeed, Israel and its conflict with the Palestinians are probably two of the most written about subjects in the vast corpus of western journalism and the western blogosphere.

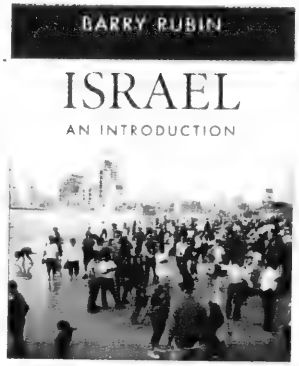
Thus, Rubin has attempted to fill a small part of the large void of ignorance by providing a primer on the modern Jewish state called *Israel, An Introduction* (Yale University Press, 2012).

In a recent online interview, Rubin explained his purpose in compiling the book. "There has never been a book about the actual country and the real people who live there.

"I say that because there is no country in the world that foreigners think they know more about but really know less about than Israel."

The book is plainly a primer aimed at students and lay readers alike. It is entirely introductory in the scope of the material, compact in style and format (340 pages) and well annotated and footnoted to encourage further reading.

After a broad introductory chapter called *Understanding Israel*, in which Rubin writes the contextual background of the text, he provides information about Israel according to six categories: history, land and people, society, economics, government and politics, and culture.



The result is a broad picture of the modern Jewish state with the full range of colour expected of a large canvas as well as the wart-like detail that up-close examination yields.

Rubin's book is timely.

It is a form of easily accessible antidote against the poison that Israel's enemies spread about it. Indeed, even as these words are being written, a debate rages among Britain's theatre elite about whether to allow Israeli actors to perform on British stages. Some churches in the United States are once again arguing about divesting their investments from Israel. And so on. The examples are too many, too misconceived and too sad.

In the book's first chapter, Rubin, of course, takes note of the malevolence of Israel's ill wishers. "The demonization of Israel in many countries of the world and certain sectors of the West has little relation to the reality of the country and its people."

And that is why he emphasizes that the reality of the place must be recorded and the deliberate distortions or uninformed misconceptions set to heel.

"Israel is a remarkable success story," Rubin told the interviewer. "We should remember the difficulties it faced in transforming a land without resources, surviving so much hostility and turning a people with many differences and no military or governmental experience into a stable and prosperous democratic nation."

"Though a country imperiled and sometimes reviled," he concludes the introductory chapter, "a nation facing real threats and forced to rely largely on its resources, Israel is not only surviving but flourishing."

That Israel is flourishing is the message that flows from every page in this book. Indeed, it is an excellent message to recall on the 64th anniversary of the creation of this tiny, imperfect, frustrating but marvellous country.

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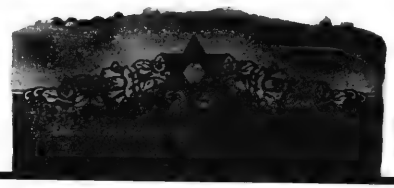

SeeJN

A WORLD OF HONOUR

Israeli President Shimon Peres speaks with Chaya Sachivaschorder, one of a group of outstanding young soldiers rehearsing for a special annual ceremony honouring young soldiers that will take place at the president's residence on Yom Ha'atzmaut. Sachivaschorder's parents and three brothers were killed by a suicide bomber at the Sbarro restaurant in Jerusalem in August 2001. The attack killed 15 people and wounded 130 others.

[Flash90 photo]

iVolunteer connects young adults, survivors

Sheri Shefa
Staff Reporter

There is a new project in Toronto that offers young Jewish professionals an opportunity to take a more active approach in honouring Holocaust survivors and preserving their memories.

iVolunteer, an initiative officially launched April 19 on Yom Hashoah, in partnership with Jewish Urban Meeting Place (JUMP), connects young people with Holocaust survivors.

"The volunteers get an opportunity to hear the stories from the survivors, and they'll be the last generation to hear these stories first hand," said Chayala Zarchi, 26, who is co-directing the project with her husband Rabbi Yudi Zarchi.

Howard Chandler
[David Collin photo]

"Both parties benefit from this program. The survivors enjoy the companionship, they enjoy being around young, vibrant people. A lot of them are lonely. A lot of them do have family but want to participate just because they know how important it is to pass their story on."

Modelled after an initiative that originated in New York City, iVolunteer Toronto's pilot program has produced 10 successful pairings since it started last year.

"It was really just about getting some feedback and seeing how it works... We're very excited to open it up to the public," Zarchi said.

The launch, held at JUMP's Yonge Street centre, attracted more than 100 people who enjoyed a light dinner before learning more about the initiative and hearing the personal testimony of Holocaust survivor Howard Chandler.

Chandler, was born in Poland in 1928. He was a prisoner in Starachowice labour camp, then interned in Auschwitz-Birkenau, Buchenwald and Theresienstadt before his liberation. Howard and his older brother were the only survivors in his family. He came to Canada as a war orphan in 1947.

Zarchi said she was initially inspired to lead such an initiative because of late great-grandfather, a native of Lodz, Poland who was also a Holocaust survivor.

"I've learned so much from being around him. He was the most incredible human being," she said.

"Like the other survivors we've been meeting with, the experiences they've been through and the fact that they were able to start over again and build new families and build a new life is incredible."

The iVolunteer participants meet about twice a month, but Zarchi stressed that the rules as to where, how and when they meet are very lax.

"They can meet in their homes, some of them might meet at a shopping mall, or they'll go out for coffee together – it really depends on what they want," she said.

"We realize that young professionals are busy and we want this to be able to fit into their schedules."

Zarchi, who estimated that there are about 10,000 Holocaust survivors living in the Greater Toronto Area, said she's committed to connecting as many young people with survivors as she can.

"We don't have a lot of time left and there is such an urgency. We really need to take advantage of the time we have left with them."

For more information about the initiative or to get involved, visit www.ivolunteertoronto.com.

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Jewish solidarity stressed at commemoration

Michelle Bitran
Special to The CJN

Beth Tzedec Congregation's annual Yom Hashoah V'Hagvurah community Holocaust commemoration last week focused on Jewish solidarity during the Holocaust.

The Jewish value of "*kol Yisrael arevim zeh la-zeh*," all Jews are responsible for one another, was stressed during the commemoration, whose theme was "My Brother's Keeper."

Yom Hashoah

"Yes, the individual has to be self-reliant, but survival also depends on *arevut*, mutual upholding," said the congregation's spiritual leader, Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl, at the commemoration, which was co-sponsored by the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem, the Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre and the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

At the event attended by local politicians, Amir Gissin, the consul general of Israel in Toronto, addressed the packed sanctuary. Messages of support were read to the audience from Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty.

Gissin spoke about the concept of Jewish unity and mutual responsibility. "We remember this aspect where there was a need to be together in order to survive," he said.

He said that since the Holocaust, the Jewish People have continued to look out for one another, and that this principle has been one of the founding beliefs of the State of Israel. Israel helped the survivors settle after the Holocaust, brought Mizrachi Jews to safety in the 1950s, and later did the same for Ethiopian and Russian Jews, he said.

Even now, Gissin said, Israel makes an effort to reach out to Jews around the world through shlichim, or emissaries. "We send our youngest, our best to educate and to make sure our young Jewish people in the Diaspora continue to be a part of the togetherness we have created."

There was an emotional candlelighting ceremony in memory of the Holocaust's Jewish victims and Jewish child victims, and in honour of all Holocaust survivors, their future generations, the Righteous Among the Nations and the Allied armed forces, liberators, ghetto fighters and Jewish partisans.

Former Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of the State of Israel and chairman of the Yad Vashem Council, Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau, addresses the audience at the Beth Tzedec community Holocaust commemoration through a video presentation.

Amir Gissin, the consul general of Israel in Toronto, addresses the audience at the Beth Tzedec community Holocaust commemoration.

[Michelle Bitran photos]

The candlelighting was followed by the singing of the *Partisans Song* and the keynote address from former Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of the State of Israel and chairman of the Yad Vashem Council, Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau. He spoke to the community from Israel through a video presentation.

Rabbi Lau, a survivor himself, spoke of the idea of responsibility for fellow Jews, especially within the family. "On this day of commemoration of the Holocaust, let's pay attention to the brothers and sisters who smuggled themselves into the concentration camps, knowing that in one of the barracks, their younger brother or sister lived," he said. He added that his own brother, like many older siblings during the Holocaust, was asked by their parents to look after him.

As Gissin said in his speech, the Jewish nation has always and must always look after one another, whether biological siblings or simply another Jewish person. "We were, and still are, our brother's keeper."

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Panel focuses on righting wrongs of the past

Michelle Bitran
Special to The CJN

Remembrance, reconciliation and restitution were the focus of a Holocaust Remembrance Day panel held by the Law Society of Upper Canada and the League for Human Rights of B'nai Brith Canada last week.

The commemoration addressed the question of whether or not it's possible for Canada to right the wrongs of the past, specifically regarding the Canadian government's refusal of entry to Jewish refugees during the Holocaust.

The panel, which took place at the Law Society building in Toronto, began with a viewing of the short documentary *When Canada Said No: The Abandoned Jews of the MS St. Louis*. The film was created by the National Task Force on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research to be shown in schools. It's about the 937 Jews who left Germany on the MS St. Louis in 1939, only to be refused entry by several countries, including Canada. The passengers were eventually returned to four cities in Europe, where only about half of them survived the war.

Lisa Avedon, one of the MS St. Louis survivors, spoke about her memories on the ship as a young child. "We were very, very lucky," she said of her family. "There were many people from the St. Louis who were not that lucky."

Continued on page 13

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64

It has been 64 years since some 2,000 years of statelessness ended for the Jewish People, since the hopeful, tearful, unceasing yearning across those same 2,000 years for return to Zion became hopeful, tearful, unlimited opportunity for the rebuilding of Zion.

In the history of nations, 64 years is a short span.

But in the history of the State of Israel, that rather modest number is a testament to the resilience, determination and overwhelming strength of its people.

Few, but the most visionary, the most single-minded, the most stubborn of resolve actually believed, 64 years ago, that the state could withstand the fury of violence, bloodshed and war launched against it by the entirety of the Arab world.

"On the feverish night when the British pulled out and we declared the State of Israel, we had no way of knowing what would happen," Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, wrote in his memoirs. "Could our people, ill-prepared as they were, rise to the occasion? I knew they had it in them to do so. I was confident in their fortitude. But materially we were so very badly off."

Despite the dire situation, the 600,000 people of the Yishuv – the Jewish community in newly proclaimed Medinat Yisrael, formerly British Mandatory Palestine – did indeed rise to the occasion.

With the help of Jewish and non-Jewish volunteers from around the world – many of whom had seen active service in World War II, had seen with their own eyes what the Nazis and their abettors had done, and had understood the urgency and the enormity of that particular hour of history 64 years ago – the embattled fighters of the nascent Jewish state repelled and defeated the attempt to destroy their country at its very birth.

Some 64 years ago, Israel became the 59th country to be admitted as a member-state of the United Nations, ahead of 134 other countries that have arrived since.

Sixty-four is a milestone of modern history. It is also a promise to us fulfilled, though we cannot fathom the full dimension of the ethereality of the promise or fully grasp the nature of its fulfilment, still unfolding, ever dependent upon the union of heaven and earth.

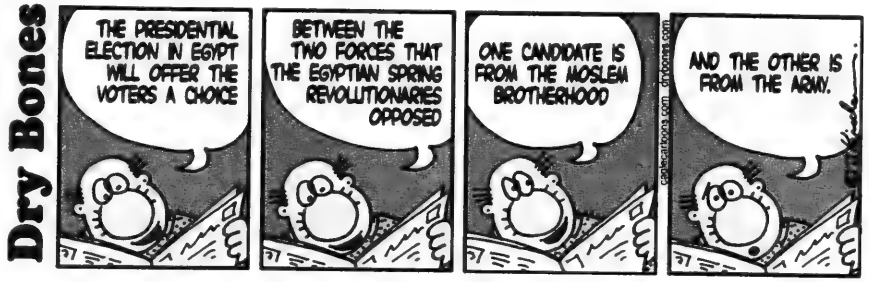
Sixty-four represents a statement of loyalty to a cause and to a people. But it is also a statement of purpose binding the people to the land for eternity.

As enshrined so elegantly in its Declaration of Independence, 64 is an aspiration for the Jewish state that "will rest upon foundations of liberty, justice and peace as envisioned by the Prophets of Israel [and will] maintain complete equality of social and political rights for all its citizens without distinction of creed, race or sex."

Celebrate 64 with thanksgiving, gratitude, praise, hope and the words of the *Shehecheyanu* in our hearts and on our lips.

25 years ago in *The CJN*

Annette Strauss, 63, a Dallas city councillor for 15 years, became the first Jewish woman to be elected mayor of a Texas city. She was the first female mayor of Dallas and only the second female mayor of a U.S. city, after Dianne Feinstein in San Francisco.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A sombre anniversary

This year's Yom Hashoah is particularly significant to me, as it coincides with the 70th anniversary of the roundup, deportation and mass murder of Slovakian Jewry. Prior to World War II, the Jewish population of the Slovak part of Czechoslovakia constituted a vibrant community of some 90,000 people, including my father's extended family. This was all to change in March 1939, when Slovakia became a new, independent country and loyal Nazi puppet state allied with Nazi Germany. Its president was Jozef Tiso, a Roman Catholic priest, and its prime minister was Vojtech Tuka, both of whom were deeply religious men. Anti-Jewish measures and laws were immediately passed by the new government, and these were carried out and enforced with zeal by the fiercely nationalistic Hlinka Guard.

Beginning in April of 1942, the rounding up and deportation to Auschwitz of Slovakia's Jews began in earnest. Tiso actually paid the Germans 500 Deutschmarks, money stolen from Jewish assets and never repaid by Germany, for every Slovak Jew they would take away. By the end of the war, 83 per cent of Slovakia's Jewish population, or 75,000 innocent Slovak Jewish men, women and children, had been taken to German death camps in Poland and murdered. Among them were my paternal grandparents and numerous aunts, uncles and cousins.

Had the Vatican intervened at the time and reined in Tiso, Slovak Jewry and my relatives might have been saved. If the wartime Pope Pius XII had spoken out against the persecution and killing of Jews, perhaps there would not have been a Holocaust or its scope would have been much smaller. I guess we will never know for sure. Nevertheless, Slovakia will forever have the dubious distinction of being the only country during World War II to have paid Nazi Germany money to deport and murder its Jewish citizens, an unforgettable footnote and indelible stain on its otherwise proud history and heritage.

Ralph Schleichkorn
Montreal

* * *

LET THEM GO...

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz

Canadian Machal volunteers

Army investigators of MIA soldiers from the War of Independence have established that Harvey Cohen and Ed Lugach, two cousins from Toronto, fell at the battle of Malkiyeh ("Yom Hazikaron, 5772," letters, April 19). They were not waylaid by Arab irregulars near Sarafand. That was my speculation, which proved to be erroneous. The army has decided that their remains were found near the battle site, and they now have been interred there, with a stone that marks their burial place.

There was a vigorous and lengthy investigation that left no stone unturned. I worked with the soldiers who conducted the inquiry, and I have nothing but admiration for their creative and unceasing efforts to amass the facts. Worth noting, however, is that the DNA that might have been conclusive was withheld by their Toronto relatives, it would appear.

Maurice Moshe Sadeh
Montreal

* * *

Misleading credit for CHAT design

I am writing in response to the article "New Vaughan JCC almost ready to open" (April 12). In the article, the design of the adjacent Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto building is attributed to architect Guela Solow-Ruda. I would like to correct this misleading credit for the design. The school was designed by our firm, CS&P Architects, in joint venture with Petroff Architects. As lead architects for the building, I was principal-in-charge from our firm and design principal. Solow-Ruda was design principal from Petroff Architects. CS&P Architects have been honoured to have worked with Tanenbaum CHAT for the past 15 years on both of its campuses and are delighted to be the architects for the new Guttman Family Science Wing on CHAT's Wilmington campus, which will have its groundbreaking next month.

Paul Cravit
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At left, a woman and her son mourn on Yom Hazikaron, along with so many others, for a fallen loved one. The very next day, the country celebrates Yom Ha'atzmaut as typified by the young children, right, waving the flag. *(Israel Sun photos)*

Memory, history and hope for the Jewish People

Rabbi David Hartman

The placing together of Yom Hazikaron – the day of remembrance of those who died fighting for Israel and those who were killed in terror attacks – and Yom Ha'atzmaut – the day of our independence as a state – reveals a profound characteristic of the Israeli psyche and of its value systems.

In the land of the promise, our fundamental connection to this land is based upon memory. This was the first home of the Jewish People, and the sense that there was no other home to replace Israel was a central value in our tradition. No matter how people may want to refer to the exile – either as Diaspora or exilic or homeless – clearly it is difficult to interpret those categories in the modern world for people who live in western cultures such as those of England or the United States. They don't feel they are in exile, they feel very much a part of their respective cultures and environments.

Yet, in some very important way, Israel is a reminder that home in the deepest historical sense – the place that embodies all the values, aspirations and dreams of the prophets – is here.

Jerusalem is the city of memory. To deny our memory is to deny our identity. When former Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat wanted to make a distinction between those who came later to Israel and those who came earlier, or suggest that the Temple Mount was never the Jewish Temple Mount, my issue with him was that he had no understanding of Jewish history. He had no understanding of what Jewish identity and memory were about.

There is no difference in whether people come to Israel earlier or later, because the memory of Israel nurtured the soul of all the people no matter where they were. "Next year in Jerusalem" is recited by Jews everywhere during their Passover celebrations.

When you visit a mourner, you say, "*Hamakom yinachem etchem*" ("May God comfort you amidst the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem"). This was a phrase that came out naturally when people were sitting and mourning.

Or, when you celebrate the wedding of two young people, you sing blessings expressing that God should rejoice over you as a bridegroom does over his bride, and again, "*Od yishama b'arei Yehuda,*" that we may once again hear the voices of lovers of spontaneous joy, of full celebration of life in the cities of Judea.

These types of experiences, in major events such as marriage and death, or in the everyday liturgy of the prayer book and the grace after meals, all developed and nurtured the belief that home is Israel.

So, when we celebrate our independence, we first of all remember. We remember that this state was not established without heroism and sacrifice. We can't approach the joy of independence if we forget the people who gave their lives to make that possible.

And the deep question we ask is to what degree is our celebration a reflection of their deepest aspirations. We owe our existence to them. Our identity is rooted in their experience and in their memory. And, in light of their memory, we celebrate independence.

I lost a son-in-law, and we go on Yom Hazikaron to the military cemetery in Raanana. It is painful to see how crowded it becomes each year. We listen in silence as the siren is blown, and we witness the deepest sighs and pain in the faces of all the people who are there.

Then, a few hours later, we meet the same Jews, and we say, "Chag Samayach." From that period of mourning and tragic pain, we then move to "Chag Samayach," we wish you a joyous festival. Songs of Hallel are recited in the services. Thus we move from tragedy to celebration, pain to the celebration of life, mourning and then the affirmation of life.

We affirm the dignity of our existence only as we feel the memory of those who are not here with us. We cannot celebrate by cutting ourselves off from history. We cannot celebrate unless we feel total solidarity with those who came before us.

For me, it is my son-in-law, Adam, whom I loved so deeply. He was killed as a pilot in the war of Shalom Hagalil (Peace for Galilee) in Lebanon in 1982. I see his face before me always, the joyous eyes, the courage, the celebration of life, the joy he felt in flying to provide security for the Jewish people here. His parents were Auschwitz survivors, and he lived with their memory as well, and he celebrated independence and our rebirth by remembering as well that Jews were willing to undergo great tragedy, suffering and mourning in order to retain their Jewish identity.

Israel makes us visible again in human history. We are not hiding. The Holocaust did not create a running away from our memories. So, we enter Yom Hazikaron, the day of memory, with trepidation. We leave it as we enter into Yom Ha'atzmaut with the celebration of life. The psyche of the Jew moves miraculously from tragedy to celebration.

We don't live only with the memory of the Holocaust, but also with the memory of rebuilding Jerusalem. We say l'chaim, a celebration of life, of the joy of every day, the joy of every minute in which we can see our loved ones and celebrate the joy of friendship and kindness to each other. That ability to celebrate and hope for the future never leaves the Jewish psyche.

If we look like a people that lives with the memory of Auschwitz or the memory of destruction and suffering, that's only one phase of Jewish identity. Only as you grasp the way we move so uniquely from weeping to celebration do you understand in the deepest sense what memory, history and the hope for a better future life mean for the Jewish People.

Rabbi David Hartman is the president emeritus of the Shalom Hartman Institute. This essay was first published by the institute in 2009.

Stamped in memory

When I was a university student in Jerusalem, my great-uncle Binyomin, who had a shul in Boston, mailed me a photograph of a stamp. He asked me to hunt it down for him. Issued in 1962 to commemorate Yom Hashoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, the stamp featured the words "Shema Yisrael" in graduated shades of orange, in the shape of a flame set against a black background. I found the stamp in a dusty box, amid other *alte zachen* in the shuk, and bought it for him.

Although I had no philatelic interest and regarded postage stamps as purely utilitarian, it intrigued me that Uncle Binyomin wanted the stamp. I found another one and bought it for myself. The next time a new set of Israeli stamps was issued, I bought them all and began to collect. Dating from my student days, I have an unbroken set of first-day covers and tags.

Lately, I have begun to backfill my collection. With the help of online opportunities for purchase or bid, I have added, for example, a set of pre-state stamps, as well as the first set of stamps issued under statehood. My goal is not to amass a comprehensive set of stamps, but to supplement selectively.

Perhaps not surprising for a professor who deals with Jewish memory, I have a special interest in memorial stamps – those issued to mark Yom Hashoah and Yom Hazikaron, the memorial day for soldiers fallen in Israel's battles. The design, text and frequency of issuance of these stamps and their day of issue envelopes speak to evolving cultural values in Israel, the way the country regards its past and its present.

In the run of stamps in my collection, the Yom Hashoah issues often feature flames or hands raised in fists or stretched out in supplication. One memorable one depicts a hand composed of strips of a tattered tallit. The stamps or their envelopes usually include a biblical verse, such as *Eileh ezkerah* – these I remember – from Tehillim (Psalms), a phrase ensconced in religious memory as the opening of a powerful poem about martyrology recited on Yom Kippur. Rather than yearly releases, Yom Hashoah issues became more sporadic over time.

Yom Hazikaron stamps appear more regularly. Their designs feature memorial spaces, headstones, stylized accouterments of war (such as tanks) or abstractions. Rarely do they invoke biblical verses. Instead, they may include verses of modern Israeli poetry, such as Haim Gouri's poem about Bab el-Wad. And while the texts of the Yom Hashoah stamps are always translated into English, sometimes those on the Yom Hazikaron stamps appear only in Hebrew.

What do these differences say about cultural memory in Israel? Clearly, both days anchor sets of memories that are important to Israeli self-definition. The bilingualism of

Sara R. Horowitz

in Toronto

the Yom Hashoah stamp speaks to a history shared by all Jews – thus, the texts appear in the languages of the two largest Jewish postwar populations. In recent years, Holocaust-related stamps are sometimes not explicitly linked to Yom Hashoah and may expand beyond the framework of Jewish memory – for example, to the January UN Holocaust Remembrance.

The Yom Hazikaron stamp, by contrast, insists on the Israeliness of memory. The secular texts, primacy of Hebrew and regularity of issue point to a commemoration of losses embedded not only in the country's origin, but – sadly – in its present. That is to say, on Yom Hazikaron, Israelis mourn not only their ancestors – real and spiritual – but their neighbours, their friends and, most tragically, their children. I'm not suggesting that these losses matter only to Israelis, and not to Jews more broadly, but that Israelis, of necessity, feel them most acutely and intimately.

It's no disrespect to commemoration to yearn for a future in which these losses have faded into the past and become historical, truly a memory and not a lived present.

As Yom Hazikaron melts into Yom Ha'atzmaut, Independence Day, and we celebrate the enduring miracle that is Israel, I spread out before me the decades' accumulation of stamps. Taken together, they celebrate architecture and art, science and literature, sages and mystics, the beauty of text and the beauty of the land.

The Diaspora is here to stay

This issue of *The CJN* appears on Yom Ha'atzmaut, when there's hardly a Jewish community in the world that doesn't mark Israeli Independence Day in one way or another. The anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel has rightly become part of both our national and our religious calendars.

But that's not enough for A.B. Yehoshua, one of the most important writers and public figures in contemporary Israel. For him, Diaspora existence – now that we have a Jewish state – is vacuous and neurotic.

Rabbi Dow Marmur

in Toronto

He insists that if you want to be a complete, not a partial, Jew you must live in Israel, not just celebrate if from afar. He has spoken about it for decades, most recently last month in Jerusalem. To live outside of Israel today is for him "a very deep failure of the Jewish people."

Though nobody is making *aliyah* on the strength of this or any other speech, many Jews in the Diaspora seem to enjoy the flagellation, especially when it comes from a distinguished Israeli. That's why we keep inviting Yehoshua to our communities to tell us off at well-attended events. Perhaps deep down we suspect that he's right. Not that we intend to do much about it, but maybe we think that a well crafted moralizing talk is good for the fractured Jewish Diaspora soul.

Having now lived both in Jerusalem and in Toronto for more than a decade, I feel moved to react to the admonition – but not to agree with it.

I love being in Israel. My Judaism is particularly enriched by Jerusalem and what it represents. But I also know that much of the tradition to which I'm committed has been shaped elsewhere.

Jewish history is primarily Diaspora history. Israel's Declaration of Independence, which we recall this day with pride and joy, is misleading when it states that "Eretz Yisrael was the birthplace of the Jewish People." It's not even certain that it's there that our "spiritual, religious and national identity was formed." Scripture and history indicate that we've been shaped by the gift of Torah starting in the desert – in no-man's land.

Therefore, although I'm a long-term, card-carrying Zionist, I cannot agree that our choice as Jews is either Israel or extinction. Whether or not *individuals* decide to live in Israel or remain in the Diaspora, as a *people* we belong to both, even if sometimes our enemies around the world try to get rid of us.

Jewish existence has always been precarious. Even the establishment of the State of Israel, although essential for our survival after the Holocaust, doesn't guarantee our future. The legitimate nervousness of Israelis in the light of Iran's nuclear ambitions is a telling indication of fears of what might happen to Jews living in their homeland, despite the stress on security and preventive action, and despite the rhetoric and the bravado of politicians and generals.

In that struggle, as in much else, the presence of vibrant and influential Jewish communities, around the world no less than in the United States, is an asset that Israel cannot do without.

Even more significantly, the nature of Judaism itself is to this very day shaped as much by the Diaspora as it is by Israel. Unlike Yehoshua and his supporters, many thoughtful Israelis have come to recognize it and are paying great attention to what's happening in the Jewish world. Though some only point to anti-semitism abroad, most affirm the continued vitality of Jewish life outside the Jewish state. They've come to respect the Diaspora far beyond its fundraising potential.

They recognize that what's needed in our time is a creative fusion, indeed a creative tension, between Israel and the Diaspora. Much of contemporary Zionist thought and practice is engaged in this work.

It's nowadays also prepared to integrate critical Jewish voices abroad as part of the ongoing debate. Thus critical American J-Street and related organizations around the world are gaining legitimacy as members of the collective Jewish enterprise with Israel at its centre.

All this bodes well for the future. Jews everywhere will continue to be enriched by the writings of Yehoshua and his Israeli peers, yet ignore his indictment of them as partial Jews for not heeding his call to move to Israel.

Independence Day is a splendid opportunity to celebrate this Israel-Diaspora partnership.

The clock ticks as talks on Iran take place

The first discussions in 15 months focusing on Iran's highly contentious nuclear program produced two sharply divergent assessments of the outcome.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu expressed skepticism, suggesting that Iran had engaged in deception and was brazenly trying to buy yet more time. By contrast, Iran's chief negotiator, Saeed Jalili, called the talks "very successful."

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

The Iranian perception was supported by the United States, Israel's ally, which characterized the negotiations as "a positive first step," and by the European Union's foreign minister, Catherine Ashton, who described them as "constructive and useful" and disclosed that the next round would be held in Baghdad on May 23.

The third set of negotiations with Iran in three years brought the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council – United States, Russia, China, Britain and France – plus Germany to Istanbul, Turkey, on April 14 to discuss two basic topics: Iran's uranium enrichment activities, a key component of its controversial nuclear program, and Iran's need to fully co-operate with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

As the talks got under way, the atmosphere was tense and the level of mutual mistrust was high, even as western diplomats told reporters that Iran had shown "serious engagement" on major issues.

There was, of course, a clear understanding in both camps that failure might impel the United States and particularly Israel to launch an attack on Iran's nuclear facilities. Last week, Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak said that the talks risked wasting time and that Israel had not promised the United States not to attack Iran while they were taking place.

U.S. President Barack Obama categorized the talks as Iran's "last chance" to resolve the dispute through diplomatic means. U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was just as emphatic, warning Iran that Washington would not tolerate any further foot-dragging or prevarication. Backing up its rhetoric with military might, the United States dispatched a second aircraft carrier to the Persian Gulf, which Iran has threatened to close in the event of war.

In a message to Israel, Clinton asserted that a pre-emptive Israeli strike on Iran would not be "in anyone's interest." China and Russia – which have extensive commercial relations with Iran and take a far more conciliatory approach to its nuclear program – put out similar declarations. The host of the talks, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, warned that an Israeli strike on Iran would be "disastrous" and devastate the Middle East.

Iran, in keeping with past pronouncements, claimed that its nuclear program is peaceful in nature and designed to produce energy and medical isotopes. To underscore its claim, Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, issued a fatwa against the acquisition of nuclear weapons, saying they contravene the principles of Islam.

Striking a skeptical tone, the six powers observed that Iran's success in enriching a portion of its stockpile of uranium to 20 per cent purity, just a few technical steps away from bomb grade, aroused suspicion.

The Obama administration, having promised Israel it will not tolerate an Iranian nuclear arsenal, delivered something of an ultimatum to Iran on the eve of the talks. Washington insisted that Iran must dismantle a newly built facility in Fordo (from which IAEA inspectors are barred), halt the production of uranium fuel and ship stockpiles of 20 per cent enriched uranium out of the country.

Israel, watching these developments warily, presented still more stringent demands. Two weeks before the talks were to convene, Defence Minister Ehud Barak made several demands: Iran must transfer 20 per cent enriched uranium to a third-party country, ship the majority of low-enriched uranium out of Iran, leaving just enough to generate electricity, and close the Fordo facility altogether.

Netanyahu was even blunter. In a meeting with Italian Prime Minister Mario Monti, he demanded a complete cessation of all uranium enrichment by Iran. Swiftly rejecting Israel's conditions, Iran went to Istanbul with several objectives in mind.

Primarily, Tehran wants United Nations and western sanctions to be lifted or at least eased, since they have badly damaged Iran's economy. The sanctions have disrupted Iran's banking system, increased inflation, decreased the value of its currency and affected oil exports, which account for 80 per cent of its foreign revenue. As well, Tehran seeks United Nations acknowledgement of its right to pursue peaceful nuclear technology.

Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi

In a public relations blitz preceding the talks, Iran displayed a mixture of bravado, defiance and conciliation. Declaring he would never surrender Iran's nuclear rights, President Mahmud Ahmadinejad claimed that Iran could ride out the sanctions, thanks to its huge reserve of foreign currency holdings. But in a nod to diplomacy, he promised that Iran would present "new initiatives" in Turkey.

A week before the talks got underway, Iran cut off oil exports to Germany, Spain and Greece in retaliation for an EU oil embargo due to go into effect on July 1. And in a show of bluster, the commanding officer of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards, Mohammed Pakpour, professed not to be worried by the prospect of an attack on its nuclear sites. "No country dares attack Iran," he said, repeating a mantra that Iran's leadership has self-confidently conveyed.

When the talks ended, Netanyahu voiced disappointment. "My initial impression is that Iran has been given a freebie," he remarked, saying that Iran had been handed a five-week reprieve to upgrade its nuclear program and strengthen its defences.

Since the last round of talks more than a year ago, Iran has made significant advances in enriching uranium, having placed many more centrifuges in the well-protected facility in Fordo.

Cyber warfare, sabotage and the assassination of Iranian scientists have set back but not incapacitated Iran's nuclear program.

After the talks, Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi portrayed them as "a turning point" in Iran's "dialogue" with the west and proclaimed that Iran is ready to resolve all nuclear issues in the next round in Baghdad, provided sanctions are eased.

Delivering a far different message, Obama warned Iran that "the clock is ticking" and that further sanctions will be applied should there be no breakthrough in Baghdad.

If Iran is merely playing games, which well might be the case, Israel will be sorely tempted to resort to military force, an option that has divided the Israeli elite.

Two months ago, Netanyahu warned Iran that an attack may be imminent. More recently, Barak said that Israel's patience should not be tested. As he grimly stated, "It [an attack] is not needed within weeks, but it is also not something that can wait a number of years."

Judging by these comments, the pressure is on Iran to make considerable concessions in Baghdad next month.

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Megillat Hashoah reading draws hundreds

Sheri Shefa
Staff Reporter

More than 300 people gathered at Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am Synagogue last week for the ninth annual commemoration and reading of the Megillat Hashoah in honour of Yom Hashoah and the six million Jews who were murdered during the Holocaust.

The Megillat Hashoah, or Scroll of the Holocaust, was first recited in Toronto in 2003 after it was written by Avigdor Shinan, a professor of Hebrew literature at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and an academic committee.

Alex Eisen, a Toronto-based Holocaust survivor and Beth David member, is credited with pushing the initiative forward, as he felt that a liturgical megillah would ensure that the memory of the Holocaust would live on forever, even after the last Holocaust survivors pass on.

The ceremony began with an opening prayer recited in Hebrew by Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl, spiritual leader of Beth Tzedec Congregation, which was repeated by the congregation, who were following along in the megillah, in English.

Each of the six chapters of the scroll were read by members of Beth David – some reading in Hebrew, some in English.

Each chapter was followed by the lighting of a candle, one each in honour of the six million murdered Jews, the destroyed communities, the 1-1/2 million murdered children, the ghetto fighters and partisans, the State of Israel, and the Righteous Among the Nations.

Throughout the ceremony, which had some attendees wiping away tears, violinist Joseph Peleg and pianist Judith Peleg performed hauntingly beautiful musical selections, and the Renanim Youth Choir sang *Eli Eli, Hashem Roi*, and a prayer for the State of Israel in perfect harmony.

Cantor Marshall Loomer of Beth David and Rabbi Moshe Meirovich of the Lodzer Centre Congregation also led the congregation in prayer and song.

But perhaps the most moving aspect of the ceremony was the reading of the megillah itself, which contains testimony from a Christian journalist who witnessed the horror of a ghetto being liquidated; an account from a concentration camp prisoner who desperately and secretly scribbled her plight on scraps of paper and wedged them between the wooden beds of her barracks, and the last words of a survivor who said he was blessed "to have been born four times, and died twice."

Attendees at Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am Synagogue stand for the national anthem sung before the reading of the Megillat Hashoah.
[Sheri Shefa photo]

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Jeffrey Brown,
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Non-US professionals such as Canadian attorneys, chartered accountants, certified general accountants, and certified management accountants can obtain a PTIN but may first have to obtain a qualifying US designation such as a licensed CPA or pass certain IRS competency examinations and satisfy continuing education requirements. However, they may still have limited abilities to practise before the IRS.

KPMG can prepare US tax returns for individuals and businesses in Canada who have US tax filing obligations. More than 200 of KPMG's US tax professionals, including many US-trained and licensed CPAs and attorneys, provide services in Canada's largest Jewish communities including Toronto, North York, Hamilton, Ottawa, Montreal, Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver.

For more information about how KPMG can help you with your US tax filing obligations, please contact ***Jeffrey Brown****, KPMG Tax Partner, at 905-523-2226.*

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Children's Aid gets a Spark

Compiled by CJN Staff

The Children's Aid Foundation hosts the Spark Gala on May 6, a fundraising event to support disadvantaged children and youth.

Mark Daniels and Andrea Weissman-Daniels founded the Ignite the Spark Fund and created the inaugural Spark Gala last year, inspired by their own experience with their adopted daughter.

Proceeds from the event will give youth in child welfare opportunities to explore their interests and change their lives. Sports, arts and cultural programs are crucial to their personal growth and development, but are a rare experience for most.

This year's theme, Rhythm & Soul, dramatizes the transformative power of music in the life of a child. More than 400 guests, including teenagers, will gather to celebrate at The Carlu in Toronto (444 Yonge St, 7th floor). They will hear from five luminaries who will pay tribute to people who first ignited their inner spark. They are legendary guitarist, songwriter, performer and producer Randy Bachman; figure-skating champion Patrick Chan; *Fashion* magazine's editor-in-chief Bernadette Morra; actor and *Top Chef Canada* host Lisa Ray; acclaimed gospel, jazz and blues singer Jackie Richardson.

Hosted by Leslie Roberts and Anne Mroczkowski, co-anchors of the *News Hour at 5:30* on Global Toronto, the event begins at 11:30 a.m., followed by an elegant brunch created by celebrity chef Mark McEwen. At 2 p.m. the tribute honouring Spark luminaries begins, highlighting their remarkable success stories through video, song, dance and fashion-runway segments. With musical direction by Joe Sealy, the production includes performances by Sistema Toronto and Sanskriti Arts, among others.

Tickets to the 2012 Spark Gala are $250. Tables and corporate packages are also available. For tickets or more information, call David Grieco at 416-923-0924, ext. 275, or visit www.ignitethespark.ca.

MS St. Louis survivor Lisa Avedon and the chair of the National Task Force on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research, Alain Goldschläger, address the audience at the recent Holocaust Remembrance Day panel. ***[Michelle Bitran photo]***

'Tragedy and hope often go hand in hand'

Continued from page 6

After watching the story of Canada's refusal to save Jewish refugees, the question of reconciliation was raised to the panellists. "My first reaction... is that there is no way to right the wrongs of the Holocaust," said David Matas, an international human rights lawyer and the senior legal counsel for B'nai Brith Canada.

Matas was on the panel along with Mario Silva, incoming Canadian chair of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research (ITF); Anke Kausch, an independent provenance researcher for art that changed hands during the Nazi era; Barry Sookman, one of Canada's best known intellectual property lawyers and a partner at McCarthy Tétraut in Toronto.

Matas said that while the crimes of the Holocaust cannot be reconciled, Canadian citizens can be reconciled with their country and its government after its shameful behaviour during the Holocaust.

He suggested that the best way to do this would be to properly deal with Nazi war criminals in Canada, to make public archival information about Nazi war criminals and about humanitarian Raoul Wallenberg, to create more effective hate-speech legislation, to enhance the protection of refugees and to maintain strong support for the State of Israel.

If these changes take place, Matas said, "we can say that the Canada that existed in World War II is not the Canada that exists now, and we can be reconciled."

Sookman added that Canadian copyright law offers "unique opportunities" that could make it easier to share important documents related to the Holocaust and "enable us to play a leadership role in remembrance."

For Kausch, the focus was on art in the Nazi era, rather than documents. She participated in the Nazi-era provenance research program at the National Gallery of Canada from 2007 to 2009, tracking down the ownership history of certain paintings that changed hands between 1933 and 1945 to see if any had ended up in the gallery unrightfully.

She was able to trace the roots of many works of art before the program ran out of funding, but there are still many left to research. Kausch has since proposed the establishment of a Canadian centre for provenance research, so that any art with questionable ownership history can be researched and, if necessary, returned to its rightful owners.

Although the funding for such a centre doesn't yet exist, Silva pointed out that many Holocaust remembrance initiatives have been developed in Canada in recent years. He mentioned the establishment of Holocaust Memorial Day and the sculpture erected in Halifax in memorial of the Jews on the MS St. Louis, as well as Canada becoming the 2013 chair for the ITF.

Silva said that as long as we continue to remember and educate about the horrors of the Holocaust, we can continue to hope for the future. "Tragedy and hope often go hand in hand."

Kosher challenge set

The Toronto Teachers' Centre of Torah Umesorah, The National Society for Hebrew Day Schools, is introducing itself to the Toronto community with a kosher chef's challenge. To be held May 1 at The Warehouse, the challenge, is for women only. For information and tickets, call 647-352-7900.

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Wiesenthal's life, legacy comes alive on stage

David Grossman
Special to The CJN

It was a day of extreme sadness, emotional stress and tears fitting the solemnity of Yom Hashoah.

But that didn't stop American-born, award-winning actor Tom Dugan from using a delicate brand of humour in an engaging and eloquent performance that depicted a man who dedicated his life to seeking information and tracking down fugitive war criminals.

Dugan was Nazi-hunter Simon Wiesenthal.

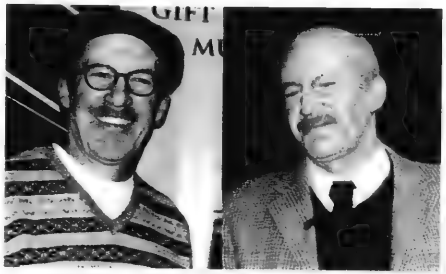
An Irish Catholic son of a decorated U.S. soldier who helped liberate Buchenwald, one of the largest concentration camps in Germany in 1945, Dugan had an interest in history and the horrors of death camps.

Now 51 years old, Dugan didn't hesitate when the opportunity came to write a two-hour script and then perform the role of the Austrian-born Holocaust survivor in the play, *Nazi Hunter – Simon Wiesenthal.*

After a morning performance at the Toronto Centre for the Arts before some 500 Grade 7 to 12 students from schools across Ontario, Dugan was brilliant again for an evening crowd that included survivors and children of survivors.

Sponsored by Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies, the production used a stage that simulates the infamous Jewish Documentation Center in Vienna. The setting was Wiesenthal's retirement day, and he recalled stories in a masterful solo performance, with wit, humour and brilliant acting.

Dugan recounted the story of Wiesenthal and how he cheated death while being tormented by Hitler's SS,



Tom Dugan, left, and as Simon Wiesenthal, right

and then dedicated his life to bringing to justice many mass murderers. While packing up his files in 2003, Dugan gives a remarkable depiction of Wiesenthal and his stories before he left the war behind and his office material boxed and ready for transportation to a Los Angeles museum.

"Although progress has been made since those horrible days of the Nazis, there is work still to be done, and I felt an obligation to pass on the important lessons learned from the generations of the past," Dugan said in an exclusive interview with *The Canadian Jewish News.*

"I would never have written this show if Wiesenthal didn't have a magnificent sense of humour – he was a comic before the war," Dugan said. "It had to be made in a presentation style that was palatable and entertaining, to conquer a tough subject.

"Look, some people thought this would be a drag – long, boring, same old stuff. While humour really works with young crowds, the subject had to be broached in a way that didn't turn people off, but got people to absorb the message."

To become a Wiesenthal look-alike, Dugan had to add padding that would make him look 50 pounds heavier. It also meant shaving part of his full head of hair to resemble Wiesenthal's baldness and then studying with a dialect coach to match his Austrian accent.

"This is not a play about history, it's a play about now and tomorrow. Humanity is struggling now with the things that happened in the '30s and '40s, and we need to do everything possible to make sure this doesn't happen again," Dugan said.

"There were something like 22,000 criminals, and I helped catch 1,100, about five per cent," Dugan said in the performance. "I'm ashamed of that small number."

Dugan had several lines that sparked mixed reaction.

"Austria is a beautiful place, the skiing is great, but they don't mention how many Jews were killed there." And, "They called me the Jewish James Bond," or, "I like it when one Nazi tells another – I will tell Simon Wiesenthal about you."

Helena Fine

Eden Granovsky, a 10-year-old student at the Toronto Heschel School, thought Dugan's decision to use humour was a smart move.

"[The humour] kept me engaged and not feeling so sad," Eden said. " It was like finding a treasure of valuable knowledge that added to what I know about the Holocaust."

Max Abrams, also 10, had a similar reaction. "Thought it was outstanding and very touching," he said. "I now have a better understanding of what my grandfather went through."

And Czech-born Helena Fine, the recipient of a special award from the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Centre before the performance, gave it a thumbs-up.

"It was a wonderful performance with moments that I got to know Wiesenthal much more than I had known," said Fine, whose mother was a Holocaust survivor. "The message is to learn and keep educating the young. Life goes on, and I don't think we should continue to be so sombre."

Yet, 83-year old Alexander Eisen, who escaped the Budapest ghetto and went on to write a book of his memoirs called *A Time of Fear*, said, "I respect [Dugan's] artistic talent, but I would have appreciated more of a historical speech, more of a serious theatrical performance. I didn't laugh. I survived the Holocaust."

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New names added to most-wanted Nazi list

JTA

The Simon Wiesenthal Center's latest list of the world's 10 most-wanted Nazi war criminals contains three new names, all with Canadian connections, and the centre claims to have new evidence against one of them.

The new names contained in the SWC's *Annual Status Report on the Worldwide Investigation and Prosecution of Nazi War Criminals* replace three alleged Nazi war criminals who died over the past year. The report was released April 18.

To read the full story, go to cjnews.com

Jewish Toronto says goodbye to a "Gute Neshame"

Janice Freedman's tragic passing leaves a wide circle of grief

By Daniel Horowitz

Janice Freedman z"l, who at just 54, recently passed away, was known and loved for many things, most of all, for being a gute neshame, a good soul.

After bravely battling a lengthy illness, Janice, the beloved wife of Alan, and mother of Hillary, Jason, and Jordan, and survived by her sister Renee Birnbaum and brother Rabbi Vernon Kurtz, succumbed to her illness on April 14th.

Despite an ongoing vocal cord ailment, Rabbi Philip Scheim of Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am Synagogue, Janice's shul, spoke glowingly about his late congregant through the voice of the shul's cantor, Marshall Loomer who read the rabbi's heartfelt words at her funeral on April 16th.

"It was so typical of Janice that I should not have been surprised in the least," read Cantor Loomer. "Visiting her a couple of weeks before Pesach, when Janice was so ill, in so much discomfort, and clearly and understandably feeling a bit down because of her prolonged incapacity, it seemed to me, for much of the visit, that I was the patient lying in bed, and Janice, the one sitting on the chair, comforting me. Janice, aware that I was having difficulty in speech, was expending whatever energy she had, reflecting concern for me. It didn't matter that what she was experiencing was a thousand times worse, that her illness and prognosis were far more serious than my issues. My issues, and not her own, were the matter of the hour…Her commitment to Jewish tradition, to synagogue, to community was uncompromising. Her pleasantness, her fundamental goodness, her courage, her determination, will continue, for a very long time to come, to inspire, to instruct, and to help her family and all of us to hope for better days ahead."

The first time I had the pleasure to sit down and chat with Janice was shortly after she began working at

> "Her commitment to Jewish tradition, to synagogue, to community was uncompromising"

UJA Federation in September, 2006. It was during our conversation when two things about Janice immediately struck me. One was her love for her family. The other was her love of Israel.

Janice asked if I would be willing to write a story about the Renanim Youth Singers - an award-winning, mixed pluralistic group of teenage singers from around the Greater Toronto Area, led by musical director Susan Michaels. The choir was created to help, develop and enhance the love of Eretz Yisrael and Zionism by performing in galas and by traveling to Israel.

The story was to highlight the group's recent return from their first performance in Israel.

Janice was an active and proud Renanim Board Member

Janice Freedman z"l

and an even prouder Renanim parent as her son Jordan, now 19, was one of those talented teens who made the sojourn to the Jewish State as did many of the parents, including, of course, Janice.

One of the Renanim Choir's Israeli performances was for SHALVA – The Association for Mentally & Physically Challenged Children in Israel

"Seeing the kids of Shalva enjoying our children gave every parent such nachas, and filled our hearts with so much pride," a clearly kvelling Janice told me. "Seeing our children perform in Israel, surrounded by so much history and spirituality brought a tear to our eyes."

When word of Janice's untimely death spread, many friends and co-workers wanted to share their thoughts and memories.

"Janice was my administrative assistant for many years, but she was much more than that for me; she was a dear friend," said former UJA Federation lawyer, Mark Anshan. "We had a very special relationship. She was a wonderful support - her dedication, commitment, work ethic set the standard. Janice was an exceptional support to me and I was privileged, in so many ways, to have worked with her. For Janice, her family, friendships and personal relationships was what mattered most. We all can learn from Janice's values which were grounded in the way she lived her life as a Jew. I will miss Janice but I have the kippah she made for me as a constant reminder of our special friendship. I finish these brief words with difficulty in viewing the computer screen through the tears that are flowing."

"Janice and I first worked together in the mid 1980's," said Stephanie Olin Chapman, a close friend of Janice's. "Later, I was fortunate enough to be able to offer her a job as the office manager and director of tenant programming at the Kehilla Residential Programme, where I was the Executive Director. She was a key member of the staff that grew that organization. On top of bringing a new sense of order to all of the staff's lives, her work raised the bar for everything that Kehilla would go on to do. Janice was one of the most competent people I ever had the honour of working with and on top of that – a caring and wonderful friend."

> "For Janice, her family, friendships and personal relationships were what mattered most"

"Janice was one of the most committed members of our staff," said Jeff Springer, UJA Federation's Senior Vice President, Corporate Affairs. "She always went the extra mile in helping UJA Federation make a difference to the community she cared so deeply about. I will miss her a great deal."

Janice with son Jordan

"Janice Freedman will be missed but never forgotten by all of us," said UJA Federation President & CEO, Ted Sokolsky. "Through her efforts here Janice had the opportunity to make a difference in the Jewish world and she worked every day to do just that. She was a tireless worker with a great presence who touched everyone that she came into contact with on a daily basis, and those people are rare."

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Yom Ha-Apps-maut

Israel is turning 64, and with Yom Ha'atzmaut upon us, it's the perfect time to celebrate with some made-in-Israel apps that share the best the country has to offer. Here's a selection, most of which you can download free.

Infolive.tv: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speaking Mandarin? That what I heard when I first fired up this app, which presents Israeli stories that may have been missed by the world media. Like: the opera *Carmen* performed at Masada set in the Wild West and Netanyahu's greetings for the Chinese New Year. (Note: After downloading, change settings for this app from French to English.) **[http://bit.ly/israpp1]**

Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post and Israel Hayom: The first two provide plenty of news and opinion in English about Israel and the Jewish world. The newly released *Ha'aretz* app requires a one-time registration. Both apps are free. **[http://bit.ly/israpp2]**, **[http://bit.ly/israpp3]**. Even if you don't speak Hebrew, it's worth checking out *Israel Hayom*, which provides a gorgeous newspaper-like interface on your iPad that includes great graphics, screaming headlines and all the ads. **[http://bit.ly/israpp4]**

Israel Museum: Jerusalem's Israel Museum has recently gone through a renewal, and this app is worth downloading even if you don't have a chance to visit in the near future. The highlight is the Exhibits section, which includes photos and audio commentaries about some of the museum's most prized pieces, including the *Rothschild Miscellany*, Robert Indiana's *Ahava (Love)* and the Model of Jerusalem (formerly at the Holyland Hotel). **[http://bit.ly/israpp5]**

iTsimer: If you are planning a trip to Israel and want to do things a bit differently, consider spending time in a bed and breakfast. The Hebrew app includes photos, reviews and contact information for dozens of gorgeous "tzimmers" in the Upper and Western Galilee and in the Golan Heights. **[http://bit.ly/israpp6]**

Jewish & Digital

Mark Mietkiewicz

Israel Nature Trails ($2.99): A great guide to download on an iPhone with information about picturesque trails throughout the country. Includes background about each trail and a photo gallery. I particularly like the GPS-enabled maps that will guide you along each path. **[http://bit.ly/israpp7]**

Israel Football: If you need a break from the Stanley Cup playoffs (and you can read Hebrew), check this app for the latest news about the sport that keeps Israelis glued to their TVs. Can the soccer team from Kiryat Shmonah make it two years in a row? **[http://bit.ly/israpp8]**

Finally, some of the best apps coming out of Israel aren't about Israel but just demonstrate why Israeli know-how and ingenuity are popular around the world. This article from israel21c.org includes an overview of 10 top Israeli apps, including Waze, which analyzes traffic in real-time and suggests alternative routes to keep you out of a jam. **[http://bit.ly/israpp9]**

But my real admiration goes to the folks who participated in the recent "Hackathon," where Israeli entrepreneurs brainstormed for two days and at the end had several ideas up and running, including "2See Israel," an aggregator of photos of Israel found on Flickr and Picasaweb **[http://bit.ly/israpp10]** and "Peace Connector," which uses Facebook "to connect people in countries of conflict simply based on shared hobbies." **[http://bit.ly/israpp11]**

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Speaking of 'my rabbi'

As a child, I would accompany my parents each erev Pesach to deliver a bottle of wine to our rabbi. This year, as we ate our final bit of chametz, my rabbi left a message on my cellphone wishing us Chag Samayach.

The role of the rabbi has changed.

I read with great interest the columns by Rabbis Elyse Goldstein (March 8) and Dow Marmur (March 29), as they reflected on the life of Rabbi Gunther Plaut.

Class Act

Daniel Held

Rabbi Goldstein asks, "Who would you consider a giant who can stand in the shadow that Rabbi Plaut cast?" and Rabbi Marmur responds, "I believe that the time when rabbis cast shadows has passed."

Pulpit rabbis like Rabbi Plaut were once the academic scholars of Judaism, but with the proliferation of university Jewish studies programs, that role has shifted. Rabbis were once the primary educators of our community, but with graduate level programs in Jewish education, day and supplementary schools now demand new levels of pedagogic training.

As Rabbi Marmur describes, the rabbi once sat atop the hierarchical pyramid of religious life, holding power by virtue of position and title. This is no longer the case. Religious life has moved from the vertical to the horizontal. My rabbi does not sit next to the Ark facing the congregation but has a seat among the congregants. He shares his pulpit with scholars and congregants, and he refers to himself by his first name.

To me, these changes have fortified, not diminished, my rabbi's authority. My rabbi holds authority, not because of his title or position, but because I choose to invest authority in him, and I make this decision because of his authentic application of his knowledge and himself. My rabbi is a teacher just as he is a community organizer; he shepherds us through lifecycle events just as he builds community; he offers pastoral care just as he calls us before the holidays. My relationship with my rabbi is not one of reverence or awe, but one of warmth and mutual admiration.

I recognize, however, that my use of the term "my rabbi" is rare among my generation. I lament that few feel a personal connection to a rabbi. For most, "my rabbi" refers to the rabbi of the synagogue to which they pay dues, or the rabbi of the congregation where they had their bat mitzvah 20 years ago. It refers to a position rather than a person.

The rabbi as preacher, who captivates audiences and compels attendance and religiosity through sermons and teachings, has passed his prime. Today's rabbi is a community organizer who shares authentically of himself and connects to the personal life journey of his congregants both sociologically and theologically.

The rabbi who seeks to cast a shadow has been rejected by my generation. The rabbi can no longer be a stand-alone figure, separated by title and pulpit. Today's rabbi must work together with the community to shed light on the possibilities of Jewish life. It is only through this collaborative process that more of my peers will be able to speak of "my rabbi."

Federation fosters Russian leaders

Frances Kraft
Staff Reporter

A UJA Federation of Greater Toronto program to foster leadership among local Russian Jews was created in part to address a disconnect between Russian-speaking Jews here – who number between 40,000 and 60,000 – and the wider Jewish community.

Historically, the two groups have not been well integrated, according to Marina Morgenshtern, co-ordinator of the Bridges program, which began in March 2011 and will wind up in June of this year.

What makes the program unique is that the bridges extend in both directions, not just toward Russian speakers, said Morgenshtern, a native of Ukraine whose family immigrated to Israel in 1990 when she was 19. She came to Canada in 2004.

"The traditional understanding of integration is that the newcomers eventually become like [the established community], but we are talking about some kind of cross-fertilization and cross-interest," she said.

One of the important outcomes so far is that the programs' mentors are discovering that the social and cultural Judaism of the newcomers is "different" rather than "less," she said.

Participants learn about goals of leadership, leadership in Jewish history, leadership skills and the importance of philanthropy. They also meet with mentors and other community leaders, and serve as interns on federation committees.

Galina Sandler, 50, who immigrated from Kiev to Toronto with her family at age 15, said her integration into the Jewish community was "pretty painless on an individual basis." She attended high school here, studied history at the University of Toronto (specializing in Russian and eastern European studies), and married a Canadian Jew.

Her children are Canadian-born, and she has worked in jewelry design and product development for many years. At the same time, she believes there's a "gap."

In North America, "the Jewish historical narrative is missing the Soviet period," Sandler said.

"Our lives in the Soviet Union developed differently than North American Jews who had the fortune to be born here… A lot happened from 1917 until the Jews started leaving [the FSU] in the 1970s. Even though religious symbols disappeared and Jewish religious life was gone, and there was a great deal of official anti-semitism, which made it difficult for us to have a thriving Jewish identity, we still remained Jewish. If we survived without religious institutions, we developed other ways of nurturing our identity… There are many varieties of Jewish experience. Mine happen to be culturally based."

Sandler is very positive about the Bridges program. "I'm very optimistic, because I think the timing is right. There are many people like myself who have grown up in Canada and who feel equally comfortable on both sides of the divide, if you will."

She said that mentorship provides "an informal kind of connection. It's good insofar as it provides somebody like myself with a bit of guidance and mentoring in terms of how the federation works." She has become involved with the federation's "emerging communities" committee.

Shoel Silver, co-chair of the Jewish Agency for Israel's Committee for the Unity of the Jewish People, is a longtime community leader and a mentor in the Bridges program. He said he thinks it's important for the community to have "breadth of leadership" in terms of where leaders come from, where they live in the community, and their life experiences.

"We should reach out and make sure as many as possible are engaged at leadership levels."

On a personal level, he said, the program is meaningful to him because it allows him to hear the perspective of people he wouldn't otherwise meet. "I think both sides are mentors and mentees."

Sephardi sages love the Land of Israel

Sephardi Window

Rabbi Ilan Acoca

As rabbi of the only Sephardi congregation in Western Canada, I am frequently asked about the Sephardi perspective regarding the holiday of Yom Ha'atzmaut. Do we celebrate it? How, historically, do the Sephardi sages regard the Land of Israel?

I usually answer that our sages attach a great deal of importance to the Land of Israel, making it clear that it is a focal point of our existence.

Besides the fact that the Torah speaks about the Land of Israel as the Promised Land, promised by God to the Jewish People, Sephardi *chachamim* throughout the generations have expressed their love of the Land through song and poetry.

In modern times, immediately following the creation of the State of Israel, Yom Ha'atzmaut was celebrated in Sephardi countries by the entire community.

The emphasis, however, was different than it is today.

The rabbis emphasized and embodied the religious perspective – the beginning of our redemption – through thanksgiving and celebration on Yom Ha'atzmaut. For them, it wasn't about "*Hallel* with or without a *brachah*." It was about giving praise to HaShem through the recitation of *Tehillim* and *Hallel* for the great miracles and gifts that we recognize on this special day.

Well before modern Israeli poets wrote of their love for the Land of Israel, Sephardi poets – Rabbi Yehuda Halevy (12th-century Spain), Rabbi David Hassin (18th-century Morocco), Rabbi Yosef Haim (19th-century Baghdad) and Rabbi Raphael Antebbi (19th-century Aleppo), among others – wrote about the beauty and holiness of the Land.

Subsequently, after the establishment of the State of Israel, there were Sephardi poets and rabbis – for example, Rabbi David Bouzaglo of Morocco, Asher Mizrachi of Tunisia, and Rabbi Frija Zuartz of Libya – who wrote of their love and renewed appreciation of the Land of Redemption. Their moving words often elicit tears when I read or sing them.

These words also bring me much hope and comfort at times when it's hard to avoid becoming despondent over our future and what's going on in the world in general. These rabbis often experienced atrocities, even death, in their countries of birth. Just as they took comfort in the Almighty, we, too, must strive to develop our faith and to strengthen our resolve in our times.

One of the stories – a story about faith – that I cherish most is about Rabbi Israel Meir Lau, the former Ashkenazi chief rabbi of Israel who visited Vancouver in 2008. A certain individual asked the rabbi for his thoughts concerning a new book discrediting the splitting of the Sea of Reeds. The rabbi responded simply, "The author of the book is an idiot!" The rabbi said that his parents taught him about that event and their parents them, asking finally, "All of them were wrong and the author of this book is right?"

On Yom Ha'atzmaut we are reminded that our faith and our history have been transmitted to us in an unbroken chain from one generation to another, from Sinai to this day. Let us thank God as we celebrate both our Jewish history and our national renewal by rejoicing on this Day of Independence.

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Victoria shul set to mark 150 years

Lauren Kramer
Pacific Correspondent

VICTORIA — Victoria's Congregation Emanu-El is approaching its 150th anniversary in June 2013, an important milestone for Canada's oldest synagogue in continuous operation.

Plans are underway for a gala weekend celebration of the Vancouver Island synagogue's birthday next year, with a recreation of the shul's inaugural 1863 parade, which was joined by the mayor and Freemasons of the day.

It's expected the current mayor and local Freemasons will join the event as well.

The 220 member families of Victoria's Jewish community are more active and committed than ever, said Michael Bloomfield, a member of Avodah, the congregation's social action committee.

"In the 18 years since I moved here from Ottawa, the community has changed a lot," he said. "There's been an incredible jump in energy and vitality."

Bloomfield attributes the increased vigour to a couple of factors, prime among which is an increase in the number of Jews in town. "In the '70s and '80s Victoria was struggling economically, but now we have a lot of new, younger families, people with professional careers," he reflects. "The advent of e-commuting has brought a lot of very talented people into the community."

He estimates there are between 2,000 and 2,500 Jews in Victoria, roughly double the number in the 1980s.

The congregation has also been energized by its social action work, which was inspired by Rabbi Harry Brechner, Congregation Emanu-El's spiritual leader, eight years ago.

In its first project, titled Out of the Rain, community members assisted the YMCA in providing and distributing food for street youth during the cold, winter months.

Jewish food quickly became a coveted item. "The kids would always ask 'When is the Jewish community coming?'" Bloomfield recalled with pride. "They preferred the food and the portions we provided."

In subsequent projects, Avodah helped to deliver new socks to homeless and impoverished individuals in the capital region. Since 2005, some 50,000 pairs of new socks have been donated to the needy on Vancouver Island by Toronto-based McGregor Socks.

Avodah's work in the community has deepened the synagogue's relationship with other faith communities, as well as First Nations leaders and local government officials, Bloomfield said.

The level of respect, care and co-operation was especially evident when vandals desecrated the Jewish cemetery with swastikas several months ago.

"The rabbi and I decided not to let the vandalism devolve into a sympathy session," Bloomfield said. "We sent the word out about a vigil through social media and our message was 'No, this is not who we are, and whenever this happens to anyone we will gather to denounce it and to stand for respect.'"

Attendance at the vigil, held at the cemetery in January 2012, was remarkable, he said.

"A stream of people became a river until there was nowhere left to stand. Virtually every church, all the faith communities, First Nations, mayors and members of the legislature came to stand with the Jewish community on a cold, drizzly day. That's what the social action component of Congregation Emanu-El has earned from the community at large."

There have been other signs of respect and appreciation in recent years, particularly from homeless people that Avodah has been helping.

One Shabbat morning in December 2011, Rabbi Brechner left the synagogue through the front door and noticed that someone had drawn a message in chalk on the steps outside.

His stomach turned as he anticipated an antisemitic screed, but the words he read took his breath away.

Someone had written, "Thank you for the socks."

Another time, a group of homeless people noticed someone trying to break into the synagogue's second floor. They immediately called police to report that there was an attempted break-and-enter in progress at "our synagogue."

"Our relationship with the larger community has given Congregation Emanu-El a stature that's absolutely remarkable," Bloomfield said.

The synagogue, located on Blanshard Street, was built in the Romanesque Revival style, its 4,000 square feet designed to hold 300 people.

It began as an Orthodox shul, adopting Conservative ritual 15 years ago. In 2005 an educational cultural annex was added, where the children's cheder is held.

Plumbing was added for a mikvah at the time, but funding for that project has been delayed.

"Our priority right now is the roof, which will cost $450,000 to be remedied," Bloomfield said, adding that the roof has shifted and changed shape over time, damaging the building and requiring major repairs.

"My understanding was that historically, Jews in Victoria used the ocean as a mikvah or travelled to Vancouver."

At least one of the Torah scrolls at Congregation Emanu-El is more than 300 years old.

Sanctuary of Congregation Emanu-El

Congregation Emanu-El

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Masorti to ordain gay rabbis

JTA

JERUSALEM — Gay and lesbian students will be ordained as Conservative rabbis in Israel.

The board of trustees of the Schechter Rabbinical Seminary voted April 19 to accept gay and lesbian students for ordination beginning with the 2012-13 academic year. The Conservative movement in Israel is known as Masorti.

A seminary statement said the decision comes following a "long process."

"The Schechter Rabbinical Seminary views the serious process leading to this decision as an example of confronting social dilemmas within the framework of tradition and Halachah," or Jewish law, Hanan Alexander, chair of the seminary's board of trustees, said in the statement. "This decision highlights the institution's commitment to uphold Halachah in a pluralist and changing world."

Students are ordained by a beit din, or rabbinical court, made up of three members of the seminary's rabbinic advisory committee, all of whom are members of the Rabbinical Assembly of the Masorti/Conservative movement.

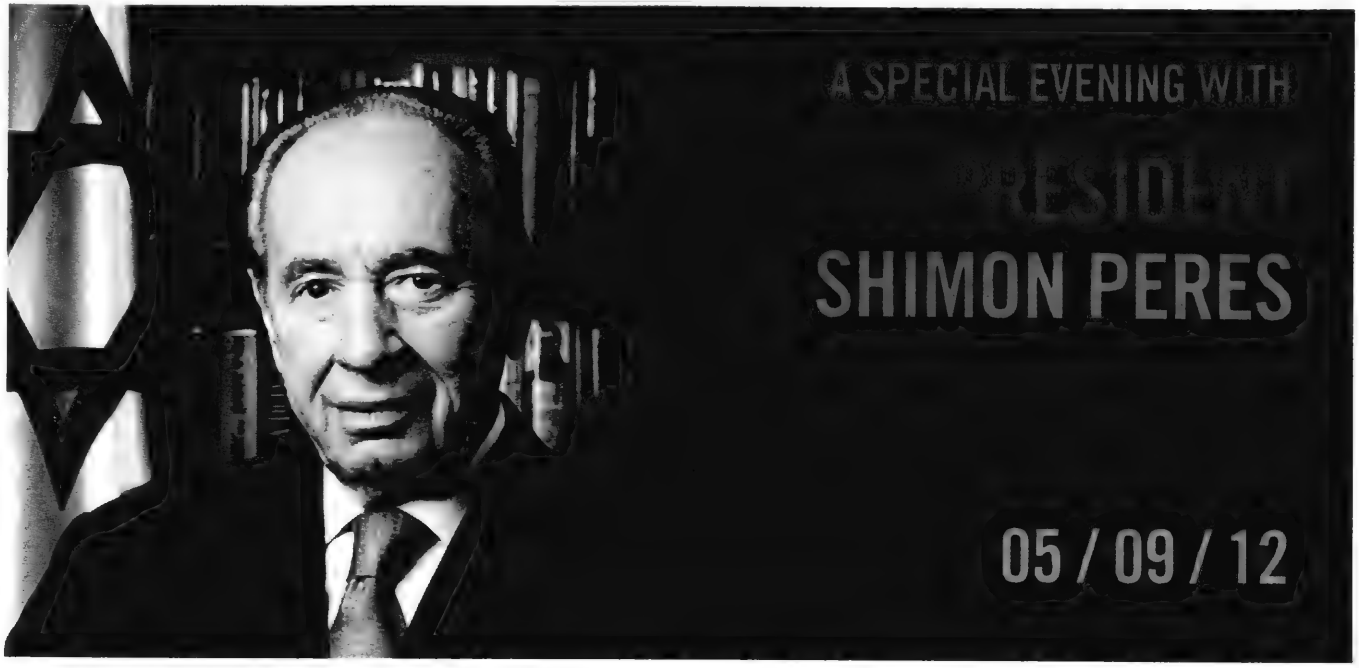
The beit din members are chosen by the candidate and subject to the approval of the seminary's dean. They have different opinions regarding the ordination of gay and lesbian students, according to the seminary.

The Israeli seminar's decision brings the Masorti movement in line with the American branch of Conservatism, whose rabbinical seminaries have been admitting gay students for some years.

The question of whether or not to ordain gay and lesbian rabbis has been rattling the movement for the past decade.

Years of discussion led to two contradictory religious rulings in 2006, one allowing the ordination of gay and lesbian rabbis and another banning it. The movement's two U.S. rabbinical seminaries allowed ordination, while seminaries in Jerusalem and Buenos Aires did not. The issue nearly caused a rift in the movement.

With files from Ha'aretz



UJA Federation of Greater Toronto
invites you to a special evening
with **SHIMON PERES**, the President of Israel.

Join us **Wednesday, May 9th,** 2012 at 7:30 pm

David Frum

President Peres will be interviewed live on stage by Political Analyst,
Features Writer for 'Newsweek' and CNN contributor, Toronto's own, **David Frum.**

At Toronto's
SONY CENTRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
1 Front Street East

Admission is $10.

As the State of Israel - and Jewish communities around the world - prepare to celebrate the Jewish state's 64th anniversary with Yom Ha'atzmaut festivities, UJA Federation invites you to join us for a unique opportunity to show your love for, and solidarity with, Israel, at what promises to be an unforgettable evening featuring President Shimon Peres, musical entertainment and more.

To purchase your E-tickets, register at: **sonycentre.ca/peres**
Or to order by phone, please call UJA Federation's Shimon Peres Hotline at 416.635.5509

Please note: Pre-registration is required. Tickets are all general admission and seating location is on a first-come, first served basis (doors open at 6pm). Due to security procedures, we suggest that you arrive early.

THE CENTRE FOR ISRAEL & JEWISH AFFAIRS

UJA Federation of Greater Toronto

שישאר בינינו

גידי קורן וחברים

על מחיר המייפל סירופ:

השנה השתגע כאן החורף לגמרי. לא היה צורך לפנות שלג אפילו פעם אחת, והניצנים בקעו באמצע פברואר. ואז, לקראת אפריל, שקענו פתאום שוב במכת קור שבילבלה לטבע את היוצרות. לפני כשבוע נסענו לבקר בחווה של מנוניטים בסנט ג'יימקובס, שעוסקים בהפקת מייפל סירוף על ידי חליבתו מהעצים הגבוהים, אחרי שאלה צברו עשרות רבות של גלונים של הנוזל הצהבהב והמתקתק במהלך החורף . מסתבר שהשנה היה היבול על הפנים, עם ירידה תלולה של חמישים אחוז בתפוקת המייפל. אחד מהמטיילים שאל לתומו את המנוניטית הצעירה שהדריכה אותנו: "אז אם כך-אפשר להבין שמחירי המייפל סירופ עלו בצורה תלולה השנה?" נזעקה הבחורה המארחת כמו מי ששמע דבר תועבה חמור ואמרה: "לא, לא, מה פתאום! המחיר כאן נשאר ללא שינוי והוא לא מושפע מן היבול". דבריה נגעו בי עמוק וטלטלו אותי בחוזקה: הערכים של פעם- חיים לפי הטבע, הסתפקות במועט, ללא בצע כסף. לפני שהמילים "היצע וביקוש" הומצאו. אנשים נקיי כפיים שאינם סבורים שאתם צריכים להיענש, אלא דווקא הם עצמם.

אבל שישאר בינינו.

מדוע הקב"ה לא קיבל פרופסורה?

ושלא תחשבו שהוא לא ניסה!

השבוע פורסמו המלצות המועצה להשכלה גבוהה שדנה בבקשתו, ואלה היו שיקוליה מדוע לא לתת לו את התואר:

•הוא לא פורסם בעיתון מקצועי,

•לא היו בספר שום ציטוטים (רפרנסס),

•לרבים יש ספקות אם הוא כתב אותו בעצמו,

•ומאז כבר חלפו עידנים בלי שעשה משהו חדש,

•עד היום אף אחד לא הצליח לחזור על הניסוי שלו,

•הוא מעולם לא פנה ליוועדה אתית לקבל אישור,

•כשאחד הניסויים שלו הלך עקום הוא ניסה להסוות את זה והטביע את המשתתפים,

•את שני הסטודנטים הראשונים שלו הוא גרש בצעקות,

•הוא לא משתף פעולה עם קולגות,

•אין לו כמעט שעות קבלה,

•בפעמים הנדירות שהוא מוכן להיפגש- זה על ראשי הרים.....

אומללותם של אנשי טורונטו:

טורונטו נמצאת בצמרת כל המשאלים הבינלאומיים: איכות חיים מעולה, כלכלה יציבה, הרמוניה בין מיעוטים, חינוך טוב, אופטימיות, ועוד כהנה וכהנה. יש רק קבוצה אחת של אנשים בטורונטו שנחשבת לאומללה בכל העולם. מאחר והקבוצה הזאת כוללת כמעט כל ילד ומבוגר בטורונטו- זה הופך את כולנו לאומללים חסרי תקנה. הקבוצה הזאת, אם לא ניחשתם, הם חובבי הספורט.....ובטורונטו יש קבוצות מקצועיות בכל ענפי הספורט:

קבוצת ההוקי שלנו לא זכתה באליפות מאז 1967 ולא הגיעה לפלייאוף כבר שבע שנים.

קבוצת הבייסבול לא זכתה באליפות כבר עשרים שנה,

קבוצת הכדורסל משרכת באופן רגיל בסוף הטבלה,

קבוצת הכדורגל חוגגת כל פעם כשהקבוצה איננה מפסידה,

וקבוצת הפוטבול מביישת את אוהדיה הבודדים כמעט כל עונה.

אז למה מה? בטור הבא אשתף אתכם בסיבות. אבל בתנאי שישאר בינינו.

MORE GIDI KOREN at www.gidikoren.com

We can't assume Iran is rational

On Feb. 19, America's most senior military officer, Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, appeared on Fareed Zakaria's CNN program *GPS*. The appearance sparked a heated reaction from Israel after Dempsey claimed that he and the Central Command, which he leads, are "of the opinion that the Iranian regime is a rational actor" and can be dissuaded from nuclear recklessness by economic sanctions, diplomacy and defensive preparations.

While that particular controversy has since cooled to a degree, what remains hot is the issue of whether Iran is indeed a "rational actor." After all, that assumption underlies the belief, widely held by many in the West, that if Iran acquires nuclear weapons, it can be deterred from using them in a first strike against Israel or any other potential target.

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

Zakaria himself, following up from his interview with Dempsey, said that he agreed with the general, adding the following: "It's very important to understand, however, what it means to talk about a 'rational actor.' A rational actor is not a reasonable actor. It is not somebody who has the same goals or values as we have. In international affairs or economics, the term rational actor is used to describe somebody who is concerned about their survival, prosperity or strength and is making calculations on the basis of these concerns. It describes someone who calculates costs and benefits."

Zakaria was reflecting the common assumption that Iran is "not suicidal" and would not dare attack Israel with nuclear weapons, only to be attacked in kind by an Israeli second strike that could inflict massive, if not fatal, damage on the Islamic regime.

In the April 12 *Toronto Star*, John Polanyi ("Trust deterrence, not bombs") simply assumed that Iran is a "rational actor" and so can be deterred, as have other nuclear-armed countries, from using nuclear weapons. Yet neither he nor anyone else can or should have confidence in that assumption where Iran is concerned. An Iranian leadership that denies the Holocaust, accepts as fact all manner of anti-Jewish conspiracy theories, and has repeatedly threatened to wipe Israel "off the map" cannot be trusted to act in a "rational" manner.

It pays to remember that it was former Iranian president Hashemi Rafsanjani – someone often described as a "moderate" – who boasted in Tehran more than a decade ago that one nuclear bomb would destroy Israel while costing Muslim states "damages only."

Iran's current president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, an extremist by comparison, believes deeply in the return of the Hidden Imam, the Mahdi – a return that can be realized through an apocalyptic war. (Indeed it was at the UN General Assembly where Ahmadinejad announced to the world his desire to hasten the return of the Mahdi.)

While Ahmadinejad is not in charge of the nuclear program – it's under Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's control – the religious apocalyptic vision is widely held within Iran's ruling circles. Whether Khamenei and others in the leadership will act on this belief we cannot say.

Yet no one can say with confidence that they won't. And that's the key point.

The *New Republic*'s Leon Wieseltier had some thoughts on this subject that are worthy of careful reflection:

"Sick minds have been distributed all across the human race, and nuclear weapons are the greatest gift ever given to sick minds, and sick minds sometimes come to power. Moreover, they sometimes hold worldviews that, in moments of anger or bliss, may weaken the appeal of logic. Who dares tell Israel that the president of Iran's promise to incinerate it means nothing? Threat assessment is indeed a supremely empirical activity, but security planning can be crippled by a diminished sense of possibility. It is one of the stranger features of the debate about Iran's nuclear program that people who are ordinarily anguished about nuclear proliferation can in this instance suddenly live with it."

Paul Michaels is director of research and media relations with the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs.

Attias ready to embrace Canadian culture

Continued from page 3

He also helped plan 1991's Operation Solomon, in which over the course of 36 hours, non-stop flights by El Al cargo planes and IAF transport aircraft flew more than 14,000 Ethiopian Jews to Israel.

Attias also oversaw the move of the IAF's cargo base from Lod to the Nevatim air base in the Negev. He then commanded the Nevatim base from 2008 to 2011. He considers the transfer to be one of the country's greatest strategic moves, as it consolidated both the IAF fighter and cargo units, as well as helped create jobs and infrastructure to further settle the Negev.

He said he considers his inaugural posting to Ottawa both an honour and a challenge. Scheduled for a 2-1/2-year term, Attias said he's paving the way for his successors and hopes to open many doors for Israel with Canada's military industries and to connect Canadian firms to opportunities in Israel.

He said acclimatizing to the change in culture, and temperature, are two of the more difficult hurdles he's faced so far.

"A friend of mine in Nova Scotia told me I was crazy for coming here, especially in December," he joked. "But the welcome my family and I have received from Canadians, and especially from the Canadian military [representatives] in Ottawa, has been amazing. Everyone has been helpful."

From a community standpoint, he said as an Israeli Jew, he's slowly learning just how much the Canadian Jewish community supports Israel.

"Israelis are starting to understand that Canada is a separate entity from the U.S.," Attias said. "And, in my opinion, Israel needs to start separating the two a little more. To achieve that, we need more interaction between Canadians and Israelis, but not just on a governmental level."

On a personal note, he said he's excited to have the opportunity to watch more hockey – a sport he's always been "crazy for," even growing up in Israel, he said – and to learn how to skate.

One of his first social events in Ottawa earlier this year was playing in a friendly hockey game between diplomats and a team made up of Canadian military personnel led by Gen. Walter Natynczyk, chief of defence staff with the Canadian Forces.

It was just Attias' fifth time on skates, and he told Radio-Canada at the time that he spent "more time on my butt than on my skates."

Attias said he's determined to become a better skater, and his family has already adopted the Ottawa Senators as their favourite Canadian sports team.

"My family and I think we'll have a great tour here. The way Canadians embrace and respect different cultures is impressive."

Intercamp Classic aims to raise $100,000

Sheri Shefa
Staff Reporter

Camp culture has always been a big part of Josh Howard's life.

His family owns Camp Tamarack in Muskoka, Ont., as well as the Zodiac summer day camp and swim school in Toronto.

Since Howard, 24, graduated from university in 2010, he's assumed a role in the family business as Tamarack's business development director throughout the year, and he returns to the camp each summer as its program director.

Three years ago, when Howard reflected on the positive influence camp life has had on him, he decided he wanted to give back.

"At camp you develop valuable social and physical skills, you build on things like self-esteem and confidence," Howard said.

"I think giving back to the community is important. I think every kid should have the experience."

Josh and Jennie Howard

On May 6, the third annual Intercamp Classic, held at the Powerade Centre in Brampton, Ont., will host more than 1,200 people who also believe in the benefits of going to camp.

The Intercamp Classic is a fundraising initiative organized by Howard, his sister Jennie Howard, Camp Walden alumnus Noah Sliwin, and Camp Manitou alumnus Spencer Hoffman.

The goal of the day-long sports tournament, including 68 teams and more than 700 players, is to raise money for Kids In Camp, a charitable organization established to financially assist families to send their kids to camp.

Howard said last year, the Intercamp Classic raised $90,000. This year, the goal is $100,000.

Howard added that they chose Kids In Camp – a charity founded by the late Ted Cole and his wife Elaine, former camp directors of Camp Walden – because it was personal to them.

"I've known Elaine for years. Ted and Elaine were friends with my parents for years and being a camp person myself, I think every kid should have the experience," he said.

"I think a lot of people who entered the tournament feel the same way, which is why they're participating and raising money for a great cause."

Campers, staff and alumni from camps including Tamarack, Manitou, Timberlane, White Pine, Wahanowin, Walden, Ramah and Northland can decide whether they want to compete in men's softball, men's flag football or women's handball.

In addition to the tournaments, the event will also include food, music, inflatables and a silent auction.

"The minimum amount we ask for each team to raise is $1,200, so if you have 10 players on your team, it ends up being about $120 per player, but many teams go above and beyond and raise thousands," he said.

To contact the organizing team, e-mail intercampclassic@gmail.com, or call 416-782-0736.

COPYING THE MASTERS:

Junior kindergarten students at the Toronto Heschel School, Emily and Shira, hold a print of Van Gogh's *Starry Night* in front of their class' renditions of the work of art. The project, which used watercolours over pastels, was part of their study of the fourth day of Creation, as well as visual arts and science.

Mazel Tov מזל טוב

Mazel tov on the engagement of Lisa Mark to Zane Gallinger. Thrilled bubbies are Rose Zimmerman, Marilyn Mark, Freda Barenholtz and Sally Gallinger.

Happy 90th birthday to Franka Kon on May 24 from Lily & Syd, Narin & Perla, Jordan & Johanna and Avery, Bruce, Hillary & Jeff and Ezra.

Happy birthday to Eliyahu Chaim (May 14, 1991) and Frayda Bluma Gluck (May 19, 1992) from their loving father; Nissim Gluck.

Arlene & Murray Fiinkelman announce the birth of their second great-grandchild, Lior, Feb. 15 in Tel Aviv. Proud parents, Sarah & Idan Sharabi, and sister Yael.

Best wishes to Rhea Filger on her 100th. birthday. A celebration will take place at her residence with family and friends.

Bella & Leon Celemencki and Puran McFadden proudly announce the engagement of their children, Jacky & Steve. An August 2012 wedding is planned.

Email your digital photos to cblackman@thecjn.ca or go online to www.CJNews.com and click the "Family Moments"

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What's New

Social Networking @ The Canadian Jewish News
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YT

Deadline reminder: April 30 is the deadline for the issue of May 10. May 7 is the deadline for the issue of May 17. Please note all deadlines are at noon. Phone 416-391-1836, ext. 269; fax 416-391-0829 or e-mail whatsnewcjn@gmail.com.

Thursday, April 26

OPEN HOUSE

Danforth Jewish Circle's Children's Jewish Studies Program holds an open house 4:45-6 p.m., Ms. Miriam's Stay and Play, 583A Danforth Ave. RSVP by e-mail: info@djctoronto.com.

YOM HA'ATZMAUT

Ward 10 **Coun. James Pasternak** is holding an Israeli flag raising, Toronto City Hall, 10 a.m., 100 Queen St. W. Meet at the information counter. RSVP 416-392-1371.

HARBORD REUNION

Harbord Collegiate Institute is holding its reunion April 26-27. www.HarbordClub.com.

YOM HA'ATZMAUT PARTY

The Lebovic Jewish Community Campus (Schwartz/Reisman Centre) is holding a Yom Ha'atzmaut party, 5:30-9:30 p.m.

IDF CHAPLAIN

Former IDF chaplain **Rabbi Shalom Hammer** discusses "Israel: Struggle for Survival and Vision of Continuity," 8 p.m., Beth Tikvah Synagogue.

Friday, April 27

CREATIVE WRITING CLASSES

Try your hand at memoirs, fiction or poetry in creative writing classes taught by **Sylvia Warsh**, Fridays 10:30 a.m., Bernard Betel Centre. 416-225-2112.

Saturday, April 28

YOM HA'ATZMAUT SERVICES

All Israelis are invited to join Beth Emeth Synagogue to celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut. Services start at 8:45 a.m., Israeli-style kiddush to follow. 416-633-3838.

POKER TOURNEY

Yafah Chapter of Hadassah is holding a "Hold 'em and Fold 'em Tournament", Rosehill Venue and Lounge, 6 Rosehill Blvd., 7:30 p.m. For tickets: yafahchapter@hotmail.com.

Sunday, April 29

YOM HA'ATZMAUT

Temple Sinai is holding a Yom Ha'atzmaut fair 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m. with speakers, food, Israeli films and entertainment. For tickets: www.templesinai.net or 416-487-3281.

CHILDREN'S GARAGE SALE

Toronto Heschel School holds a garage sale of children's clothes, books, toys, sports equipment, 11 a.m., 819 Sheppard Ave. W.

ISRAELI WAR VET

Joe Warner, a veteran of WWII and Israel's War for Independence, speaks at 10 a.m. at Temple Kol Ami, 36 Atkinson Ave., Thornhill.

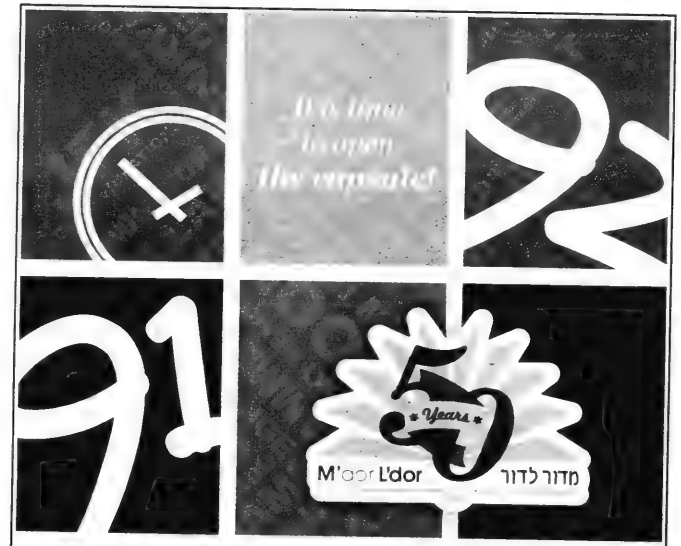
LEARN ABOUT HOSPICE

Speakers from the Jewish Hospice Program will discuss the service, 7 p.m., Temple Har Zion, 7360 Bayview Ave. Thornhill. RSVP: 905-889-2252 or paulette.volgyesi@rogers.com.

SONGS FOR ISRAEL

Mickey Lewin performs songs for Israel at the Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism's Yom Ha'atzmaut party, 18 Wynford Dr., 7 p.m. 416-385-3910 or roby@oraynu.org.

Continued on page 23



Thursday, May 3rd, 2012
7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.
Bialik Upper Gym
RSVP to: rsvp@bialik.ca

2760 Bathurst Street
Toronto | M6B 3A1

UJA Federation

Bialik Hebrew Day School
בית ספר יומי ע"ש ביאליק טאג שול

Do you remember what you put in the time capsule from 1991/92? Twenty years have passed and it is time to show you what you wrote when you were a student at Bialik. Please join us for an evening of friendship and nostalgia. Dessert reception to follow.

The Louis and Moshe J. Weisfeld Annual Memorial Lecture

CHALLENGES FACING SYNAGOGUE RENEWAL

with Dr. Jack Wertheimer
Friday, May 4 and
Shabbat, May 5

Friday, May 4, Kabbalat Shabbat 6:30 PM
Dinner and lecture following: *Pathways to Synagogue Renewal*

Shabbat, May 5, Shaharit 8:45 AM
Pulpit lecture: *The New Language of North American Jews—A Primer*

Luncheon and address following Services: *A New North American Judaism? The Changing Jewish Religious Scene*

Minhah and Seudah Shlisheet presentation 7:35 PM
The Coming Generation: How Young North American Jews Think about Jewish Life

Package price for dinner AND lunch: Adults/$68, Children (ages 4-13)/$34. (Adults/$36, Children $18 for dinner OR lunch.) Seudah Shlisheet: No charge. RSVP by Tuesday, May 1 to 416-781-3511 or info@beth-tzedec.org.

Dr. Jack Wertheimer is a Professor of American Jewish History at the Jewish Theological Seminary specializing in modern Jewish history and is an acclaimed expert on today's Jewish attitudes and religious and educational trends.

Beth Tzedec Congregation 1700 Bathurst Street Toronto, ON
Tel 416-781-3511 Fax 416-781-0150 Email info@beth-tzedec.org
www.beth-tzedec.org

בית צדק
Beth Tzedec Congregation

Continued from page 22

GIFT AND CRAFT SALE

Beth Avraham Yoseph Synagogue of Toronto, 613 Clark Ave. W., Thornhill, holds a gift and craft sale 10 a.m.-5 p.m. 905-731-0351.

JEWS OF INDIA

Ann Samson discusses the Jews of India, 7 p.m., Lodzer Synagogue, 12 Heaton St. 416-636-6665.

SINGLES IN THE PARK

Singles in the Park for men and women over 55 presents The Sparklettes singing hits from the '50s, '60s and '70s, 7 p.m., Earl Bales Community Centre. $12. RSVP required. Debbygo@rogers.com or 416-631-0005.

Monday, April 30

PEACE NOW

Yariv Oppenheimer, director-general of Israel's Peace Now movement, discusses "Israel/Palestine: Too Late for the Two-State Solution?" 7:30 p.m., Barbara Frum Public Library, 20 Covington Rd.

TO THE END OF THE LAND

Ruby Newman reviews *To the End of the Land*, by **David Grossman,** Beth Tzedec Congregation. Dessert at 1 p.m., review at 1:30 p.m. 416-781-3514, ext. 225.

SPRING LECTURE SERIES

Iain Scott discusses "La Stupenda! Dame Joan Sutherland: The Voice of a Century," 2 p.m., Temple Emanu-El. To register, 416-449-3880.

JEWS OF MAURITIUS

Gerald Ziedenberg discusses "The Jews of Mauritius," 7:30 p.m., Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue.

Tuesday, May 1

THE BOOK OF RUTH

Rabbi Martin Berman discusses the Book of Ruth, Tuesdays at 8 p.m., Shaar Shalom Synagogue, 2 Simonston Blvd., Thornhill.

REFORM JUDAISM

Rabbi Emeritus Michael Stroh discusses "The Uniqueness of Judaism as a Theology and Its Implications for Reform Judaism," in a series of four lectures starting tonight, 7:30 p.m., Temple Har Zion, 7360 Bayview Ave.

WARTIME MEMOIRS

Kitty Wintrob discusses "I'm Not Going Back: Wartime Memoir of a Child Evacuee," Temple Har Zion. Bring your lunch at noon, program starts at 12:30 p.m.

THE 'GAZA DOCTOR'

Dr. Izzeldin Abuelaish, author of *I Shall Not Hate*, speaks at Congregation Darchei Noam, 7:30 p.m., 864 Sheppard Ave. W.

THE BOOK OF HAGGAI

Aaron Nussbaum discusses the Book of Haggai, 8 p.m., Beth David Synagogue, 55 Yeomans Rd.

BAR-ILAN UNIVERSITY

Dov Altman, CEO of Canadian Friends of Bar-Ilan, discusses "Israel's Technological and Scientific Achievements," 12 p.m., Beth Tikvah Synagogue. Reservation only: 416-221-3433, ext. 352, or e-mail helen@bethtikvahtoronto.org.

Wednesday, May 2

PARENTING ADULTS

Family therapist **Margie Shore** discusses "Parenting Adult Children: What To Do With Your Opinion When No One Is Listening," 7 p.m., Temple Sinai. 416-487-3281.

BOOKS ON BAYVIEW

Rabbi Joe Kanofsky reviews *In Ishamel's House: A History of Jews in Muslim Lands*, by **Martin Gilbert,** 7:30 p.m. at Chapters, Bayview Village, 2910 Bayview Ave.

FATHERING

Jeff Mintz discusses "Fathering," as part of Beth David Brotherhood's series on men's health, 8 p.m., 55 Yeomans Dr. 416-633-5500.

JEWS FOR JUDAISM

Rabbi Michael Skobac discusses "The DaVinci Code: A Jewish Perspective," Shaarei Tefillah Congregation, 8:30 p.m., toronto@jewsforjudaism.ca or 416-789-0020.

Thursday, May 3

YIDDISH VINKL

Shirley Kumove discusses her new publication, *Ordinary Jews*, noon at the Free Times Cafe, 320 College St. $18 includes buffet lunch. RSVP to: yiddishvinkl@yahoo.ca.

Other News

THEATRE TRIPS

Temple Sinai Seniors Club is seeing *Lost in Yonkers* on June 6. Deadline for reservations is May 1. 416-487-3281.

RENTAL REGISTRY

Are you looking to rent your basement apartment or extra room? List it for free with UJA Federation's Jewish Information Service of Toronto. Help also available for those looking for a place to live. Visit JIST in the Lipa Green Centre, 416-635-5600, jinfo@ujafed.org.

JF&CS GROUPS

All programs require pre-registration and are open to all members of the community. To register, call **Shawna Sidney,** 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or www.jfandcs.com. All classes at Lipa Green Centre, 4600 Bathurst. St., unless otherwise noted.

One Family, Two Homes: A 6-session series for families experiencing separation and divorce. Children and parents participate in separate groups. Starts April 25, 6:30 p.m.

The Challenge of Anger for Women: A 6-session group to learn how to express anger in an assertive, non-aggressive way. Starts April 26, 7:30 p.m.

Beyond the Chupah, Becoming a Couple: A 6-session marriage preparation group for couples, offered with the Rabbinical Assembly of Ontario. Starts April 26, 7:30 p.m., Beth Emeth Synagogue.

BEREAVED PARENTS

Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario provides 8-week self-help groups. Call **Beth Feffer** at JF & CS, 416-638-7800, ext. 6244, or bfeffer@jfandcs.com.

FOR SENIORS

Charming Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park. (60+). **Valerie,** 416-395-7881. Dance with live music, April 29, 7 p.m. Casino Rama, May 16. Tuesdays, gentle exercise, 10 a.m.; Wednesdays, duplicate bridge, 12:30 p.m.; Thursdays, line dancing, 10 a.m.; social bridge, 12:30 p.m. Non-members welcome.

Spousal Support Group. A group for caregivers over 55 examines coping strategies and burnout. Starts May 15 at Bernard Betel Centre, call Circle of Care, 416-635-2860.

Seniors Cultural Club meets Tuesdays, 10 a.m., Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell. 416-630-9444.

New Horizons is a Jewish Hungarian seniors club that offers kosher food, card games, casino trips. 416-256-1892.

Adath Israel Congregation. Wednesday afternoon socials. Bridge, mah-jong, Rummikub. Refreshments $2. Call **Pearl,** 416-635-6317, or **Marcia,** 416-932-1229.

Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue welcomes new players for mah-jong and Rummikub Monday and Wednesday afternoons. 416-633-3838.

Beth Tzedec Haverim. Tasting and learning in preparation for Shavuot, May 7, 1:30 p.m. 416-781-3514, ext. 232.

Bernard Betel Centre 416-225-2112. May 1, **Gerald Ziedenberg** discusses "The Story of the Struma: A Jewish Refugee Ship," 10 a.m. May 2, Spring Fling lunch and concert, 12 p.m. May 3, Wellness lecture on Lifeline, 1:30 p.m.

Active Seniors, Miles Nadal JCC, 416-924-6211, ext.155. Israeli Independence Day musical program and brunch with musician **Eldan Cohen**, April 26, 11:30 a.m.; Jewish genealogy, learn how to research your family history, May 3, 1:30 p.m.

Active 55 Plus Fitness. Colin Blayney 416-924-6211, ext. 526. Ongoing classes in yoga, dance fitness and aquafitness.

PROSSERMAN JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com.

Tickets for spring/summer theatre trips are on sale now. The spring/summer program guide is available now, ext. 4235.

MILES NADAL JCC

750 Spadina Ave. 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org.

Free brunch for Israel's birthday, April 26, 11:30 a.m.

Shabbat programs for young children start April 27. Ext. 277.

Toronto Jewish Film Society screens the 1922 film *Hungry Hearts*, with live music by **Jordan Klapman,** April 29, 4 and 7:30 p.m. Ext. 606.

Reading Jewish, a class with **Rabbi Elyse Goldstein,** starts April 30, 8 p.m.

Film critic **Adam Nayman** discusses the films of **Stanley Kubrick**. April 30, *The Killing* and *Paths of Glory*, 7 p.m. Ext. 606.

Summer Institute for Creative Adults offers classes for adult singers, July 16-20. $300 before May 1, $350 after May 1. Ext. 250.

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner discusses Jewish teachings from the Talmud on exotic subjects, Thursdays 8 p.m, starting May 3. Ext. 154.

Jewish and Muslim scholars discuss Eve, the first woman. May 6, 2 p.m. University of Toronto Multi-Faith Centre. www.multifaith.utoronto.ca.

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Western students take part in multi-faith seder

Why is this night different from all other nights?

Every year, Jewish families around the world ask this question during our customary Passover seders. Such a query is traditionally asked by the youngest child at the seder, to symbolize youthful confusion toward the idiosyncrasy of Passover rituals.

Campus Life

Jessica Pollock

Being the youngest at most of my seders, I am usually the elected guest to ask the Four Questions. Well, this year, I posed the Passover conundrum a bit ahead of time. That is because this year Passover arrived early at the University of Western Ontario.

With the invaluable assistance of some Western Hillel staff and members, as well as a couple Muslim and Christian student leaders, I was able to organize a multi-faith seder to celebrate Passover in an unconventional manner.

About 45 students, including Jews, Muslims and Christians, gathered together to learn about one another's religions and springtime holidays.

This experience taught me how important it is to be educated about different cultures and religions. The multi-faith seder exposed me to religions that I knew little about, strengthening my respect and interest in both Islam and Christianity.

Above all, teaching non-Jewish students about Passover only solidified my love and passion for Judaism.

The seder was divided into many different parts. This gave Jewish participants the opportunity to lead various segments, such as explaining the significance of eating bitter herbs with charoset or why we dip the karpas into saltwater.

As the seder proceeded, it became obvious that each student was engaged with the speakers and eager to learn about the Passover story.

At various intervals in the seder, Muslim and Christian students were allotted time to discuss their own religions and its connection to Passover and Judaism at large. To my surprise, scores of similarities were quickly unearthed.

Specifically, similar to Passover's dietary restrictions forbidding Jews to eat chametz, Muslims undergo the annual Islamic month of fasting known as Ramadan, when Muslims refrain from eating and drinking from sunrise to sunset.

This time period is intended to teach Muslims about humility and compliancy to God.

Similarly, the Jewish eight-day prohibition against chametz exists in its duality to have Jews demonstrate their compassion for our enslaved ancestry by desisting from bread, while also reminding us to be thankful for HaShem's strength in redeeming us from bondage in Egypt.

Moreover, the Christian participants taught the rest of the students that Jesus' last supper is in fact biblically referred to as the Passover meal.

Furthermore, Jesus is recognized as the "Lamb of God." In ancient times, the lamb was a solemn sacrifice for both Jews and Christians, evident in the Passover story by the use of lamb's blood in marking Jewish homes to be spared from the 10th plague in Egypt – slaying of all first-born children.

What made the seder so successful was that all 45 students in attendance were genuinely interested in sharing and learning. In order to foster interfaith dialogue and friendships on campus, preconceived notions must be cast away in order to progress.

I believe that such an interfaith event was long overdue at Western. It is now clear that a safe domain to discuss the three Abrahamic religions, leaving political differences at the door, is imperative in growing as a cohesive student body. It is far more beneficial for each faith to bond over our shared values.

Comparable to the Passover story and various other times in Jewish history, both Islam and Christianity possess antiquities tempered with epochs of oppression or slavery. In every such case, there were demands and pleas for social justice and redemption.

The famous quote by Martin Niemoller, the Lutheran minister and early Nazi supporter during the outset of the Holocaust, is written on a wall in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.

After alluding to socialists and trade unionists, the end of the quote reads, "Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out – because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me and – and there was no one left to speak for me."

It appears that because of religious and [illegible] dissension, we are all losing sight of the basic humanity that binds us together. Most religions hold similar platforms that encourage the use of spirituality to benefit its believers as well as society at large. We should aim to foster a culture that actively supports and embraces humankind's religious sameness and diversity, one interfaith initiative at a time.

OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Fay Hurvitz	Apr 8/12	100 Promenade Circle
Freda Levine	Apr 8/12	97 Baycrest Avenue
Rose Biderman	Apr 6/12	20 Baif Blvd.
Jordan Goldstein	Apr 8/12	17 Westdale Drive
Amy Iny	Apr 7/12	164-A Bellefair Avenue
Rose Yermus	Apr 8/12	784 Centre Street
Yvonne Blajchman	Apr 8/12	172 Brighton Avenue
Cruz Ison	Apr 6/12	20 Glenayr Road
Helen Singer	Apr 10/12	3560 Bathurst Street
Frank Altman	Apr 13/12	3181 Bayview Avenue
Ester Billet	Apr 13/12	5950 Bathurst St.

HEBREW BASIC BURIAL

Sonnie Landau	Apr 9/12	205 Cummer Avenue
Rita Leibowitz	Apr 11/12	7420 Bathurst Street
Sofie Carr	Apr 13/12	170 Red Maple Rd.

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Mount Sinai Memorial Park
Chevra Mishnais Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

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OBITUARY

Rabbi Jonathan Plaut served shuls in Windsor and U.S.

Compiled by CJN Staff

Rabbi Jonathan Plaut

Rabbi Jonathan Plaut, spiritual leader of Temple Beth Israel in Jackson, Mich., died April 17 after a long battle with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. He was 69.

Rabbi Plaut was ordained in 1970 by Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Ohio, and earned a doctor of Hebrew letters degree there in 1977. He also received an honorary doctor of divinity degree in 1995 from Hebrew Union College.

Rabbi Plaut, son of the late Rabbi Gunther Plaut, the longtime Holy Blossom Temple spiritual leader, first served Congregation Beth El in Windsor, Ont., as senior rabbi until 1984. While there, he was credited with helping the synagogue double its membership.

During his time in Windsor, he was also editor of the *Journal of the Canadian Historical Society* and *Through the Sound of Many Voices: Writings Contributed on the Occasion of the 70th Birthday of W. Gunther Plaut.*

In 2009, Rabbi Plaut received a doctor of laws degree (honoris causa) from Assumption University, which is in federation with the University of Windsor.

For more than a decade, he hosted a weekly religious news program on CBET-TV television and CKWW radio in Windsor.

In 1985, he was the youngest person to receive Windsor Jewry's highest communal honour as the Jewish National Fund's Negev Dinner honoree.

After Congregation Beth El, he assumed the pulpit of Temple Emanu-El in San Jose, Calif., where he remained until 1993.

He eulogized his father, the late Rabbi Gunther Plaut, at Holy Blossom Temple in February.

The younger Rabbi Plaut leaves his wife of 47 years, Carol, son and daughter-in-law Daniel Plaut and Amy Cohen, and daughter and son-in-law Deborah and David Elias. He was the grandfather of Steven and Jeffrey.

Politicians denounce Val Morin vandalism

Janice Arnold
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Quebec Immigration and Cultural Communities Minister Kathleen Weil denounced the break-ins and vandalism earlier this month of Val Morin summer homes owned by chassidic Jews as having "every appearance of acts of a hateful and racist character."

However, by late last week, the Sûreté du Québec (SQ) had not labelled the vandalism, which included the painting of swastikas and the slogan "F--- juif" on and inside at least two of the houses, a hate-motivated crime, as defined by law.

Many of the rest of the 15 were ransacked or vandalized in other ways on or around April 12 to 15. Nothing was reported stolen.

No one was living in the homes at the time. They're part of an enclave of about 50 cottages owned by members of the Belzer community of Montreal. The two daubed with antisemitic graffiti were on 17th Avenue.

Kathleen Weil

SQ spokesperson Sgt. Benoît Richard said April 18 on a Montreal radio station that only after the person or people responsible for the crime are arrested and questioned about their reasons can police recommend hate charges to the Crown attorney.

Richard said it's possible that the vandalism was committed by "kids" who don't understand the meaning of the swastika or its connection to Jews.

"We are not saying it was not motivated by hate. To be sure it looks like that… but it is too early to say, without a doubt, that it is. It is not our duty to characterize the type of crime. Our job is to investigate and give the Crown attorney the specifications of the crime, and he will decide what charges are to be laid," Richard said.

He said that the investigation is continuing, and the SQ is working with the Belzer community.

Richard noted that the SQ is currently investigating about 25 incidents in total reported by the Jewish community, not only in Val Morin, but also nearby Val David and Ste. Agathe in the Laurentians.

The SQ does not have a team dedicated to investigating hate crimes, he said, but some investigators are specialists in that field. They have not been called in at this point.

Pinkas Feferkorn, one of the Val Morin residents whose house was broken into, told *The CJN* that logically this should be termed a hate crime, especially in view of the fact that no robbery occurred.

He's not sure if applying the term would have any practical effect on how the police handle the case, but he does think it would reassure the community of how seriously it's being taken.

Feferkorn also thinks the hate crime designation would send a message to the public and to the government that the chassidim of Val Morin are living with prejudice on a daily basis. (The community spends about two months a year in the village.)

"It's not like in the city. People out there look down on us, like we're second-class citizens, or strangers. Last summer, every day when the boys were going to yeshiva, somebody went by in a car and yelled 'juif' this or that to scare them.

"Antisemitism is going on here. The police and government try to cover up and say everybody is happy. The government has to fix society."

Weil, speaking on behalf of the Quebec government, stated April 18 that the Val Morin crime is "unacceptable and does not reflect in any way the values of tolerance and openness of Quebec society."

D'Arcy McGee Liberal MNA Lawrence Bergman, chair of the government caucus, also condemned what happened.

He said that he's outraged by the crimes, especially "the hateful graffiti."

"I wish not only to condemn these acts, but also to condemn all expressions such as these of racism, intolerance, hate and antisemitism. We live in an open and tolerant society in which there is no place whatsoever for these despicable acts which reflect prejudice and discrimination," Bergman said in a statement.

The day before the Quebec politicians officially responded, the Val Morin "antisemitic" vandalism was denounced by Jason Kenney, federal minister of citizenship, immigration and multiculturalism.

"I join with other Canadians in deploring the cowardly and odious acts of vandalism that targeted Jewish-owned summer homes in Val Morin," Kenney said.

"Sadly, it is not the first time that hateful individuals have vandalized the property of Val Morin's Jewish community. This only makes this latest incident all the more disgraceful."

(The most recent serious similar incident occurred in 2005 when a house used for prayer was trashed, and about 300 sacred books and objects were desecrated.)

The Belzer community has roots in Val Morin going back many decades.

Israeli-designed drones fly over Quebec

Compiled by CJN Staff

MONTREAL — Israeli-designed drones have begun making demonstration flights out of the small Lac St. Jean city of Alma, in conjunction with Montreal-based CAE Inc.

Last August, CAE, a leader in the manufacture of flight simulators and other aviation training equipment, and Aeronautics Ltd., one of Israel's largest defence corporations, announced an agreement on a research-and-development project in the non-military uses of drones.

Alma's airport is the site of the new Centre d'excellence sur les drones. Located 175 km north of Quebec City, Alma has a population of about 30,000.

CAE announced April 11 that the first series of flights of the Miskam drone had been conducted successfully over a period of several weeks.

"The demonstration flights represent the first phase of an R & D project aimed at demonstrating how unmanned aerial systems [UAS] can be used for civil applications, such as remote inspection of pipelines and hydroelectric installations, surveillance of forest fires, observation of critical natural resources, assessing natural disasters and a range of other applications," CAE said in a statement.

The Miskam is a Canadian version of the twin-engine Aeronautics Dominator XP, which can fly for up to 24 hours and carry a significant payload.

"We are very excited to be working closely with CAE and the entire team in Canada to showcase our UAS capabilities as part of Project Miskam," said Aeronautics CEO Avi Leumi. "As potential customers and the general public at large begin to understand the tremendous benefits offered, we expect the use of unmanned systems to become more widespread."

A file photo of the Ethan, not the Miskam, unmanned aircraft produced by Israeli Aircraft Industries. *[Flash90 photo]*

ICRF to honour four women at annual lunch

Compiled by CJN Staff

The Israel Cancer Research Fund (ICRF) is honouring four women at its 11th annual Women of Action Luncheon, April 26 at the Sheraton Centre.

Sheryl Abbott, the executive director of the Canadian Cosmetic, Toiletry & Fragrance Association Foundation is being honoured for her company's charity, Look Good Feel Better, which is dedicated to empowering women to manage the effects that cancer and its treatment have on their appearance and, often, on their morale.

Also being honoured are Lisa Borsook, a managing partner at WeirFoulds LLP; Dr. Fei-Fei Liu, a professor in University of Toronto's department of radiation oncology, a staff radiation oncologist at Princess Margaret Hospital/University Health Network and a senior scientist at the Ontario Cancer Institute; Lynn Posluns, the managing director of Cedarpoint Investments Inc., the founder and president of Women's Brain Health Initiative and a community leader.

Joy Wagner Arbus, ICRF's executive director, said that Posluns is the first recipient of the Vicki Campbell "VAST" community award on behalf of Henry Campbell and family, given out to women "who have done exemplary work in the broader community and who have worked hard to make the world a better place."

The luncheon will be hosted by Beverly Thomson, the co-host of CTV's national morning show *Canada AM*.

For more information, call the ICRF at 416-487-5246, ext. 6500.

SickKids president visits Israel

Carolyn Blackman
Staff Reporter

Travelling to Israel for the first time this winter with a delegation of hospital CEOs affirmed her beliefs about her own hospital, said Mary Jo Haddad, president and CEO of Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids).

"I met doctors who had trained at SickKids, and are now leaders in their field. I had always heard about them, but to meet them in person and have them reach out to me was overwhelming," she said in an interview.

"All my life I have been hearing about and meeting people from Israel, but to see first-hand their passion to make Israel all it can be was amazing."

Since 1997, more than 250 Israeli children have been treated at SickKids. There have also been 28 medical observers and 179 fellows from Israel at the hospital.

Haddad was honoured last week with the Meir Hospital Israel Medal of Merit by Canadian Friends of Meir Medical Center, at an awards ceremony and tribute dinner held at Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue.

Mary Jo Haddad

Also honoured were Bernie Farber, former CEO of Canadian Jewish Congress, Dr. Michael Dan and Dr. Amira Dan.

"It is wonderful to be recognized by this hospital, especially in how it relates to children and children's health. We share a passion for the rights of children," she said.

SickKids has partnered with faculty at Meir, including scientists who have conducted research on measuring cancer dugs and on biomarkers of stress in heart patients.

Haddad, who has three children, ages 21, 19 and 15, said that her interest in children's health "came honestly. I grew up in a large family, and was surrounded by siblings and cousins. I always wanted to work with kids, and I built my career around their health care.

"I am amazed by kids. They are resilient and inspiring in the way they respond to adversity and challenges in life, whether these challenges are trauma or disabilities.

A graduate of the faculty of nursing at University of Windsor, Haddad earned her master's degree in health science from University of Toronto, and has made numerous contributions to children's health in Ontario and internationally.

She joined SickKids in 1984, and was appointed president and CEO in 2004, after serving as interim president and CEO.

She holds an honorary doctor of laws degree from the University of Windsor, and is a recipient of the Ontario Premier's Award for Outstanding Achievement. She was appointed a member of the Order of Canada in June 2010.

Visiting Israeli hospitals, she said, she was impressed with the country's health-care system. "I am particularly impressed with the way they use simulation in training medical staff and administrators. Israelis are leaders in that field."

Not surprisingly, Israel also leads in "emergency preparedness, and how they focus on being ready for the worst possible disaster," she said.

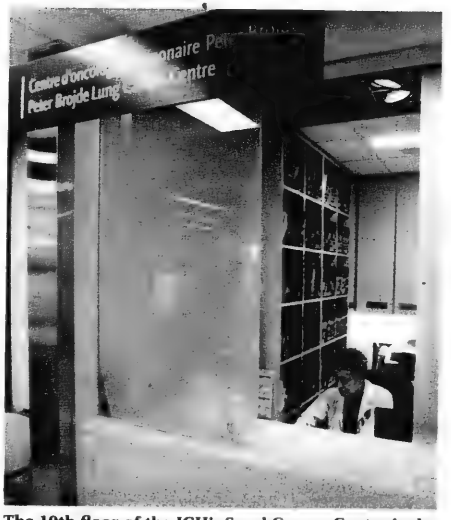
The two countries share the belief in a publicly funded health-care system, she said, and in ensuring that every person has access to it.

Chinese medicine in use at JGH

Janice Arnold
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Traditional Chinese medicine and other non-conventional therapies will have an equal footing with western treatment as care options at the new Peter Brojde Lung Cancer Centre at the Jewish General Hospital (JGH). This clinical and research centre, which officially opened April 18, is being described as the first in a Canadian hospital and one of only a few in North America to fully integrate what are sometimes referred to as complementary or alternative therapies into oncology treatment.

To read full story, go to cjnews.com



The 10th floor of the JGH's Segal Cancer Centre is the home of the new Peter Brojde Lung Cancer Centre.

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Placing Old Age Security on a Sustainable Path

Canadians are living longer and costs for the Old Age Security (OAS) are rising.

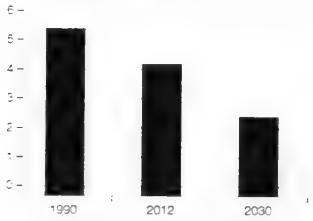
On April 1, 2023 the Government of Canada plans to start raising the age of eligibility for OAS and the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) from 65 to 67.*

What does this mean for you?

54 or older as of March 31, 2012	You may still obtain OAS/GIS at age 65
53 or younger as of March 31, 2012	The age of eligibility for OAS/GIS **will change gradually** between 2023 and 2029

Starting in July 2013, Canadians who are eligible for, but not yet receiving OAS will have the **flexibility to delay** receiving it in exchange for a higher monthly amount at a later date.

The number of working-age Canadians for every senior is decreasing**



**Source: *9th Actuarial Report on the Old Age Security Program*

The number of working-age Canadians per senior is decreasing, placing additional pressure on the OAS program.

For a free brochure or more information visit **www.ServiceCanada.gc.ca/retirement** or call **1 800 O-Canada** (TTY 1-800-926-9105)

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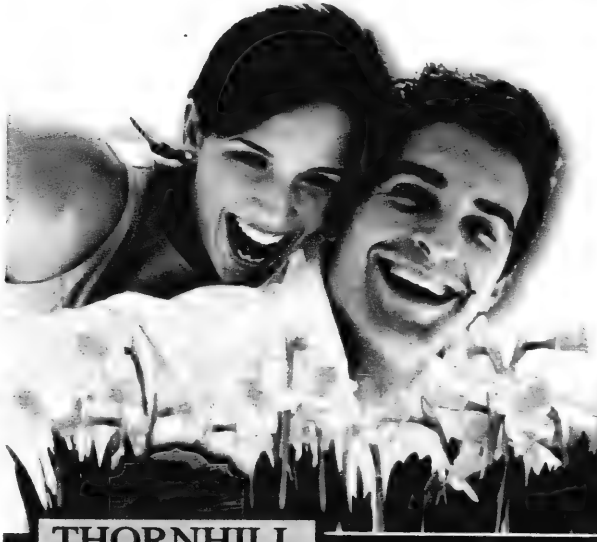

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Unilateral cancellation raises questions

Zvi Bar'el
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

Mohamed Shoeb, head of the Egyptian Natural Gas Holding Company, announced Sunday evening that the company will terminate its agreement to provide natural gas to Israel.

The decision had been made on Thursday due to what he termed "Israel's repeated breaching of the agreement."

Shoeb, in an interview on Al-Hayat television, stressed that the termination of the deal was due to failure on the part of the Israeli side to transfer the payments owed by Israel for some months and "had nothing to do with the repeated attacks on the pipeline."

The termination of the agreement is not expected to raise Israel's electricity prices, because the recent price hike of nine per cent was made while taking into account that no gas would be delivered from Egypt. Government offices have recently began looking for alternative sources until the Israeli Tamar field begins supplying gas in April 2013.

Despite the announcement, the fact that Egypt's ruling Supreme Military Council and the Egyptian government did not announce the decision officially is puzzling, raising the questions of what motive is behind the decision and how it was decided.

It is possible that the announcement was intended to pressure Israel into calling off the lawsuit for compensation of $8 billion (US) over Egyptian failure to provide gas as promised. This theory agrees with the announcement by diplomatic officials in Jerusalem that the decision stemmed from a "business dispute."

The fact that no official announcement was made may also indicate that the Egyptian government intends to issue a correction or completely deny the announcement made by Shoeb.

However, even if the Egyptian government denies the decision to terminate the agreement, the fact that the company's CEO made the announcement puts the deal in the limelight. If it turns out that Egypt had really one-sidedly decided to terminate the agreement, it could be a dangerous precedent indicating that other agreements between Egypt and Israel may also come to an end.

Israeli soldiers secure the gas terminal near Kerem Shalom on the Israeli-Gaza border as a result of the constant sabotaging of the gas pipeline through Sinai from Egypt to Israel. ***(Flash90 photo)***

The sale of natural gas to Israel was one of the main criticisms the Egyptian opposition voiced against former president Hosni Mubarak, claiming that the price the Israeli company secured was extremely low, cutting into Egypt's national income.

Some have claimed the deal was made possible due to a bribe the Egyptian partner Hussein Salam paid Mubarak's family in order to win the concession. Salam was indicted on this charge but fled Egypt and Egyptian attempts to have him extradited were not successful. The deal has therefore come to symbolize Mubarak's treason and the corruption of his regime.

In addition, Bedouin in Sinai claim that the pipeline and its infrastructure were constructed on their land and they have yet to be compensated as was promised. This is one of the reasons some of the Bedouin families are willing to damage the pipeline and halt its activity.

Since the revolution in Egypt, the agreement to sell Israel natural gas has became one of the charges Mubarak and his circle are being indicted for. Egypt's new leadership promised to look into the price Israel is paying to see if a higher rate can be obtained.

On the other hand, the leadership of most of Egypt's political parties, especially the Muslim Brotherhood, have made it clear they intend to "stand by all the agreements Egypt had signed in the past, including the Camp David accord and the agreement to sell natural gas," Khairat al-Shater, a onetime presidential candidate and other party leaders said.

Egypt's ruling Supreme Military Council and interim government also made it clear to Israel and the United States that all agreements will be kept. This commitment was perceived as a condition for a continued working relation with Israel and the United States, relations that radical organizations and terrorists working in the Sinai are trying to undermine.

The flow of natural gas to Israel and Jordan also symbolized the regime's ability to control the Sinai and ward off the attempt by terror organizations to dictate Egypt's domestic and foreign policies. Both the gas company and Egypt's security forces have made great effort and used a great deal of manpower in securing the pipeline, but after 14 explosions and the failure to get Sinai's Bedouin to cooperate, it seemed that Egypt had given up.

Thus, even if it turns out that a business dispute, and not the failed fight to keep the flow of natural gas flowing against the saboteurs in the Sinai, are what caused the termination of the deal, Egypt's regime may find itself in the midst of a political storm, criticized for neglecting the nation's vital interests and losing its grip on the eastern peninsula, this time because of the deal's end.

With this in mind, it seems likely that the military council will instruct the Egyptian natural gas company to "reconsider" its decision, to avoid the possibility that the cancellation of the deal will become a tool with which the opposition can criticize the regime.

Egyptian gas company cancels deal with Israel

Avi Issacharof and Amos Harel
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JERUSALEM — Egyptian engineer Hani Dahi, executive director of the Egyptian General Petroleum Corporation, said on Monday that the Supreme Military Council and the government had no part in the decision to terminate Egypt's agreement to provide natural gas to Israel.

Dahi said the decision was made following a business dispute with Israel and had nothing to do with politics. He added that the Israeli side has not fulfilled its economic obligations, despite repeated requests.

Mohamed Shoeb, head of the Egyptian Natural Gas Holding Company, announced Sunday evening that the company will terminate its agreement to provide natural gas to Israel.

Presidential hopeful Hamdeen Sabahi said, also on Sunday, that if elected, he will cancel the gas deal.

Israeli security officials said Egypt has not provided clear answers on the matter, and that during talks in Cairo, Egyptian officials refused to confirm or deny the decision.

Despite Dahi's statements, it is unclear whether the Supreme Military Council knew about the decision. It may have been an independent step taken by the Egyptian gas company, as the economic situation in Cairo remains unstable.

It seems that on the eve of the Egyptian presidential elections, the situation on the ground has never been so chaotic: Egypt still does not have a constitution defining the president's authority, and it remains uncertain who will lead the committee to draft such a document.

On Sunday, in a bid to calm public sentiment, a senior military council member said the elections will take place as planned and that authority will be fully transferred to the elected official.

There is also some question as to whether the decision to terminate the gas supply will affect U.S. assistance to Egypt. Congress has recently warned that its assistance depends on maintaining the peace accords with Israel, yet it did not list the gas agreement as one of the conditions. U.S. assistance to Egypt amounts to approximately $1.3 billion in military aid and an additional $300 million in economic aid.

Under the original agreement, Egypt began delivering gas to Israel in 2008 in the framework of a 2005 political agreement that has significantly enriched Egypt's coffers.

In the context of the growing anti-Israel sentiments in Egypt, the decision comes as no surprise. In recent days, Muslim Brotherhood leaders have launched a smear campaign against Egyptian Grand Mufti Ali Gomaa for visiting Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque last week – apparently with the Israeli authorities' consent.

Extreme right shows strongly in French vote

JTA

PARIS — French Socialist François Hollande finished first in the initial round of presidential elections, ahead of President Nicolas Sarkozy, while extreme-right leader Marine LePen came in third with an unexpectedly high vote total.

Garnering more than 28 per cent of the vote, Hollande leads over Sarkozy, the incumbent president and conservative leader, who received about 26 per cent of the vote in Sunday's poll.

Hollande and Sarkozy will face each other in the second round of the election on May 6. According to the latest polls, Hollande could defeat Sarkozy by a comfortable margin.

Le Pen, head of the National Front, the country's largest extreme-right party, achieved a historic tally, garnering 18.5 per cent of the vote, the highest reportedly ever achieved by the movement. Le Pen improved on the vote tally of her father, Jean-Marie Le Pen, in 2002, who garnered a little less than 17 per cent of voters, but was able to reach the second round of the election against Jacques Chirac.

The National Front vote tally is alarming, the French Union of Jewish Students said. "Today, more than 7.2 million French citizens have voted for an extreme-right candidate, who openly preaches hatred. They already were 5.4 million in 2002. We are very worried, especially because Marine Le Pen seems to be very popular among young voters," the union's president, Jonathan Hayoun, said in a statement.

The results of the first round were disappointing for two other candidates. Far-left leader Jean-Luc Mélenchon earned a little more than 11 per cent of first-round votes, a showing that did not meet his expectations. Centrist François Bayrou, who appeared as the "third man" during the last presidential race, did not reach nine per cent of the vote this time. The turnout for the election was quite high, with about 80 per cent of the 44.5 million registered voters going to the polls. However, it was lower than the 2007 ballot, when 84 per cent of the electorate participated.

Germans polled about views toward Israel, Iran

JTA

BERLIN — Fewer than half of Germans recently polled believe Iran poses the graver danger in the current tensions between Iran and Israel.

In a survey carried out by the Infratest/Dimap polling firm for *Die Welt am Sonntag* newspaper, 1,000 citizens of voting age were interviewed on April 17 and 18.

The results stand in contrast to a European Commission flash survey in 2003, according to which most Europeans felt Israel posed the biggest threat to world peace, with Iran in second place.

They also fly in the face of a recent controversial poetic essay by German Nobel Prize-winning author Gunter Grass, who raised a tempest by blaming Israel for the current tensions and criticizing the German government for its subsidized sale of submarines to the Jewish state.

According to the survey on the Infratest/Dimap website, 58 per cent of Germans see Iran's nuclear ambitions as an existential threat to Israel, while 48 per cent see Iran as the greater threat of the two countries.

Only 22 per cent said the two countries are equally threatening, while 18 per cent said that Israel was the more dangerous of the two. The latter group included supporters of the Left Party, which is the most critical of Israel of all the mainstream German political parties. Supporters of all the other mainstream parties pointed the finger at Iran.

The survey also found that Germans in general believe there is no taboo against criticizing Israel.

"Some suggest that one is not permitted to say certain things about Israel and the Jews in Germany," one survey question began. "Others say that in Germany, Israel and its policies can be criticized just as those of any other country. With which of these views do you agree?"

In response, 75 per cent said Israeli policies were just as open to criticism as those of any other country. Again, the Left Party differed from the rest: only 46 percent believed that there is no taboo against criticism of Israel in Germany.

The Left Party has come in for serious criticism over its Israel policies in recent years. In May 2010, three Left Party parliamentarians were aboard the ill-fated Mavi Marmara flotilla boat that attempted to break Israel's naval blockade of Gaza.

Turkey nixes Israeli involvement in NATO summit: report

JTA

JERUSALEM — Turkey has blocked the participation of Israel in next month's NATO summit in Chicago, a Turkish newspaper reported.

Turkey's Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu vetoed Israel's participation during a NATO foreign ministers meeting last week in Brussels, the *Hurriyet Daily News* reported Monday.

"There will be no Israeli presence at the NATO meeting unless they issue a formal apology and pay compensation for the Turkish citizens their commandos killed in international waters," a senior Turkish official told *Hurriyet*, referring to the deaths of nine Turkish activists during an Israeli naval commando raid on the Turkish ship the Mavi Marmara as it tried to break Israeli's naval blockade of Gaza in May 2010.

"Those countries who wish to see normalization in ties between Turkey and Israel should advise Israel to apologize and to compensate the killing of Turks in international waters," the official told the news service.

Israel – and other countries, including Egypt, Mauritania, Algeria, and Morocco – is a member of the Mediterranean Dialogue, a NATO outreach program.

It's not the first time Turkey has vetoed Israeli attempts to participate more fully in NATO. It vetoed an Israeli request to open an office at NATO headquarters and vetoed its participation in some Mediterranean Dialogue group activities, according to *Hurriyet*.

"You are talking about being partners and partnership values. But partners, first of everything, should act like partners, so that we'll treat them accordingly," Davutoglu said during last week's NATO meeting, according to *Hurriyet*.

SOLEMN SONG OF REMEMBRANCE

Montreal student Sara Diamond along with the Toronto March of the Living choir sang at the international March of the Living ceremony in Auschwitz-Birkenau on Yom Hashoah. They sang *What will become of all the memories*, written by Toronto composer Abie Rotenberg. Some 800 students, survivors and adults from Canada attended the annual March, along with over 10,000 participants from around the world. In Canada, the March is funded by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, Federation CJA in Montreal and Jewish Federations of Canada-UIA.

[Yossi Zeliger photo]

Rifle-butt incident cost IDF officer his post

JTA

JERUSALEM — Lt.-Col. Shalom Eisner has been dismissed from his command post following an investigation into an incident in which the Israeli soldier hit a Danish pro-Palestinian activist in the face with his rifle.

Israel Defence Forces Chief of Staff Lt.-Gen. Benny Gantz relieved Eisner of his position as deputy division commander on "moral grounds," according to the IDF. Gantz said the probe also showed professional and command failures.

In addition to losing his command, Eisner will not become deputy commander of the Bahd 1 officers' training school and will be ineligible to serve in commanding positions for the next two years.

Eisner was suspended from his post on April 15, hours after a video of the incident was posted on YouTube by the International Solidarity Movement. The incident occurred during a protest bike ride in the Jordan Valley. Four activists were wounded, *Ha'aretz* reported.

Maj.-Gen. Nitzan Alon, the Central Command chief of the IDF, ordered an immediate investigation on April 15 into the incident. Military Judge Advocate General Brig.-Gen. Avi Mandelblit also ordered a criminal investigation of Eisner.

Eisner was interrogated by military police investigators for the first time on April 16, Ynet reported.

Eisner reportedly said he regretted the incident, but said the video represents one minute out of a two-hour event in which the protesters attacked the soldiers, breaking one of Eisner's fingers and injuring his wrist. He is seen later in the video with his wrist and finger in a white bandage.

Defence Minister Ehud Barak's office released a statement April 17 condemning the incident.

"The defence minister has determined, in closed conversations, that there is no contradiction between carrying out operations, appropriate behaviour and preserving the principles and spirit of the IDF," the statement said.

The statement added that Eisner's statements in defence of his actions "are not accepted by the defence minister and were never acceptable by the IDF."

Approximately 200 activists, including Palestinians from the West Bank and foreign activists, rode their bikes along Route 90, the Jordan Valley's main north-south route, on April 14 to protest what the ISM calls on its website "regular harassment and attacks from Israeli settlers and soldiers." Israeli soldiers halted the activists, who were blocking the main thoroughfare to traffic and began taking away their bicycles.

According to Ynet, Eisner said he did not use a water cannon that he had at the scene in order to disperse the protesters, because there was an ongoing dialogue and he wanted to end the event peacefully.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu condemned the incident, saying that "Such behaviour does not characterize IDF soldiers and officers and has no place in the Israel Defence Forces and in the State of Israel."

Israel Briefs

Gas set to flow

An exploration well in Israel is scheduled to produce natural gas in July, just as the country's sole reservoir is about to be drained. Avner Oil and Gas and Delek Drilling announced they'll begin gas deliveries in July from the Pinnacle 1 well, the Israeli business daily *Globes* reported. The development plan for the well was approved in late March, the companies said. A survey found that the Pinnacle 1 well contains up to 1.3 billion cubic metres of natural gas. The Yam Tethys natural gas reservoir, Israel's only reservoir, is close to running out. Nobel Energy CEO Charles Davidson told Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during a meeting April 16 that the company will work to start production from a larger reserve, the Tamar field, containing some 9 trillion cubic feet of natural gas by April 2013.

Back to terror

Israel's Shin Bet security service noted two Palestinian terrorists released in the swap for Gilad Schalit have resumed terrorist activity. One of the terrorists, who was deported to Gaza, has written guidelines for future abductions, including "The captive should not be hidden in remote locations, caves, or woodland unless it's a dead body or the captive's head." He also tried to recruit young Palestinians in the West Bank to kidnap Israelis. A second terrorist was sentenced to 44 months in prison last month for arms trafficking. Some 1,077 Palestinians in Israeli jails were released six months ago in a prisoner swap to secure the release of Schalit.

Files from JTA

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Remembering fallen Machalniks

Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf
Staff Reporter

Airman Willy Fisher gave his life to the cause of Israel.

Sadly, according to his surviving nephew, most Canadian Jews never heard of the man or his colleagues in the Machal, the group of overseas volunteers who came to fight for the nascent state.

A flight navigator, Fisher, a Winnipegger, perished in the evening of Oct. 24, 1948, while flying for Israel in a Dakota aircraft, along with fellow Canadian Machalnik pilot Wilf Canter and co-pilot Fred Stevenson and English radio operator Leon Lightman, when the plane's right engine exploded shortly after takeoff.

Michael Wimers, an Israeli army liaison, was also killed in the crash.

The flight crew was scheduled to fly from Tel Aviv to Sdom on a re-supply mission.

According to eyewitness reports, the aircraft had just taken off from Tel Aviv airfield when the right engine caught fire. Canter, a Torontonian, attempted to fly to a nearby air base, but the plane spiralled out of control and crashed into the ground near Kibbutz Kfar Yesodot.

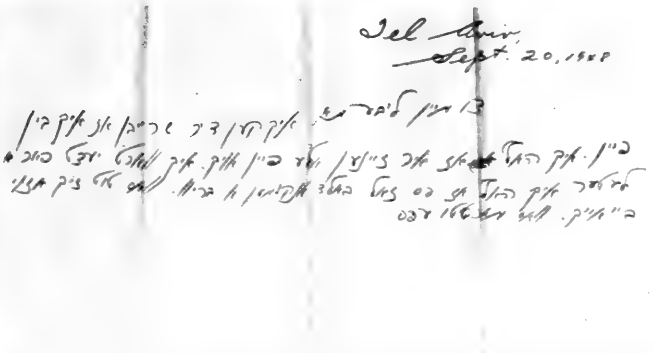
Wilf Mandel, 65, Fisher's nephew, told *The CJN* it was his mission to keep his uncle's memory – and the memory of the Machal, a Hebrew acronym meaning "volunteer from abroad" – alive and relevant to today's Jewish and Israeli communities. Mandel was just two years old when his uncle died.

On Yom Hazikaron, he said, the community honours the memory of "too many members of Tzahal [the Israel Defence Forces] who at too early an age, gave their lives in defence of the State [of Israel]. We also honour the memories of the victims of terror. We should also remember the 11 Canadian Machal volunteers who gave their lives in the 1948 War of Independence."

William (Willy) Fisher

Fisher, who was only 25 when he died, grew up fatherless in Winnipeg – his father had died before Fisher was born. After graduating from high school, he enlisted with the Royal Canadian Air Force and became a navigator with a Lancaster bomber crew flying missions over Germany in World War II.

"I don't know how many missions he flew, but I learned later that bomber command was the most dangerous [assignment] in all the armed services during World War II. The losses were more than 60 per cent," Mandel said.



A letter from Fisher to his mother, dated Sept. 20, 1948, translated from Yiddish, reads: "To my beloved Ma. I can write to you that I am fine. I hope you are all well, too. I am waiting for a letter that I hope will arrive soon. What is happening with you? How is..."(unfinished).

According to Mandel's research, in July 1948, his uncle embarked on a journey to Israel under an assumed name, because there was a concern shared by many Machalniks that they could end up in trouble with Canadian authorities and lose their citizenship.

Fisher eventually reached the Holy Land at the end of August 1948 and began flying missions for the fledgling state almost immediately.

Mandel said he cobbled together most of the information about his uncle from another Machalnik, Montreal pilot and navigator Yedidia (Eddy) Kaplansky.

"The Israelis had almost no air force training. Nearly 70 per cent of the Israeli air force was Machal," he said.

Kaplansky served with Fisher in Israel and even relied on him as a navigator during September 1948's Operation Taskit. The operation involved Kaplansky's plane dropping pyrotechnics over a number of specifically targeted areas for five consecutive nights while the Israeli Signal Corps operators on the ground monitored various frequencies for enemy signal activity. All of this helped Israeli military personnel accurately gauge the positioning of the enemy.

"I knew nothing about Machal, had never heard about it growing up. Two hundred and fifty Machal from Canada went [to serve] over there, 11 of them died," Mandel said. "It seemed strange to me that not more people know about this. We owe them a debt of gratitude."

The sacrifices and service of the Canadian Machal to the Jewish state is Canada's "bond to Israel," Mandel said.

This Yom Ha'atzmaut we salute all the families in Israel who defend our nation's independence and freedom.

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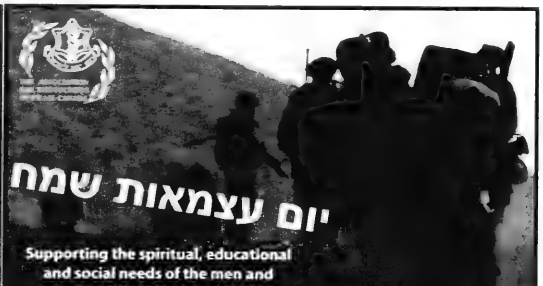

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Antisemitism falls

TEL AVIV — Global antisemitism fell by 27 per cent in 2011, according to an annual report.

The Kantor Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry at Tel Aviv University presented its global antisemitism report for 2011 on April 18, the eve of Holocaust Remembrance Day.

The report showed that the number of cases of major violent incidents, including threats and vandalism against Jews, was down to 446 incidents from 614. There was an increase, however, in violence against Jews and Jewish property, as well as a rise in their severity.

France had the most hate crimes against Jews with 114, followed by the United Kingdom with 105, Canada with 68 and Australia with 30. Numbers for the United States were only partly included, the centre noted.

Some 42 per cent of hate crimes against Jews were committed against individuals. Synagogues were attacked 20 per cent of the time and schools and Jewish community centres six percent. Jewish cemeteries were vandalized in 14 percent of the cases.

European Jewish Congress President Moshe Kantor presented the report.

"The Middle East conflict has been imported into Europe and serves as an excuse for antisemitic attacks against the Jewish citizens of Europe," Kantor said during a news conference at the Kantor Center.

Retired teacher gives savings to Ethiopian project

Paul Lungen
Staff Reporter

When 87-year-old Yankle Gladstone donated the majority of his estate to a Jerusalem community centre that would benefit Ethiopian olim, it was hardly the first time he took an interest in that ancient Jewish community.

Back to the early 1970s, when they were still known by the pejorative term "falashas," he had donated $25 – " a lot of money in those days" – to help Ethiopians still living in Africa.

More recently, the retired Yiddish teacher joined a number of other Canadian benefactors in providing the $4.5 million needed to renovate a 3-1/2-storey community centre in the Morasha neighbourhood of Jerusalem. The centre, to be known as Canada House, will serve minority communities in the Israeli capital, and Gladstone's donation will be attached to a dedicated room that will help Ethiopians adjust to life in the modern state of Israel.

Gladstone's contribution is a small part of the funds raised for the project, but it represents a greater portion of his wealth than that provided by other contributors, said Steve Solomon, a spokesperson for the Jerusalem Foundation, which partnered with the local municipality in the project.

Gladstone "is a simple teacher. He never made big money, but he put his savings to do something special that he could see and appreciate during his lifetime," Solomon said.

Gladstone joined his niece, Judy, and nephew, Eden, at a dedication and pre-bar mitzvah ceremony, officiated by Ethiopian-born Rabbi Sharon Shalom, at the facility during Passover. The project will launch officially in May 2013.

Gladstone said he is happy to continue to help his Ethiopian "brothers and sisters" acclimatize to life in Israel. That's an endeavour that should not be limited to the well-to-do, he said.

Yankle Gladstone with his nephew, Eden, and Ethiopian-born Rabbi Sharon Shalom *(Nave Antopolsky photo)*

Yankle Gladstone with "his" children in the Absorption Centre on Kibbutz Beit Oren in 1991

"You don't have to be a philanthropist," he told *The CJN*. "What I gave came from the heart. You can imagine what a Yiddish and Hebrew teacher earned, so whatever I gave is almost everything I had."

While his contribution to Canada House can be measured in dollars and cents, Gladstone has had an even deeper connection with Ethiopian Jews. As a child, studying in Yiddish schools in Montreal, he'd heard about an exotic and remote Jewish people, living beyond a river and out of contact with the rest of the Jewish people.

"I thought they were legends," he said.

A longtime educator and activist, Gladstone was working in the Bronx with black Jews from the Caribbean when he made his first donation to Ethiopian Jewry. He later joined the North American Conference on Ethiopian Jews.

When the first large-scale emergency aliyah took place in the early 1980s – Operation Moses – he was living and working in Israel.

"I was present at the airport during the arrival of Ethiopian children, youths and adults," he said. "That was a moving scene, to see them brought out on stretchers, many getting blood transfusions, many kissing the ground.

"And we were singing. It was an amazing scene of singing and dancing."

At the same time, flights were bringing Jews to Israel from the former Soviet Union. It felt like "ingathering of the exiles," he said. "It was an amazing, amazing experience."

Gladstone, who lived in Israel from 1979 to 1984, ran back and forth between absorption centres and hospitals, keeping families informed about the condition of their loved-ones. Working with Israel's ministry of education, he solicited the help of the Association of Americans and Canadians in Israel to provide math and computer tutoring to new arrivals.

Supporting a community centre in the heart of Jerusalem is particularly meaningful to him, Gladstone continued. Ethiopians have always been devoted to Jerusalem. "Israel to them was Jerusalem."

Despite the promise of that first aliyah – a second group would be brought in Operation Solomon in 1991 – Gladstone acknowledges "there are problems. Not enough people embraced the Ethiopian Jews." Their Judaism was questioned by rabbinic authorities, and, like other immigrants, they found it difficult adjusting to Israeli culture and economy.

Solomon noted that Ethiopian Jews who do not do well in school and who fail to matriculate are ineligible for army service. "That's two strikes against them and they get only marginal jobs," he said.

One of the projects contemplated for the renovated centre will be to "help Ethiopian youngsters get caught up and help them academically and socially," Solomon stated.

Gladstone believes the Toronto community should step up and establish a permanent organization dedicated to helping Ethiopians.

As for himself, he remains optimistic Ethiopians, like olim before them, will integrate into Israeli society.

The community centre can only help. "It's important for the Ethiopian community to feel they have a place, a centre. For me, that's a wonderful vision, so Ethiopians feel they belong, they are part of a community centre," he said.

They are part of the people of Israel and "the Jews of the world are my family. The main thing is not that I contributed money, but my soul," he said.

"It's impossible to put into words that you're working with family, who were isolated from me."

For more information on Canada House or the Jerusalem Foundation of Canada, contact Monica E. Berger at mberger@JerusalemFoundation.ca, or call 877-484 1289.

Beware! Your cellphone may be in danger

Yair Mor
Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

TEL AVIV — One of the most explosive scandals of 2011 was the *News of the World* hacking escapade. The newspaper's journalists habitually hacked into celebrities' cellphones to get juicy gossip. Exposure led to a public outcry, and the paper's owner, Rupert Murdoch, shut the 168-year-old institution down.

But a corollary to the sordid story is a helpful one: many people never realized their phones were as vulnerable to hackers as unprotected computers. Smartphone owners are the most vulnerable users as those gadgets usually have a rich mine of data to steal.

In October 2008, when Google's Android operating system for smartphones was still in its infancy, a company named Droid Security got on its feet – right here in the desert town of Sde Boker. Droid developed the first anti-virus application for Google's Android-based smartphones.

After a $1 million (all figures U.S.) investment, two years of operations and 4.5 million downloads, Droid Security was acquired by the security giant AVG for $9.4 million. AVG then turned the company into its R&D arm in Israel.

"We felt that Android devices were likely to supplant personal computers and realized that as soon as there was a new, successful platform, the bad guys would jump on board, too," said Dror Shalev, founder of Droid Security and now the development chief at AVG Mobilation.

Smartphones are essentially powerful computers that are always online, Shalev noted. They contain a huge amount of data on the user – passwords, address books, contacts, bank codes that arrive in text messages, e-mails, pictures, information about friends, information on financial transactions – information the technology world's bad guys would love to have. Droid Security's job is to fight back.

Three and a half years after the company was founded, hacking smartphones has indeed evolved from an after-hours hobby into a full-blown occupation. According to figures from data security company Kaspersky, in 2011 alone, hacker attacks and malware attacks on smartphones grew 200-fold. (Malware refers to malicious software or codes – viruses and that sort of thing.)

In January 2011, the company identified 20 unique malicious software codes making the rounds. By December, that had grown to 4,101.

The variations on those thousands of malware codes are even greater. In December, Kaspersky reported some 82,000 variations. In the first two weeks of 2012, the number had reached 360,000.

Data security company McAfee reported that in the fourth quarter of 2011, computers weren't being attacked by malware as much. But malware for smartphones was taking off. This year, many industry experts say attacks on phones will outstrip attacks on computers.

People's ignorance of the threat just makes it easy for the hackers, said Noam Froimovici, head of A.N. Power Communications, Kaspersky's representative in Israel. That ignorance leads people to merrily download applications that demand their personal information.

There are two groups of threats to smartphones. One is theft of information, such as phone numbers, e-mails and the content of text messages. Such information could be used to hack bank accounts, or e-mail address lists could be sold to spammers.

Hackers get that information using applications cleverly programmed to steal information, or when web users surf infected sites. The bad guys also piggyback on the phones' wireless communications capacity.

"People surf from their smartphones or tablets using WiFi for free but don't realize that wireless Internet and Bluetooth constitute a breach of security," said Erez Mor, Symantec sales manager for the Middle East, Russia and eastern Europe.

For instance, surfing with the help of a public-access wireless network exposes the information that the surfer types into all other devices on the same network. Direct short-distance communications technologies such as Bluetooth can be used to hack nearby phones.

Then there's phone theft, said Froimovici. In Israel, 50,000 smartphones get stolen every year, leading to an abuse of information.

The second group of threats to smartphones is takeover – back-door access that allows the hacker to use your phone without you realizing it. This is the more egregious danger and also the more immediate one, Froimovici said.

For instance, the hacker could use the conquered phone to send premium text messages, such as voting on reality shows, that cost a lot of money, but you get the bill. A call like that could cost as much as $20. Now imagine that a huge number of such calls are made from your phone and you only discover it when the charge arrives.

Another danger in this group is the hacker using your phone to surf the web. Malicious codes often "phone home" to the hacker over the Internet. Again the chief risk here is inflated bills at the end of the month. If a Web user exceeds his package with his service provider, the extra cost can reach many hundreds of shekels.

Why would any hacker want to do that? Well, say experts, a hacker might use "captured" phones to attack websites. Oh yes, and this also uses up the phone battery quickly.

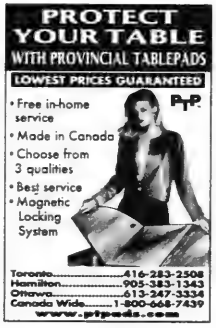
Although all these examples relate to Google's Android system, Apple's iOS system is not immune. In fact, security experts won't say which system is safer. But many suspect that Google's open applications store makes life very easy for hackers – compared with Apple's applications store, where the company's blessing is required before the app can be offered.

There are companies offering software to protect smartphones against all sorts of attacks, and software to operate the phone remotely if it's lost or stolen. The problem is that hackers can exploit that too, offering fake anti-virus systems for phones that do exactly the opposite of what the hapless buyer thinks they will do.

All you can do is be careful about which applications you download. Read critiques of the applications before downloading them. Learn their bugs and weaknesses. Don't go near applications from unknown sources.

Also monitor your phone bills. If you check the history of calls and text messages and can't identify some, alarm bells should go off.

And if your phone starts heating up even though it isn't being used, by you at least, a hacker may be using it to surf the Internet. And finally, use accredited software to protect the device. That one-time investment today could save you a much higher bill tomorrow.



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Ghosts of Home recovers prewar Jewish life

It is a rare scholarly work that appeals to both specialist and generalist audiences, but this is true of *Ghosts of Home: The Afterlife of Czernowitz in Jewish Memory*, co-written by Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer (University of California Press).

Hirsch is a major figure in American academia – and the dominant voice in this collaboration – whose signal contribution to Jewish studies is the notion of "post-memory," which she explores in light of her own experiences growing up under the influence of European-born parents.

Reviewed by

Norman Ravvin

Her identity, she explains, was overshadowed by their "stories, images, and behaviours" connected with their youth in interwar Czernowitz. "Strangely," she writes, "the streets, buildings, and natural surroundings of Czernowitz – its theatres, restaurants, parks, rivers and domestic settings, none of which I had ever myself seen, heard, or smelled – figure more strongly in my own childhood memories and imagination than do the sites and scenes" of her own childhood.

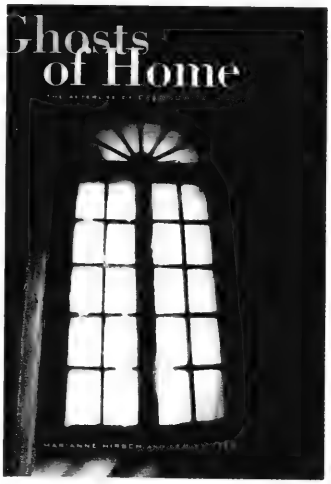
It is this highly personalized approach to a recovery of a particular European past that renders *Ghosts of Home* eminently readable. But its pleasures include, too, a detailed portrait of the Bukovina, the far-flung province of the Hapsburg Empire where Czernowitz became a cultural and political outpost of Vienna. There, a large, Germanized, assimilated, bourgeois Jewish community flourished during the last half of the 19th and early 20th century.

This status quo – a paradigmatic example of Jewish emancipation and cultural influence – was undermined after World War I with the rise of Romanian nationalism and its fascist and militarist supporters.

The Holocaust in Romania is not Hirsch's focus, though she does portray the rise of prewar antisemitism, as well as the Romanian state's willingness to deport and incarcerate Jews. One of the quirks of her approach derives from her parents' outlook and memories of their prewar selves. In 1998, Hirsch made her first visit, with her parents as guides, to the Ukrainian city of Chernivtsi. There, with much of the architecture of what was prewar Czernowitz intact, Hirsch strolled the Herrengasse, the main drag of her parents' youth, and found her way into her mother's prewar home, which, however worse for wear, was not greatly changed after 70 years.

Hirsch's parents were both incarcerated with their families in the Czernowitz ghetto, but they managed, again with the bulk of their family, to evade the massive deportation of Jews to the area between the Bug and Dniester rivers known at the time as Transnistria.

Hirsch's parents do not think of themselves as survivors. Their memories of the wartime are in part influenced by their escape from the worst-case scenario offered by Romanian-German collaboration in the Bukovina, but their outlook is coloured, too, by the idea, alive in the minds of many old Czernowitzers, of a "pre-First World War multicultural and multilingual tolerant city and a modern, cosmopolitan culture in which German literature, music, art and philosophy



flourished among a significant majority of their numbers."

It is this ideal, its prewar life and postwar memory that *Ghosts of Home* examines with care and insight. In later trips to Ukraine – most recently in 2008 – Hirsch travelled without her parents and undertook a kind of travel that is sometimes called tragic tourism. She made her way to the deportation sites of Transnistria, as well as to the Vapniarka concentration camp, where she found a complete lack of memory, whether among the local population or by way of memorials at the site of atrocities.

Ghosts of Home concludes in Chernivtsi, with an account of the newly founded Bukovina Jewish Museum of History and Culture, which is housed in a building that once belonged to the Jewish community. Though Hirsch finds the contents of the museum lacking, she recognizes that its goals are "part of a larger movement to revitalize Jewish life in Ukraine... to connect Chernivtsi to a larger religious Jewish world abroad, not to highlight its particular history."

Ghosts of Home brings to light a prewar and wartime history, acted out in an eastern borderland, which most readers will discover anew. Hirsch's depiction of prewar Jewish life is masterful, and her presentation of the challenges of postwar memory is both moving and provocative. *Ghosts of Home* is a fine example of scholarship that is both serious and intimate.

Norman Ravvin's recent books include a novel, The Joyful Child *(Gaspereau), and the co-edited* Failure's Opposite: Listening to A.M. Klein *(McGill-Queen's).*

Senior kindergarten students and their parents at Leo Baeck Day School's Thornhill campus got dressed in pyjamas to hear a bedtime story, eat a yummy bedtime snack and learn about "We Give Books," a new digital initiative that puts books in the hands of children who don't have them simply by reading books online. Pictured, from left, are SKer Meagan Goldberg, Joan Udelson, SKer Jordan Winer-Ma, Keren Winer, SKer Benjamin Turkel, Caleb Turkel, and teacher Bonnie Gremont.

The Canadian Committee for the Haifa Foundation presents
Renowned Israeli Concert Pianist and Scholar

Astrith Baltsan

Hatikvah

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A mesmerizing show presenting a revolutionary research of Israel's national anthem. *Dr. Baltsan* weaves the national anthem into a fascinating personal show, in a spectacular performance containing music by Mozart, Chopin, Smetana, Jewish and Israeli folk, pop and rock tunes and rare historical recordings and video clips.

Proceeds from this concert will go towards building a new park and playground located near the Carmel Forest. The park will be dedicated in loving memory of those who perished during the devastating Carmel Forest Fire in December 2010.

"This performance is a must see for every Jew in the world!" -Shimon Peres, President of Israel

The Canadian Committee for the Haifa Foundation 647.430.7743 www.haifa-foundation.org

Hot Docs festival offers films of Jewish interest

Sheldon Kirshner
Staff Reporter

This year's edition of the Hot Docs documentary film festival runs from April 26 to May 6 and has a fine selection of films of Jewish interest.

A sampler:

Tamar Tal's *Life in Stills* is both a portrait of a country-in-the-making and of an unusual personal relationship.

The late Israeli photographer, Rudi Weissenstein, was an eyewitness to history. Working out of a modest studio in the centre of Tel Aviv, he photographed people, places and events in Palestine and Israel.

His photographs of early Tel Aviv and David Ben-Gurion's proclamation of independence in 1948 are particularly of value and interest.

When Weissenstein died, he bequeathed his archive of more than one million negatives to his wife, Miriam, who had always been his trusted collaborator.

Now, years after her husband's death, Miriam and her grandson, Ben, are fighting city hall to save Photo House, the landmark studio that served as his base for decades, from demolition.

The studio is supposed to make way for a residential development, but Miriam and Ben oppose it. Can they stop the march of time? That's one theme of *Life in Stills*.

The other theme focuses on their mutually loving relationship. Miriam is gruff and gloomy, while her grandson is blessed with a sunny disposition. Despite their diametrically different personalities, the pair get on remarkably well, and in this altogether charming movie, which is set in Israel and Germany, Tal skilfully fleshes out their battle for survival.

Life in Stills will be screened on Saturday, April 28, at 9:30 p.m. at the Israel Bader Theatre, Monday, April 30, at 4:15 p.m. at the Cumberland Four-Alliance Cinema, and Saturday, May 5, at 1:15 p.m. at the Bloor Theatre.

* * *

One Day After Peace, by Miri and Erez Laufer, is about a dedicated woman's crusade to find peace of mind and, against all odds, to build reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians.

Robi Damelin, an Israeli peace activist originally from South Africa, is still in mourning after the death of her son, David, an aspiring MA candidate in philosophy and education and an Israeli army reservist who was killed in an Arab ambush in the West Bank in 2002, at the height of the second Palestinian uprising.

In this empathetic film, the Laufers explore Damelin's attempt to contact the family of the Palestinian sniper who shot David at a checkpoint as well as following her to South Africa on a journey of self-discovery to talk to South Africans who were personally affected by the now dismantled apartheid system.

The Laufers concentrate on the South African segment of *One Day After Peace*. Damelin, a dogged woman of conscience, is a whirlwind of activity. She meets mothers whose sons were killed by the previous regime, attends sessions of a national committee trying to heal old wounds and visits a cousin who was Nelson Mandela's lawyer.

For Damelin, the new multi-racial South Africa is a model of hope, a place where enemies can lay aside their differences and grievances and achieve some kind of closure. Clearly, the Arab-Israeli conflict is a tougher nut to crack. But Damelin is not someone who succumbs to despair easily.

One Day After Peace will be screened on Sunday, April 29, at 9 p.m. at the Cumberland Four-Alliance Cinema, Tuesday, May 1, at 11 a.m. at the Isabel Bader Theatre and Saturday, May 5, at 4 p.m. at the ROM Theatre.

* * *

Soldier/Citizen, directed by Silvina Landesmann, takes us into a civic studies class at an Israeli army base where young combat soldiers seeking to finish high school are exposed to such concepts as tolerance and pluralism.

Continued on page 37

The relationship of photographer's widow Miriam Weissenstein and her grandson, Ben, is explored in *Life in Stills*.

Film portrays Jewish immigrant experience

Sheldon Kirshner
Staff Reporter

Hungry Hearts – the 1922 silent movie scheduled to be screened by the Toronto Jewish Film Society on April 29 at the Al Green Theatre at 4 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. – is something of a cinematic gem.

Based on the short stories of Anzia Yezierska (1880-1970), a Polish-born American writer who brought the experiences of Jewish immigrants to a mainstream audience, *Hungry Hearts* is touching and compelling.

This 80-minute classic, ably directed by E. Mason Hooper, revolves around the Levin family, a Jewish family that lands in New York City's Lower East Side after emigrating from czarist Russia in 1910.

The family's gentle patriarch, Abraham (E.A. Warren), is a lowly teacher scratching out a living in the rustic town of Goluth. Life in Goluth is pretty predictable, except when Cossacks come calling.

Inspired by an effusive letter from a relative in America, Abraham's wife, Hannah (Rosa Rosanova), begins dreaming of immigrating to the United States. "It must be always sunshine in America," she gushes.

Selling their possessions, the Levins, father, mother and four children, immigrate to the land of their dreams. But the streets of the *goldenne medine* are not necessarily paved with gold. The Lower East Side is crowded, and the flat they rent is dark and grimy.

"Where's the sunshine?" asks Sara (Helen Ferguson), Abraham's fetching and ambitious daughter, who longs to be a "somebody."

Forced to abandon teaching, Abraham becomes a businessman, selling fruit from a proverbial pushcart. But success eludes him, and Sara must take a job as a janitress before she can find a better position in a shirt factory.

When the landlord's nephew, an up-and-coming lawyer named David Rosenblatt (Bryant Washburn), arrives to collect the rent, he spies Sara and is totally smitten. Much to her parents' delight, they are soon engaged to be married.

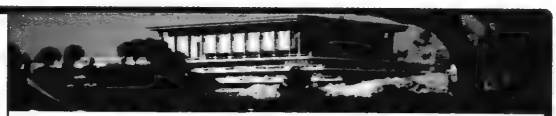
Rosenblatt's mean-spirited uncle steps in, threatening to disinherit him if he proceeds to marry a "nobody" like Sara. Rosenblatt wavers, his uncle retaliates and Hannah runs amuk. Facing prison time, Hannah convinces a judge in a courtroom appearance that she should not be judged too harshly. Justice prevails and nearly everyone lives happily ever after.

Only in America.

Hungry Hearts, a tug-at-your-heart tearjerker with a great musical score, is a fine film propelled along by a credible script and stellar performances.

Helen Ferguson and Bryant Washburn in *Hungry Hearts*

ISRAEL



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EYE ON ARTS

By BILL GLADSTONE

KOFFLER CENTRE PRESENTS STUNNING AND BOLD IMAGES BY ISRAELI PHOTOGRAPHER ADI NES

The Koffler Centre of the Arts presents an exhibition of the stunning, bold and often controversial photographs of Tel Aviv-based photographer **Adi Nes**, who infuses his sense of marginality into his work. His "meticulously crafted interpretations of biblical, mythological and literary subjects propose a critical view of the present while seeking to uncover a universal humanism."

Koffler Offsite at Olga Korper Gallery, 17 Morrow Ave. May 3 to June 2. Opening reception, Thursday, May 3, 6 to 9 p.m. Nes gives a talk at Eaton Theatre, Rogers Communication Centre, 80 Gould St., Monday, May 7, 7 p.m. Free admission. www.kofflerarts.org

* * *

Multimedia Version of *Hatikvah*: Israeli musicologist-pianist **Astrith Baltsan**'s multimedia performance of Israel's national anthem, *Hatikvah*, contains music by **Mozart**, **Chopin**, **Smetana**, Jewish and Israeli folk, pop and rock tunes, and rare historical recordings and video clips. Baltsan has performed the piece throughout Israel and the United States. Her only Canadian performance, in Toronto, is presented by the Canadian Committee for the Haifa Foundation. $90. Glenn Gould Studio, Sunday, May 6, 7:30 p.m. 416-593-4828, www.roythomson.com.

* * *

Names in the News: Bella (Bel) Kaufman, who is hoping to celebrate her 101st birthday on May 10, is a granddaughter of the legendary Yiddish writer **Sholem Aleichem** (1859-1916) and as such, was interviewed for the 2011 documentary film *Sholem Aleichem: Laughing in the Darkness*, which recently enjoyed a Toronto run.

Born in Berlin in 1911, she came with her parents to New York in 1923, earned a degree in literature, and worked as a high school teacher. A writer of occasional pieces for *Esquire* and other magazines, she also penned a grittily realistic novel about her teaching experiences. Published in 1965 as *Up the Down Staircase*, it became a runaway bestseller and remained on the *New York Times* bestseller list for more than 64 weeks.

Last year, at age 99, Kaufman was hired by a New York college to teach about Jewish humour. "I'm too busy to get old," she remarked at the time.

Her second husband, **Sidney J. Gluck**, runs the Sholem Aleichem Memorial Foundation. She was five years old when her famous grandfather died, and, according to a *New York Times* story that appeared when she turned 100, she "believes she is the last person alive who remembers him and his impish humour."

* * *

Arts in Brief

• A free screening of the 55-minute documentary, *Israel Inside: How a Small Nation Makes a Big Difference*, takes place at Beth Torah Synagogue, 47 Glenbrook Ave. Thursday, April 26, 7:30 p.m. Another screening, sponsored by Aish Toronto, is at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation, 470 Glencairn Ave., June 5, 8 p.m.

• Marquee Theatrical Productions presents *Hairspray, the Broadway Musical*. City Playhouse Theatre, 1000 New Westminster Dr., Vaughan. April 26 to 29. $27, $22.50. www.cityplayhouse.ca, 905-326-7469.

• Encore Entertainment presents *Wrong for Each Other*, a romantic comedy by **Norm Foster**, which producer **Merle Garbe** calls "an insightful comedy, full of honest humour and sprinkled with poignancy." Toronto Centre for the Arts, Studio Theatre, April 27 to May 6. $29.50, $28. 855-985-2787, www.encoreshows.com

• The Toronto Jewish Film Society presents *Hungry Hearts*, a classic silent film from 1922 with speaker **Shirley Kumove** and live piano accompaniment by **Jordan Klapman**. Produced by Samuel Goldwyn, this stirring drama filled with pathos and melodrama focuses on a family of Jewish immigrants on the Lower East Side. Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, Al Green Theatre. Sunday, April 29, 4 and 7:30 p.m. $15, $10. 416-924-6211, ext. 606.

• Film critic **Adam Nayman** presents "In Nayman's Terms," an analysis with film clips of the **Stanley Kubrick** films *The Killing* and *Paths of Glory*. Miles Nadal JCC, Monday, April 30, 7 to 9 p.m. $12 drop-in, students $6. www.mnjcc.org

• The 20th annual Toronto Jewish Film Festival opens with the feature film *A Bottle in the Gaza Sea*, filmed in Israel by French director **Thierry Binisti**, and co-produced by a Canadian company from Montreal. The festival is screening 102 films from May 3 to May 13. For details, visit www.tjff.com or phone 416-324-9121.

* * *

At the Galleries

• Photographs by **Aaron Vincent Elkaim** documenting the history of Jewish Morocco are on view during the month of May at the Pikto Gallery, Distillery District, as part of the Contact Photography Festival.

• *Nothing Is Hidden*, an exhibition of 31 photographs by Montrealer **Lynn Cohen**, goes on view May 3 at the Design Exchange, 234 Bay St. A Governor General's Award winner whose work is in many international galleries, Cohen is known for capturing domestic and institutional spaces devoid of people, and often reflecting social and political themes with a wry sense of humour. Until June 30. www.dx.org, 416-363-6121.

• *Picasso: Masterpieces from the Musee National Picasso, Paris*, is on view at the Art Gallery of Ontario, May 1 to Aug. 26. www.ago.net

The sound of movies

Compiled by CJN Staff

The Toronto Jewish Film Festival presents the 2012 Sidebar series, "The Sound of Movies: Masters of the Film Score". This 12-part series celebrates the lives and works of Jewish composers who create the music for the movies, through the artistry of the film score.

The Sound of Movies marks another chapter in a fascinating story, as the festival continues its exploration of the predominant and extraordinary role that Jewish composers have played in the popular culture.

In the same way that Jewish songwriters and lyricists excelled in their respective genres, most of the "greats" in the world of the film score have been Jewish. Many of them are classically trained or jazz-oriented, and creators of orchestral works and popular songs, as well as movie scores. The first wave—the group who actually invented film music—were exiles from Nazi Germany, Europe and Russia, and they had a profound influence on those who followed.

The series incorporates special guests, rarely screened gems, and events that showcase some of the most renowned and accomplished composers of all-time.

See www.tjff.com for descriptions and times.

Doc celebrates life

Continued from page 36

Their teacher, a gentle, probing man, challenges their preconceptions as he examines issues ranging from human rights to democracy.

In the main, he talks about the status of Israeli Arabs, much of whose land was confiscated by the state in the wake of the 1948 War of Independence.

He and his students don't often share the same views, but their spirited exchanges infuse this film with vitality.

Soldier/Citizen will be screened on Sunday, April 29, at 6 p.m. at the Bloor Cinema, Monday, April 30, at 2 p.m. at TIFF Bell Lightbox and Saturday, May 5, at 9 p.m. at the Rom Theatre.

* * *

Oma & Bella, by Alexa Karolinski, is about friendship, tradition and memory.

Regina Karolinski (Oma) and Bella Katz are Holocaust survivors of a certain age who live together in apparent harmony in a small flat in Berlin. They've been through a lot in their lives, yet they face the world with good cheer and optimism.

The filmmaker, Oma's granddaughter, observes them in various situations and obviously thinks highly of them.

Oma and Bella, from Lithuania and Galicia respectively, celebrate their food traditions, recall the Holocaust and the post-Holocaust era in displaced persons (DP) camps, get their hair done at a beauty parlour, play cards, take a boat ride and meet friends and family at a festive gathering.

In its essence, this is a film that celebrates life, for life is short.

Oma & Bella will be screened on Saturday, April 28, at 6:30 p.m. at the TIFF Bell Lightbox and Monday, April 30, at 4:30 p.m. at the ROM Theatre.

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Junior star set to play U.S. college hockey

Paul Lungen
Staff Reporter

Matt Silcoff

Skating for the Vaughan Vipers of the Ontario Junior Hockey League (OJHL), Matt Silcoff received a lot of interest from NCAA colleges, including firm offers from two Division III schools.

In the end, he opted for Middlebury Collegiate in Vermont, a prestigious liberal arts institution that counts Ari Fleisher, former White House press secretary, among its alumni. Silcoff will join the Panthers in August as a freshman left winger.

When it came down to it, Silcoff had to choose between Middlebury and another school with "Saint" in its name. Going to a school with that kind of religious connection just didn't seem right for a guy who graduated from the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto, he said.

On top of that, he was blown away by the atmosphere at a Panthers game he attended. Packing the Panthers' home arena were 3,000 rabid fans cheering the team on – a remarkable showing for a school that has only 2,500 students.

When you add that to Middlebury's reputation for academic excellence and the chance to foster business contacts, it seemed like a good fit, Silcoff said.

Silcoff, who took the year off after high school to focus on hockey and getting in shape, is now completing the paperwork necessary for the next leg of his hockey journey. Then he plans to hit the gym over the summer to prepare for next season with the Panthers.

Getting the offer from Middlebury, which plays in the New England Small College Athletic Conference, came only after "a lot of hard work," Silcoff said. When other guys his age were out partying, he was in the gym working out. When others were socializing, he was working on his game.

The result, he said, is "the opportunity to go to a school like Middlebury. It's incredible."

Although nothing is yet set in stone, Silcoff plans to study economics at the liberal arts college.

And play hockey and more hockey.

He's already known as a good skater who likes to dish the puck. He admits to getting as much satisfaction, maybe more, from setting up a teammate than scoring himself.

A six-foot one, 180-pounder, he wants to join the Panthers 10 pounds heavier and hopes to graduate in four years weighing 200 pounds. That will give him his best shot at getting noticed by NHL scouts, but he recognizes that few players from Division III ever play in the big league.

A more realistic goal, he said, is to spend some time playing professionally in Europe, like other Division III players.

This past season, Silcoff finished second in scoring for the Vipers. He scored 24 goals and 27 assists in 49 games, including some played with the Lakeshore Patriots.

He was traded by the Patriots (previously known as the Upper Canada Patriots) at the beginning of the season. The year before, he scored 47 points and was invited to Team Canada East's selection camp.

Going back even further, he was named MVP of the GTHL Midget All-Star Game when he played for Vaughan Kings.

In 2011, he played in the Hockey 4Life (Chai Lifeline Tournament) and was named MVP. This past year, he played in the Joel Schwartz Memorial Hockey Tournament, in aid of the Reena Foundation, again being named MVP.

In 2009 he played for the Tanenbaum-CHAT Tigers. He and linemate David Garbuz led the team to the York Region Athletic Association (YRAA) championship.

Garbuz influenced his hockey career in aother direction – east. As in Metulla, Israel.

Both played in the 2009 World Jewish Cup of Hockey, albeit on different teams.

While Garbuz played for Israel, Silcoff was on the Under-18 Team Canada "White" team coached by former NHLer Steve Thomas.

Team Canada White won the tournament, and Silcoff led all skaters in scoring.

He considers it his best summer ever.

"I'd never been to Israel before," he said. "The hockey and the culture were incredible."

After the hockey, Silcoff spent more than a week touring.

"It was just a great time," he added.

In 2010 he tried out for and made the Soo Greyhounds of the OHL, but that didn't last long. He played in the OJHL instead, and he advises guys playing minor midget and midget hockey to consider something other than major junior hockey.

Playing in the OHL was enticing, he said, but you could get hurt, and not get as far as you hope.

"I wanted to get an education. Use hockey as a vehicle to get a good education," he suggests.

It's advice he plans on taking himself.

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Israeli wins fencing championship in Moscow

Compiled by CJN Staff

Israel's Yuval Freilich won the men's epee competition at the recent World Cadet and Junior Fencing Championships in Moscow.

Freilich, 17, defeated Poland's Sebastian Majgier by a score of 15-6 in the final, vaulting him into position as number 1-ranked epee cadet in the world.

Freilich advanced to the final with a 15-5 victory over Hungary's Balazs Hamar.

Earlier, Israel's cadet team won second place in the epee event at the European Championships in Croatia. The team, which includes Freilich – who won an individual silver medal – as well as Ariel Drizin, Maxim Pozdnyakov and Daniel Fridman, fell to Ukraine in the final, 45-36.

Israeli fencer Yuval Freilich, seen here four years ago. ***[Flash90 photo]***

In the semifinal, the team defeated France 45-35, after beating the Czech Republic 45-36 and Sweden 45-28.

"It's an amazing team achievement," said fencing chairperson Lydia Hatuel-Zuckerman.

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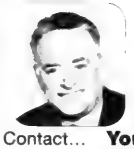

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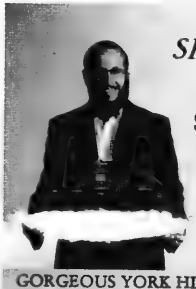

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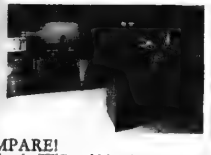

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Writer turns days spent waiting tables into a movie

Cara Edell
Special to The CJN

While Michael Sparaga's films have allowed him to quit his job as a waiter and work full time as a screenwriter and producer, he said he will never forget his humble beginnings.

His latest feature, *Servitude*, hit theatres on March 30. It's a waiter-themed comedy, "so in a way I'm back working in a restaurant," he said.

Sparaga started writing screenplays in 1991, when he was studying film at York University. "Almost everything I wrote back then was a ripoff of *Goodfellas*, which came out that year and completely blew me away."

Sidekick was the first feature Sparaga wrote and produced. "It's about Norman Neale, a comic-book-obsessed computer geek who discovers that one of the cocky stockbrokers in his office, Victor Ventura, has slight telekinetic abilities. Norman decides he wants to train Victor to be a superhero, so he can become his-sidekick. The only problem is, Victor was always a bit crooked and, as he grows in power, he doesn't have any intention of becoming a hero."

Sparaga produced *Sidekick* on his credit cards and line of credit while he worked as a waiter to make the minimum monthly payments. "I figured if the film wasn't any good it would just take me a mere 15 years to pay it off," he said.

"I guess it turned out all right because the finished film played in worldwide film festivals, was theatrically released in Canada and went on to sell in numerous international territories, including the United States. Remake rights were even optioned by Universal's Focus Features."

Michael Sparaga

Sparaga said *Sidekick* attracted the attention of Telefilm Canada, which gave him enough money to take the film cross-country and screen it in eight Canadian cities. While on that tour, Sparaga collected footage for his next film, a documentary on the state of the Canadian film industry called *Maple Flavour Films*.

He said the original idea was to include the documentary as a DVD extra on *Sidekick*, but the finished film ended up selling on its own merit and airing on Air Canada flights and pay TV.

Sparaga wrote the first draft of *Servitude* in 1999, when he was working as a waiter at The Keg. "The idea of waiters taking over the restaurant and treating guests with the respect they deserve is something that I thought about every day, so writing the film was really a catharsis of sorts," he said.

"The best part about waiting tables at night is that you have your days free to write, so that's what I did. Often the events of the night before ended up in the script. Still, when I was finished writing, I was too embarrassed to hand the script out because I thought people would say, 'Oh, you're a waiter,' instead of 'Oh, you're a writer.'"

It took Sparaga a long time to realize he actually liked waiting tables and that it was nothing to be ashamed of. After a decade, he pulled the script out of his drawer and was reminded of how funny it actually is.

Kristen Hager and Joe Dinicol star in Michael Sparaga's latest feature *Servitude*. [Caitlin Cronenberg photo]

Sparaga decided *Servitude* would be his next feature. He gave the script to Warren Sonoda, a director whose work he admired, and asked him to give it a read. A few weeks later, Telefilm Canada announced it wanted to make comedies again and was starting up the Features Comedy Lab, which would be chaired by Eugene Levy and run in collaboration with the Canadian Film Centre and Just For Laughs.

Sparaga did a quick rewrite on *Servitude* and submitted it to the Lab, which was looking for five scripts from across Canada to pair with A-list Hollywood comedy talent for development. Within a month, he said he was accepted into the Lab and sitting in a room with Ivan Reitman (director, *Ghostbusters*) and Etan Cohen (writer, *MIB3*) working on the next draft.

"It was quite an incredible experience. And in the end, *Servitude* was the first film green-lit from the Lab for production."

Servitude is "a laugh-out-loud comedy with big fun characters. And a bit raunchy at times, too. Kind of like *American Pie* in a restaurant. It isn't the sort of film that critics normally bestow praise on, but I'm hopeful. As for audiences, I'm not worried," he said.

"I've screened the finished film in several festivals, including the Just For Laughs Comedy Festival last July, and the theatres are always rocking with laughter."

As a Jewish writer, Sparaga said his background influences his work. "The character of Josh in *Servitude* is Jewish. He is essentially me at age 25, struggling with the same decision of whether or not he should go to law school or continue waiting tables as he tries to make it as a writer.

"I wasn't sure how much of that sort of thing I would include initially, but it was actually Ivan Reitman who pushed me to make the script more semi-autobiographical."

While Sparaga hasn't waited tables in seven years, he said it "feels surreal to this day. I still get anxious on Friday and Saturday nights, like I'm supposed to be somewhere running around like crazy. But overall, I know I'm lucky to have a job that I love, that doesn't feel like a job at all really and allows me to work in my pyjamas."

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HEEBONICS

Jewish studies major juggles artistic pursuits

Michelle Bitran
Special to The CJN

For most people, multitasking can be a real challenge, but for 24-year-old Mirra Kardonne, it's all part of the fun.

The part-time University of Toronto Jewish studies student is currently pursuing several acting, music and visual arts projects during her quickly disappearing spare time.

"I kind of have many fingers in many different pies, artistically," she said with a laugh.

Kardonne held her debut art show late last month. The exhibition, titled *All Descriptions*, took place at Toronto's Studio Huddle and featured 11 of her mixed-media works, some of which are as large as 36 by 48 inches.

The paintings in the collection focus on an exploration of identity as it is expressed through the body.

"It's definitely some of the biggest stuff and some of the most ambitious stuff I've ever created," she said.

Although Kardonne's first and deepest artistic love is the theatre, after selling a few paintings while studying Hebrew at Tel Aviv University two summers ago, she felt the draw to spend some more time on her visual artwork.

"With visual arts, I've always felt like I have to strike while the iron is hot – because it's not always hot," she said. Kardonne added that when she feels inspired, she can complete a painting in as little as one or two sessions. "Sometimes the juices are just flowing," she said.

Kardonne said her debut show made her much more optimistic about the potential of her artwork, as about 50 people showed up to the catered event that featured two Gypsy-jazz guitarists, and four of the 11 paintings were sold by the end of the evening.

She also received some requests for commissioned paintings, something Kardonne is very eager to work on.

"I was really nervous. I'd never held an [event] like this before," she said, adding that she was "really touched that people weren't just happy for [her], but they seemed to be impressed."

After the excitement of the exhibition wound down, Kardonne was busy with two major artistic endeavours, on top of several side projects.

She co-produced the April 22 CD release of a jazz recording, *The Thing Is*, on which her older sister, Tova, sings.

Kardonne is preparing for her first role in a Toronto Fringe Festival play, *Honour Killings*, written by Harvey Markowitz.

She is also set to appear in a live art show in early May, where she and another performer will create artworks in front of an audience, and she is part of an ongoing YouTube series.

Kardonne, whose father is a playwright, has studied theatre for 12 years, both at acting studios and with a private coach, and still considers it her strongest artistic passion.

But if her love for the theatre is genetic, so is her talent in painting – Kardonne's grandfather was the American artist Joe Kardonne.

Coming from an artistic family has given Kardonne a push forward in her career.

"It's been really nice to have my parents be like, 'If you want to be an artist, be an artist – not a doctor,'" she said of her family's support.

Mirra Kardonne
[Denise Grant photo]

Kardonne's painting *Death Notice* features a copy of her grandmother's death notice in its original Hebrew. *[Kailey Kaufman photo]*

Family history and tradition feature quite strongly in Kardonne's recent paintings. The largest work on display at her debut show was a portrait that was overlaid with her grandmother's death notice, written in Hebrew. The painting, titled simply *Death Notice*, was the "most laborious" for her to create, but she felt it was important to include in the collection, especially in its original Hebrew.

"One of the things that is me is that I speak Hebrew and I'm a Jewish studies major," she said, explaining that her Judaism is an important part of her identity.

Kardonne began to learn Hebrew when she was 20 and has studied it in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. She began her degree as a philosophy major, but readjusted her studies in order to take up the Hebrew language.

In 2010, Kardonne served as president of the U of T's Jewish Studies Student Union for a semester, and she also recently spent time as an intern at the Koffler Centre of the Arts.

Between her studies and the myriad artistic projects and hobbies that eat up her time, Kardonne is finding herself performing a bit of a balancing act.

"I feel like I'm a mad juggler these days," she said, laughing, "but I really thrive on being busy."

Now, as she prepares to graduate this summer, she will have a bit more free time to achieve her artistic goals.

Kardonne said that her latest success with her *All Descriptions* show has left her very hopeful for a future in the arts, both performance and visual.

Kardonne's wish is to keep juggling her talents and to develop them all as she goes along.

"My wildest dream in five years would be to sort of do the Renaissance-woman thing," she said.

More news for young Jews on heebonics.ca

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Synagogues, schools and sustainability

Sustainable Jew

Fred Winegust

What does it mean to be a sustainable Jew? That question was the headline of my first *CJN* column in September 2010. Since then, we have explored many aspects of sustainability in this monthly column. What have we learned so far?

A small segment of our Jewish community that is receptive to this precept of tikkun olam and its interpretation by the many streams of Judaism is still motivated to focus on the environment and take action to leave the world in better shape than we found it.

Keeping Jewish students motivated and connected to environmental concerns is easier in younger grades. Challenges in extending that interest through middle school into high school and on to post-secondary education have not been overcome.

Is there a connection between synagogues, schools and sustainability?

When you talk about sustainability to people involved in the running of these institutions, thoughts quickly turn to affordability and the ability to sustain a viably sized synagogue membership or school student population.

Over Pesach, I discussed the issue of sustainable operations with family and friends. Through those encounters, I've brought together different community views from various cities and countries. Common to all of the discussions was an ongoing increase in labour costs because of the need to pay a living wage to those who teach our children or run our religious institutions. That is not solvable in this column.

However, if you are a member of a board of directors for a synagogue or day school, you have the opportunity to understand how ongoing operational sustainability is affected by energy utilities such as electricity, natural gas and water.

Are you running your own building or are you a tenant, renting part of a larger facility? Do you ever see a utility bill at a board meeting or just a cost number? Does the board have a focus on consumption? Do you know which cost drivers you have control over?

Most boards will see a single number, the amount spent on utilities. Sometimes the number will be broken into three parts, separating the costs for electricity, natural gas and water.

How many boards look at consumption numbers, understand what is connected where, know how much each connected item consumes, and how long the consumption take place? Very few from what I've seen.

What are the variables that need to be considered that can directly affect consumption? Weather can affect the amount of heating or cooling required. Sunlight hours can affect the number of lights required in rooms that face the exterior. Building occupancy schedules can affect the number of hours an area has to be lit, heated or cooled.

It is this kind of knowledge that can lead to informed decisions to improve efficiency and use, which in turn can help the utility portion of operating costs of a synagogue or school stay steady.

Next month, we will look at how informed decisions can be made and consumption reduction achieved, resulting in costs that can be held steady or rise at a slower rate.

Winegust@gmail.com

LEMON ALMOND MUFFINS W/LEMON GLAZE
2 c flour • 1/2 c sugar 2 tsps baking powder • 1/2 tsp baking soda • 1 c plain Greek yogurt • 1/2 c canola oil • 1 tsp almond extract • 1/2 c sliced almonds
Lemon Glaze: 1 c icing sugar 2 tblsp lemon juice
Preheat oven to 400°F. Spray 12 muffin cup pan with cooking spray. In large bowl sift flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda. In another large bowl combine yogurt, canola oil, lemon peel, egg, almond extract; whisk together. Fold into flour mixture just until combined. Scoop batter into muffin cups; sprinkle with almonds. Bake 16-18 min. or until toothpick placed in center of muffin comes out clean. Cool 5 min. in pan; transfer to wire rack to cool. Glaze: Whisk icing sugar and lemon juice together until smooth. Drizzle glaze over warm muffins.
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On cjnews.com

The CJN's French-language reporter in Montreal, Elias Levy, writes about:

An exhibit and a conference organized by the Jewish Public Library, as well as the recording of personal stories of Sephardim during the Holocaust, scheduled to trace the history of the migration of Sephardim from North Africa to Montreal.

French geopolitical expert Frédéric Encel who says he does not believe France's position on Israel and Iran will change noticeably if François Hollande's Socialist party wins the May 6 election.

Exclusive to cjnews.com

Hebrew web columnist Yossi Tastassa looks at whether Yair Lapid's entry into politics is a sign of a major change or is it more of the same?

Cirque du Soleil founder and CEO, Guy Laliberté, former Montreal Canadiens coach and senator, Jacques Demers, and television host Ben Mulroney are among the Montrealers the 350 major international supporters of Israel's Weizmann Institute of Science will meet at a conference in Montreal next month.

A 19-year-old Quebec student was expected to return to Montreal this past Saturday after being detained by Israeli authorities from April 15 to 17 in connection with a planned pro-Palestinian activity in the West Bank.

This is a reminder...

Urban Writer

Avrum Rosensweig

This is a reminder to all Jews that a family once lived in a small *shtetl* in Poland in the 19th century. One day, they heard horses galloping and then saw the drunken men riding them, pulling knives from their scabbards and waving them above their heads, yelling, "Kill the Jews."

This is a reminder to all Jews on Yom Hazikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut that the family scattered to the nearby trees, but never exited the forest to safety, because the venomous thugs rode hard with a relentless commitment to finding them, knowing there was no country for the family to run to.

This is a reminder on Israel's 64th birthday that once in Berlin, a Jewish factory owner had a wife by the name of Pearl and five children, all of whom were proficient in Torah learning and piano. This is a reminder that one morning, he returned to his factory and found glass everywhere and saw ashes blowing past him, and big iron beams lay melted at his feet.

This is a reminder to all of us that this family had nowhere to hide, no country to flee to, no nation that didn't believe "none is too many," and that one day soon after, the family perished inside a camp, barricaded inside by barbed wire and degraded by the worst corrosion of nature.

This is a reminder to all Diaspora Jews that thousands of Israeli parents have sent their children to the Jewish army, and sometimes to war, and many never saw them alive again. This is a reminder that these young Jewish soldiers took a bullet for every Jew then and every Jew now.

This is a reminder to the Jewish People that our State of Israel is an anomaly because of its diminutive size and burgeoning growth, and because of its absolute refusal to cower to the pogroms of today, cloaked in the guise of missiles and resolutions.

This is a reminder to the world that Eretz Yisrael is the homeland of the Jewish People, a haven for every Jew who might have previously hid among the foliage of fear, and that while we will negotiate, we will never run and we will never scatter, for it is said, "I will gather you from the nations and bring you back from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you back the Land of Israel again" (Ezekiel 11:17).

Rest in peace, you Jewish men and women, you Druze and Bedouin, who knew that a shot from the enemy's revolver might some day take you in war or through terrorism, but regardless, you donned the fatigues of bravery.

We embrace your legacy of heroism and thank your parents and families for the ultimate sacrifice of a child, brother, sister or grandchild.

Happy birthday to our State of Israel, born on Iyar 5, 5708 (May 14, 1948). While Moses was never allowed to enter your gates, we know that we have the right to return – should we want to, should we need to. This is a reminder. For this we sing and dance in your honour and thank God for this land, a gift to the Jewish People and all nations.

"We do not rejoice in victories. We rejoice when a new kind of cotton is grown and when strawberries bloom in Israel." – Golda Meir

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